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### Ivan Smirnov: A Problem In Americanization (A Novel)

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IVAN SMIRNOV  
A PROBLEM IN AMERICANIZATION  
(A Novel)

Being

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty in  
Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of  
Master of Science

by

Thelma Hruza

Fort Hays Kansas State College

Approved by:

Date May 11, 1934

R. Macgregor  
Professor in English



*Gift*

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I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. R. R. Macgregor, my major professor and advisor, for the inspiration and courage to attempt as extended a piece of creative work as the novel.

*Helma Hauge*

To President W. A. Lewis, I owe much for his interest in the novel as a fulfillment of the thesis requirement for the Masters Degree, and for his interest in and kindly criticism of the characters in the novel, "Ivan Smirnov." President Lewis, in his far sighted wisdom and his knowledge of the necessity for the human race to have some form of self-expression, encouraged and fostered all courses and projects which lead to that expression. He felt, as Dr. Macgregor, that creative writing is the crown of all efforts in the fields of English and literature, and, though the efforts of those who enter that field may not be crowned with commercial success, one of the great purposes of culture is answered--the artistic expression of the relation of the individual to his environment. As evidence of the mastery of the field of English, creative work is the best test that may be provided, and, therefore, a novel is truly a fulfillment of the requirement of the Masters Degree.

*6/26/34*

I wish to acknowledge my appreciation of the help



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**Book One**



IVAN SMIRNOV

A PROBLEM IN AMERICANIZATION

by

THELMA HRUZA

The contemplation of truth and beauty is the proper object for which we were created, which calls forth the most intense desires of the soul, and of which it never tires.

---William Hazlitt.







Ivan Smirnov, his eyes wide and fixed, crouched on all fours on the yellow bank of the irrigation ditch, eager, alert, tense; crouched watching his reflection ripple in the water below him. For moments he waited, motionless except for the slow fall and lift of the long fringed eyelids. The last long rays of the setting sun struck the water, reflected into his face, but still he remained motionless.

Suddenly he bent forward; expectancy was written in every line of the slender figure. He smiled; a soft sigh broke his tension; peace filled him; he sank back on his feet, squatting--a formless heap. A soft whisper blended with the slush of the water against a nearby weed.

"You come, my mother, my water lady. I wanted to tell you that we won't be here any more. All of us Smirnovs are leaving the colony; we go to the country; we work for Kransky." The guttural Russian lost its harshness in the liquid tones of the child voice.

He paused, listening, then shaking his head, answered, "Yes, there are beets, but it is not all beets. Father has many things for which he gets money every week. Think, mother, every week. We will be rich! rich! like--like--like," he hesitated, searching for a comparison, "like Kronkow. Father says we have to get money, that is all that matters to anyone; for then we can get land. Money gets every-



thing. Did you love land, my mother? But if money gets everything, why did not father pay to keep you from dying?" Again he was silent, but for a moment only. "Perhaps he did not know when you died that money gets everything; because at the same time he told us that, he told us he had learned many things in America. Maybe he learned that, after he came to America."

Ivan squatted, silent for long minutes; then began slowly and rhythmically rocking, with his eyes fixed on the reflection before him which diffused as he moved, and might have been two, three or more people. He softly hummed "rock-a-by, rock-a-by" as he had heard the German mothers do while they sat in front of the shacks with babes at their breasts. Their white breasts fascinated him. Often, pressing close to a shack wall, he peeped around a corner at one of those women. Many times he had been caught by some passerby, and punished with a kick, or shamed as a peeping Tom. There was no need for his peeping, for such women were always somewhere about the colony. But he knew no one stared at them as he did. The punishment did not kill the desire to watch the baby hands kneading and pummeling the overfull breasts; to watch the soft flesh pulled and released by sucking lips; but it made him more wary, and now, when he saw a woman with her child at her breast, he was possessed with an overwhelming feeling of guilt and shame.

As he rocked and hummed, he felt himself in the arms of the woman whose image his fancy called from the water, and whose



reflection, he firmly believed, was mingled with his in the irrigation ditch. He lost himself more and more in the spell of his droning chant, of the sparkling ripples of the water, and of his imagination. His hands worked, opening, closing, opening, closing. Suddenly shame flooded him, broke through the world of fancy. Shaken by the feeling of nameless guilt, he stiffened. He stared dazedly about him. The water flowed by him untroubled by images; for he was again only Ivan Smirnov, lonely, unwanted son of Nicholas Smirnov.

Before him lay the irrigation ditch and fertile fields extending to the foothills of the Rockies; to the right were more fields; to the left, the shacks of the Russian-German sugar beet workers, the factory, and the town.

The Smirnov shack was set apart from the German colony of which it was a part. The Smirnovs had little contact with the other members of the colony. Their shack was never the meeting ground for conferences, gossip, and plans as were the other shacks; for the Smirnovs were Russians, tolerated by the German neighbors because the Smirnovs were the friends of Henry Kronkow, an influential German. But they were not accepted as equals by the race-conscious Germans who had lived for many years in Russia before coming to America, but who had never been Russianized.

The Smirnovs were a gloomy lot, taciturn and surly.



Days went by without conversation, except brief commands and grunted answers. Except Ivan, the youngest child, none looked to the sky but to prophesy storm; none, to the earth but to note the condition of the soil and listen for its command to labor. They were an earth-bound people. They rose with the first flush of the dawn; scooped the cold beans or porridge from the kettle, sometimes with battered tin spoons, more often with unwashed fingers; then hurried with bent heads and shuffling feet to the fields.

Three years in America had made little difference in the Smirnovs, either in outward appearance or inward enlightenment. The three years might be called a period of systematization and crystallization of forces already dominant. Ivan was the only one deeply colored by the new environment.

Nicholas Smirnov was a square, squat, black-visaged, black-browed, black-haired, grim Russian, whose restlessness had driven him from Russia. In America that restlessness had crystalized, and all the fierce energy of the man had centered in the desire for one thing--coins. Tamzie, his wife, had been the only human being toward whom he had any affection, except the German, Kronkow, whom he had known in his youth, and who had been instrumental in bringing him to America. Tamzie had given birth to eleven children, then sickened and died. Six of the children survived her; Karl, the eldest, an ugly hulk almost as large and strong as Nicholas; Catherine and Ann, squat and square as their father; Alex and Peter as like in appearance as two peas from the same



pod, but one a glib jester, the other agile of body. They were Smirnovs, every one.

Ivan was different. A lonely lad, he was as a bit of down cast among thistles. Three brothers had died in infancy between Ivan and Peter who was five years older than he. Ivan was three when his mother died. From birth he had been a shy, frail, sickly, child. Her death had marked the beginning of a new life for him--a life in which he was forever alone; although it was a life spent with a father, with brothers and sisters--a life controlled by the wavering shadows that hover between the conscious and subconscious.

Added to his own memories of his mother, were the whispers of his brothers and sisters who talked of her when Nicholas was not present. Her name was never spoken aloud, nor was it ever mentioned in the presence of Nicholas. She loved Ivan although he was the smallest and weakest of all her children; but Nicholas hated him, for Nicholas thought Ivan had taken the beloved Tamzie's life. When she would plead with Nicholas to be good to his youngest son, and would tell him it was not the child's fault that she had grown weak and no good, Nicholas reminded her that she had borne ten children and still danced and laughed; but after Ivan, the spring had gone from her walk, the roses from her cheeks. After Ivan's birth she lay on her cot, white faced and weary, and always the little one nuzzled and fed from her breast. Tamzie's last words had been a plea that Nicholas should care for Ivan as he did for his other sons.



In the confusion that followed her death, Ivan had huddled in a corner of the bare room unnoticed. The first night after his mother was taken away, he had burrowed alone into the tumbled covers where he had spent the nights of his three years, held close to her.

Ivan was six when the Smirnovs were first drafted into the child labor army of America. Small of stature, physically weak, under nourished from birth, his days were many of them pain filled, and would have been unendurable were it not for the world of fantasy the sensitive introvertive child had built around him. He had started to build the imaginative world soon after the death of his mother. One night, after listening to the stories of his sisters and brothers, he had dreamed so vivid a dream that he remembered it when he awoke. There was tall grass everywhere, and there were many flowers. The air was sweet with fragrance. Streams of water ran on every side of him; sometimes the water washed his legs, and he stood in it. Then the water turned to a woman. She was very near him, almost touched him. He felt her presence, but he could not move to get closer. He wanted to. He tried again and again, but his feet were fastened. She came toward him; slowly she lifted her hands to him. Her fingers hovered above his shoulders. Waves of pleasant anticipation filled him; he would capture the knowledge of how it felt to be held close to her, a knowledge that eluded him. Then she was gone, and he was awake. He called to her; he shut his eyes tightly to bring her back; but she would not come. Shut out from the companionship of those about him, he had turned again and again to



thoughts of this dream woman, until at last he could bring her image to his eyes almost at will.

Soon after the Smirnovs came to Colorado, Ivan began to spend his leisure time on the irrigation banks staring into the slowly moving water, thinking of the dream woman. In his little boy mind, thoughts played at tag with each other, until out of the waters pictures arose; floated for a moment then disappeared--the picture of his dream woman fused with his own reflection as he lay half awake and half asleep with his eyes fixed upon the water. As he watched and longed for her, she came more and more clearly. Then there were pictures of a little house with thick walls and a bushy roof. Ivan knew there was a big stove inside, and sometimes people slept on the stove. There was a palace with guards in brilliant uniforms marching around it. At first Ivan only watched these pictures, then he began to talk to the woman who was always in them. One day she was talking back to him, her voice strangely blended with the sound of the water as it rushed through a nearby gate. It was long before she came near him, but he felt a glow as though something warmed him when she was in his thoughts. Then, in the night of a cold winter, she held him in her arms. As he lay close to his sister, the dream woman hovered near even before he sank into deep sleep. Suddenly she caught him to her, almost crushed him. Half waking, half sleeping, the weight of her arm held him; erotic sensations drugged him. Suddenly he was startled to full wakefulness; the arm that pinned him to his bed was his sister's, but the sensation of the half waking, half sleeping moment was not lost.



Then there were the days in the beet fields when his body seemed always to ache. As the hours crept slowly forward, thoughts of the water pictures grew more and more vivid as he wriggled up and down the beet rows, pulling, cutting, pulling, cutting. When the pain between his shoulders was very sharp, he thought very hard of the dream woman in the water. He pictured her in the beet rows. The same psychology that permits children to build their imaginary world and play-mates permitted Ivan to believe she was there with him, or, if not there, then in the water waiting for him. He talked to her, sometimes aloud, sometimes only in thoughts. Together they listened to the calling or singing of the Mexicans in the nearby fields.

The Mexicans never seemed heavy and tired, yet they worked as long hours, and were as quick if not quicker. Again and again Ivan tried to work as those Mexicans did, standing on his feet, bending from his waist. With the one hand he would chop two widths with the broad beet hoe; with the other, pull all but the strongest from the clump of beet plants left. But he was slow and awkward. His people seemed to be built to stay close to the earth, they squatted on their feet and had a peculiar waddling movement as they wriggled down the rows.

Ivan did not know that squatting was his heritage. His great grandfather had squatted under an overseer's lash in distant Russia, squatted and spat vile invectives until one day he lay worn out by work, by the lash, and by hate. His grandfather had squatted over exile fires in frozen Siberia, had squatted in damp mines until he, too, had died



worn out by toil and hate. The Smirnovs were rebels against the traditions that surrounded them. Now Ivan's father with his brood squatted in the beet fields of Colorado, a part of the treadmill of American industrialism.

If Ivan gained release from the monotony, the routine, and the indifference in a dream world, he also found balm for the weary loneliness that enveloped so much of his life through beauty, beauty in the distant mountains that reared above the foothills. At morning he saw their crimson glory dim to blues, mauve splashed, purple lined, green fringed; at noon he saw their lavender heights, cloud shrouded; at evening he saw them gilded, crimsoned, indigoed, changing until at last they were part of purple distance. There were moments when that beauty enveloped him, warmed his chilled heart; moments when all the world seemed a kindly brooding mantle, wrapping him in its peaceful folds. Then his heart beat more rapidly; tears stung his eyelids; he threw his arms wide to embrace the essence of life. Again, the cold grandeur, the majesty awed him; the mountains and the stars were far off; a great stillness engulfed him. He was utterly alone, an atom in the universe.

Nicholas Smirnov threw himself into the new life America offered with fevered intensity. He swept his children with him. He made of them one machine. To Nicholas, the labor was as nothing; for he had known labor in Russia; he accepted it as part of life. Only one thing irked him, that was idleness when no coins were added to the slowly increasing pile; only one thing roused him, that was the sight



of his own coins.

For the third year since coming to America the last of the beets had been hoed, and Nicholas was unable to find regular employment for all his family. He trudged the six miles from the colony to Henry Kronkows. Henry greeted him heartily, but Nicholas was laconic.

"Here are the rest of the coins for our passage.

Other men have paid theirs more quickly, but they have saved none for themselves. Three years I have been here, but coins are few. It isn't as if I spent them for food and drink and merry-making. Our food, we earn and store--beans gleaned after the thresher has passed, potatoes that we cull, meal from the grain gathered from the chaff. The promises of money are slow in fulfillment."

"You are impatient, my friend. Ten years have I been here, and still I have few coins. You have many backs to cover, and do not forget there is freedom here, no armies. What you earn you keep, no prince takes it from you, because he is a prince." A kindly smile lighted Kronkow's face.

Nicholas scowled. "Many backs there are, but many hands work."

"Yes, yes, Nicholas. But you are at the bottom of the ladder. I make more than you, because I rent the land, I served my apprenticeship as the laborer just as you are doing. The owner makes more than I, for the land is his; the factory earner makes even



more. It is right for they have put in more money."

"But they do not work as hard, they are not cold in winter, burning in summer. Their hands are not rough like mine. They wear fine linens. Because your belly is not so empty as in Russia, because you are not in the army, do you think it is right that they wallow in luxury, waste their coins while we work, and have only a handful of coins at the end of the season? Is money all that makes them different?"

Nicholas worked himself into a fine frenzy, shouting, gesticulating. Kronkow's better judgment, sound advice, and logical reasoning only enraged him.

At last he shouted in rage, "If it is only money that gives you power, I will have money and lands. Your people will come crawling to me as you grovel before these others. I will not wait years and years to get it. I will no longer plod, be a beet worker with pay only once in a while. I will have money every week."

Nicholas was not an idle boaster, so Ivan had gone to the ditch to tell the water friends that the Smirnovs were leaving the colony. They were going to work for Kransky.







Nicholas and Ivan Smirnov scuffed the dust as they trudged the road between the Smirnov 'dobe' and the Kransky house. Nicholas's arms swung loose from his broad, massive shoulders. But Ivan's hands were clenched in tight fists held close to his slender body. He gazed steadily into the west.

"Father, there is gold dust in the sky."

The west was a blaze of golden light as the sun sank back of the mountains. The stray clouds had golden linings that shone in glittering rims at the underside. Long golden light shafts shimmered and danced as they shot from the gilded peaks to the valley. Through them, as through a golden gossamer, the mauve, lavender, orchid, and rose of the enchanted foothills snared the vagrant fancy--an ephemeral world that vanished with the sun.

But Nicholas neither lifted his eyes nor answered, although the word gold echoed and re-echoed the thoughts that turned in his mind. It was gold, or its equivalent--coins--that he sought now, but the gold dust of western skies could not feed his hunger. Change had come to the Smirnovs, and it was as Nicholas had prophesied. He would have money, and that at regular intervals.

It was a year since the Smirnovs had moved into the Kransky 'dobe,' a floorless, one-room affair, fifteen by twenty feet, with a monkey stove, several crude benches, and a hastily put-together table for furniture. Nicholas was Kransky's general hand. He had a best contract on the 'side.' Not a week of that year had Nicholas fail-



ed to make the trip to the Kransky residence for his weekly hire. In vain Kransky had tried to pay him once each month; had tried to pay him with a check. In strident voice, Nicholas declared that coins were the wage of an honest man; he knew nothing of the money paper of the American; and he cared nothing for it. Kransky had promised to pay each Saturday, and, on each Saturday, Nicholas demanded to be paid.

Silent, unresponsive, unemotional, the Smirnovs might be through the week, but on payday a rising excitement filled them. For that brief time, there was a common emotion; for one thing stirred all the Smirnovs, the glitter and clank of coins. Water flowing in the irrigation ditches, the distant mountains, the cool, green fields of beets with their crumpled, shining leaves brought peace and dreamy content to Ivan; it lulled him to rest; but the glitter of coins roused him as it did his kin.

The love of money had sunk deep into the soul of Nicholas Smirnov, but he had not words to express it. As they returned to the 'dobe' with the coins safely buried in his pocket, a grin twisted Nicholas' lips when Ivan queried, "When you see the light on the coins, does prickling run up and down your back so you want to rub it on your shirt? When you see fingers go around coins does yours go shut too? Don't you feel the coins burning against you down in your pockets, now?"

Ivan lay his hand over the coins, pressing them closer to Nicholas. The muscles under them contracted. Nicholas



tensed. How did the boy guess? He had never held coins. Had not Nicholas seen to that? Only Nicholas touched the coins. How did the boy know the feel of them against Nicholas' leg? But there was even more than that when Nicholas held coins in his hands, a great strength filled him.

The other Smirnovs eagerly awaited the return of Nicholas and Ivan. Their black eyes glittered, as they bunched near the door. Nicholas entered first, Karl followed, then Catherine, Ann, Alex, Peter, and Ivan. They squatted in a circle in the center of the room while Nicholas kicked aside the rags in one corner. He lifted a flat rock and took from under it an old shawl bundle. He carefully laid the bundle in the center of the eager group. Ivan squirmed with excitement as he watched the edges of the shawl gently laid back by his father's quivering hands. Ivan's heartbeats quickened; the blood pounded in his temples; the saliva kept him gulping. He hesitated between the desire to give way to tears or laughter, but he remained silent. Then he watched his father hold high the new coins; drop them one by one onto the pile.

Ivan had been five when the first coins dropped into the old shawl. He had watched the pile grow from ten discs to the gleaming mound. In the first years, it had been slow to increase but, since the Smirnovs had moved to Kransky's the pile was much larger. The thrill of the coin ceremony grew for him as he heard the clink and saw the glisten of the ever growing pile. His throat contracted and stopped



his breathing as he watched his father lift the shining pieces; then let them slip through his fingers, tinkling as they struck the other coins. No word broke the silence, only the clink of coins, the huh-hu-huh-hu of deep breathing, quick sniffs. The light of the smoke-smudged kerosene lamp shortened and flattened the squatting figures into grotesque images whose sallow faces, thrust over the coin heap, were startlingly twisted in the half lights.

Nicholas's face, as it leaned over the coins watching them run through his fingers, lost its surliness. Some of the glow of the coins seemed to stay with him, even after he had carefully wrapped the old shawl around them, and returned the bundle to its earthy resting place. His voice welled up from deep within him.

"It is good, and it is right. In Russia are many poor men who have never felt their own coins. Serfs, slaves, they have been; peasants still, never free men. But I am free, free! Some day I will buy land, then we will get more land and more land. Ach! money gives you everything. Here what is mine is mine. In Russia everybody wants his own land, he thinks he has it but--" He shrugged expressive shoulders, "The land isn't his. He only has what he raises, and only a little part of that. Always there is the fear of famine. It is hell to starve. I work for myself here, and have no fear of starving, but my grandfather worked only three days for himself, the other days he must work for the Prince. When there was famine, he took from the fields what was rightfully his; but he was cast into the dungeon; put into chains;



beaten." He talked on and on, terrible stories of punishment endured, of hatred stored, of revenge waited.

"But when you have money--" he paused, his gleaming eyes swept the group, "and I shall have money." He closed his great fist and lifted it, as though to clench his vow.

Then he sat silent, chin sunk on his breast, eyes fixed, long audible breaths lifting his hairy chest. One after another, the Smirnovs crawled among their sacks. Nicholas, eyes still thoughtful and burning, was the last. Soon the room filled with heavy breathing, with snorts and grunts of weary sleepers. Only Ivan lay with wide eyes seeing in the streaks of light filtering into the darkness, glittering coins floating about--coins on which rode bent gray faced creatures shrinking from huge ogres who swung heavy whips. Then long talons, reaching out, dragged in the coins, tumbled gray elfs and ogres together. Suddenly the coins had wings; they did gay fantastic swirling maneuvers. Ivan's fingers opened and closed, opened and closed. Finally, he too slept, the echo and re-echo of, "I shall have money," filling even sleep. On those nights there was no place for a dream woman.

During the winter months Nicholas worked with the sheep that Kransky fed on shares with the owner of the ranch. Karl, Peter, and Alex occasionally found work with neighboring ranchmen. Catherine and Ann helped with heavy cleaning in the nearby town. But



for Ivan there was nothing. From the time when the last beet was harvested until he could begin work in the spring, Ivan shivered through the day near the little stove that served as heater and cook stove, or he searched the countryside for fuel. He filled the endless hours by playing games with his dream people, but the games had to be in silence, for the harsh criticism of the Smirnovs hurt and frightened him. There were days when he helped Nicholas clean the long troughs for the corn and molasses, or shovel the beet pulp from the wagons. It was a dreary time for Ivan; for Nicholas vented his ill humor on the boy, always taunting him for his weakness.

Until his ninth year, Ivan's world had been circumscribed physically by the fields, the shacks in the colony, and the irrigation ditch that flowed by it. His social contacts had been limited to his family and the colony inhabitants until the Smirnovs moved to the Kransky ranch. With this move, Ivan's contact with the mass group had been broken. But a new world opened. Nicholas had to send him to school. Nicholas's wrath broke all bounds when the truant officer made his demands. Being forced to send this scrawny youngest son of his<sup>to school</sup> who had always been a thorn in his flesh, swept away his regard for the freedom of America. Suddenly Russia became the paradise of men. Many and wordy battles were fought, but at last the truant officer won. Colorado laws provided for compulsory education, but there were many violations. Too often enforcing officers were interested in children as laborers.



That first year of school left many indelible impressions on Ivan. There were those days when he could no longer go barefooted, when the children laughed at the sacks tied around his feet, laughter that shamed him--a shame that was quickly forgotten in the story the teacher was telling, the story of a fairy who lived in the water, but who came out to give to a lost child anything he might wish. Did not Ivan know people who lived in the water, who came out to be kind to children? There had been another day, when, dreading the laughter, he had worn a pair of high heeled shoes which Catherine had found in the city dump. Another time he had worn his father's boots. Not even the laughter had mattered then, he was too weary.

But that was in the past. Now the January air was crisp, and snow clumps sparkled in shaded hollows as Ivan started to school his second year. Nicholas had found one reason after another to keep him from going in the early months of the fall and winter. There was no money for clothes; no money for shoes; he must work; all the excuses of the past year renewed, and with increased vehemence. But Ivan was at last free.

As soon as the Smirnov 'dobe' was out of sight, Ivan leaped and skipped in time with the nonsense rimes that tumbled in his thoughts. He pranced and side stepped, a gay charger on his way to battle. His steps slowed as he listened for his heart beats, th-rump, th-th-thrumpthrumpthrump-th-th-thr-ru-ru-ump. He sang in a monotone, "To school-to school--Now I can hear stories--stories--stories--hurray --hurray--stories."



Suddenly he stopped; lifted his hands; turned them over; looked at them. He had remembered that last year when he went to the school his hands had looked like that. Every morning the teacher had said, "Let me see your hands."

He shook his head as he spoke aloud in broken English, "A long time, I not know what she say. I no onerstant her talk. I glat first she call me."

He still stared at the grimy little hands with their broken nails and heavy callouses. Again he heard her sharp voice, "Terrible, terrible, ugh! Don't you ever wash?"

She had grabbed him by the arm, hurried him to the wash stand, and washed his hands. He had delighted in the feel of her soft palms as they rubbed the soap over his hands. He had smiled. But one morning it had been different. She had cried out in an angry voice, "Those hands have not been washed. Have they? Answer me! Have they?"

Ivan had shook his head in negation. She had stamped her foot and shook him. Someone had tittered. She shouted, "Why don't you? Haven't I told you over and over you must wash before coming to school? You are bad, dirty, dirty!"

Then she had pushed him away. He couldn't tell her no one washed at home; that water must be brought from the ranch yard unless the water was in the ditches.

That was last year. But today Ivan loitered, the



struggle between memory and the present desire wrestling. There were the stories, the pretty clothes, the books, the colored chalk with which one traced letters on the board. It happened sometimes that one was permitted to dig forts for the leaders, or hunt sunflowers for the Indian houses. Of course when the work was done, one was shoved aside, but just being near laughing boys and girls made one happier.

Ivan's shoulders lifted; his chin thrust forward; he marched on. It was recess when he reached the building. A vivid young woman, as eager for experience and adventure as any of her pupils, greeted him. "Hello, sonny, are you a New Year's gift?" She didn't wait for an answer, "You are certainly a sweet one if you are."

An informative miss whispered, "Miss Alice, he is Ivan Smirnov, a real Rooshin. Teacher always had to have him wash his hands. They are terrible."

Ivan started; his face paled. Quickly he clasped his hands behind him. The teacher laughed, "When you have a face and eyes like that, what difference do hands make? Going to let me draw you, Ivan?"

She grabbed a sheet of paper, and with quick sure strokes sketched a heart shaped face. The little V of fine black hair that dipped on Ivan's forehead was the top, his pointed chin the tip. The children gathered about them, elbowing their way closer to the quickly moving hand that worked over the white paper.



Whispers passed among them, "It looks like him."

"It does."

"I didn't know he was like that."

"Teacher likes him. She only draws us when it's something special."

Ivan stood tense, not a muscle quivered. His hands were still clenched behind him. The only sound was the scratching of the pencil on paper.

"There!" She held the paper up for inspection, "Not many people have that distinctive facial outline." She pointed out the lines, the heartshaped outline, the sweep from the crown of the head to the jaw, to the chin, the large well spaced eyes, the arching, thin brows, the almond shaped eyes lifting at the corners, the fine nostrils. Soon the youngsters were finding good points. They left the picture; they were using the model. Then one child had Ivan by the hand leading him back to some paper cutting the pupils were doing in spare time.

"You don't have scissors?"

Ivan shook his head.

"I have two pairs, a little one and a big one. You can have the little one." It was a little girl who the year before had worn a crisp tomato-red-dress. Ivan, attracted by the color, had touched her skirt. She had angrily struck him, pouring out a stream of words which were meaningless to him, but the manner and tone showed



the anger that prompted them.

"You can have some of my paper," another child offered.

Ivan held in his hands and arms the papers, scissors, paste, ribbons--all the implements of paper cutting and pasting which had been showered on him. His eyes were wide with wonder. The wonder look was reaching deep into Miss Alice's heart. The tears stood close in her eyes. But for her the wonder look could not blot out the startled hurt in the big eyes when Ivan had hidden his hands behind him. As she watched him, he looked up at her. Slowly the wonder look faded. A beautiful smile spread from his eyes to his lips, then over his face. Such glory the woman had never seen on human face before. She moved quickly to him; caught him in her arms; crushed him to her; laughed into his hair a little smothered laugh that flooded Ivan with joy; then she quickly released him.

Very soon Ivan had forgotten that last year there had been three classes, "Whites," "Rooshes," and "Mexes." Miss Alice had quickly wiped out the class distinction on the schoolground. In her philosophy of life there was no class distinction, and she taught as she lived. But Ivan liked the "White" people best. He liked the pretty, alert faces, the sureness in all they did, the dainty clothes of the little girls, the clean "smell" of them.

Ivan's English came slowly and awkwardly, but he never spoke his native tongue nor the German while at school. When baffled for a word, he remained silent. He refused to talk German with the Rus-



sian-German children. This information reached Nicholas in a short time. For although he was not German and, in questions pertaining to the group, he was never consulted--in fact, his opinions when expressed were pointedly snubbed and disregarded--yet the Germans considered him one of them against any effort to Americanize them, or in their own words "take away their rights."

Even before Nicholas entered the 'dobe', he was shouting at Ivan. "So this is what school does for you. You are ashamed of your native tongue, ashamed of people that are almost your own. You take up with the trifling ways of these foreigners? Don't you know the Americans laugh at us on the street, make fun of us? And why, I ask you? Aren't we just as good as they are? I will tell you why. So they can make you young ones want to talk like them, dress like them, and act like them. Then you will want to spend our money. The Germans and the Slavs in this country have been too easy, they let themselves be run over. These Americans don't want us to have money; they want to keep us always working for them so they won't have to work. They know they can't keep us that way if we don't stick together. That's what they have these damn schools for, trying to force us from sticking together. Well, they don't get no son of mine to like them. Why do you suppose you know how to speak German? That's to help you out. You don't need English. Remember when the Germans talk to you in German, you talk to them. You better be proud they talk to you. Wasn't the folks angry in Russia because the Kronkows sent me



to school to learn German with Henry? Russians were jealous because the Germans were quality stuff. Everybody wanted to be their friend. But the Germans looked down on the Russians, wouldn't have anything to do with them. Now here you are in America, and the Germans try to talk to you, but you won't talk to them in the language that I taught you myself, you have to talk that school language. Here they have made me almost one of them. These Americans don't know it is an honor to have the Germans come to their country. But I am telling you. You just try talking English when they ask you things in German, just try! I will use the straps on you."

Ivan made no answer, only shrunk deeper into the shadows of the room. The Smirnovs told the tales of slights from Americans, of interferences. Someone was always trying to get them to go to church, inviting them to the night school that was provided by some people of the town. Some of the Germans were going; they were learning the English language; but not many. Most of them were sure they could get along without the English. Wasn't there enough of the Germans to help each other? They didn't have to go to strangers for help. Of course, there had to be a few men in the colony who could speak English, but there were the ministers and a teacher or two who had had to flee Germany because of too radical views. But in the days that followed, Ivan still refused to answer in German although he did not answer in English

Throughout the community was much talk concerning



this bad influence the school was having upon the children; the "out-landish" ideas it was putting into the heads of youngsters. There was much bitterness that the German students must be sent to the English school against the wishes of the parents. In the schools, the German language was not taught, but the schools were maintained through taxes which the Germans must help pay. Very few paid taxes, but the complaint was made in anticipation of the taxes of the future; for all knew that they would some day own the land. The children remained loyal to Miss Alice, but the discussion came into the school, and it required all her ingenuity to keep international peace in this "no man's land" of America.

She was determined that the slender, white faced, dark eyed child that hovered always just at the edge of things but never truly became a part of them should not suffer from this melee. At school she could save him, but over the home she soon learned she had no control. She visited his home, but withdrew hastily, disgusted that such squalor could exist in a civilized country, angered at the bigotry of Nicholas, and amazed that out of such surroundings could come the boy Ivan. She was surprised that he could be eleven years old. To her he was a child.

It did not take long for her to learn all that there was to know of his physical being. Incident after incident that had happened in the past year was recited to her, either by Ivan or by some child seeking recognition and knowing information concerning Ivan



was one way of getting it. Ivan's flushed face, as he watched her when these tales were being told, gripped her with a yearning tenderness.

One day she drew him to her, and, rubbing her cheek against his, she whispered, "I am glad you are in school."

His eyes glowed. "Miss Vite was sorry last year ven I tell her I can no more come back. I had to vork. I tell her I vill my hands vash in the water ven it is by the ditch. I feel tears in my eyes den. She put her arm around me, and she gifs me a liddle book and she says not to forget to reat it. But it is dark ven I do not vork in zummer. I only read it dree times." He looked up shyly. "I like Miss Vite, but I luf you. Ven de vater voman comes I vill call her you."

She laughed her husky laugh, "And I love you, Ivan. Love you, love you, love you."

This second year he learned rapidly; he learned much from the recitations of other classes, for he listened avidly to all that went on. Too, Miss Alice spent much time reading <sup>to him</sup> and talking with him.

His hunger for beauty grew, as his appreciation increased. He found sensuous pleasure in color; in the feel of things as the smoothness of satin, the softness of velvet, the sleekness of fur. Each created a new emotion or a different sensation. As his eyes had opened a new world to him, so did his ears; the world of sound. The sound of running water, of wind, of the implements in the



field, even the clop, clop, clop of the hoes, held for him rhythm. Greatest of all was the violin music which Miss Alice played for him when the others had left the school. Her eyes fixed on his, awake to every change of emotion mirrored in the white face and deep eyes, she lost herself. Her music would not have satisfied an artist, but the sensation starved child was swayed by every tone--now crying out in actual physical pain as the high thin notes tautened the overwrought nerves; sobbing as the deep low tones filled his being to overflowing; wriggling at some dancing, sprightly movement; screaming in terror as, sick at her power over this human being, Miss Alice viciously dragged her bow across the strings in a rasping discord. Then she must lull him back to rest and confidence.

His desire for knowledge seemed never satisfied. She gave of all she had. She told him of far places, of buildings, peoples, scenes, of characters from books and from life. She tried to tell him in words simple enough for his young mind, the meaning of love, truth, faith, loyalty. Most earnestly of all, she tried to teach him the true value of money.

When she talked to him of money, the reformer in Miss Alice surged forth. Everywhere she turned, she saw the same God, money and possessions. That an artist dwelt in the soul of this boy no one had the time to know or care; the only interest in him was that he might with his puny efforts help Nicholas Smirnov care for more acres of beets. Even in her school work, she must give her time, not



to foster the creative imagination that she might find in the few, but to drilling into the many the minimum essentials for successful entrance into a dollar and cents existence. That money should and did become the dominating force among these immigrants did not surprise her. From the hour the first thought of coming to America had come to them, the need for money had dominated every action. Before they could secure their passage, they must have money or their friends must have the money to purchase the fare for them.

Whether they took passage by the southern or the northern routes, these immigrants were crowded into stinking steerages. Miss Alice fought nausea often as she listened to stories of the sea trips of her German patrons. Tagged and herded from the cars to the docks, they were sent into steerages. Many of the steerages were divided into three divisions, one for the single men, one for the single women, and one for the families. Each individual or family carried their belongings wrapped in crude bundles. There were six to eight hundred human beings crowded together in these three compartments. The northern lines were worse, especially when the sea was rough, for the steerage passengers could not get on deck to light and air.

The smells--unwashed bodies, stale food, vomit, and at times the putrid flesh when some mother sought to keep her dead child from the water grave to which she had seen so many consigned--the noise--constant pound of engine; the wash of water; the clacking of tongues; the cries and rushing feet of children at play; blows and



curse; screams of those in pain, pain from disease, infection, ptomaine, childbirth; the constant sobs of someone crying--were always with them. Above them rang gay laughter, light chatter, and the strains of illusive music. On the upper decks might have been another world. The difference between the two was money.

In America, the immigrant was immediately thrust into the great industrial army. Whether that army was the textile mill of New England, the mine of the middle state, the packing house of the middle west, or the beet field of Colorado, every energy must be expended that the individual might exist.

In Colorado, the mines had brought in some foreign labor, but since the first sugar factory had been opened in Grand Junction in 1898 and the raising of beets had become a recognized and permanent industry, labor was an absorbing problem. As more factories were built, a gentleman's agreement had been entered into by the two big sugar companies owning most of the factories. Competitive buying was eliminated. Growers were bound to the factory in their section. More and more beets were contracted; thus opening up gold mines in such arable land as could be put under ditches. But, to keep the price of production at a minimum and assure profits for both grower and factory, cheap labor was essential. For that reason, the family system of contract labor was adopted. The head of the family contracted to care for the beets at so much an acre. His whole family worked. Germans were brought in from Kansas and Nebraska, new immigrants came from



Russia. Very few of those families made over six hundred dollars per year from the beets, and very few of the families had less than six members. Many families did not make more than four hundred dollars. Standards of living were deplorably low.

Again, the difference was money. Seeking security, the German, the Slav, the Russian, saved most of the scanty wages with the idea of renting and then buying land. The immigrant soon made everything subservient to the one purpose, the accumulation of wealth in lands and in money. Bodily health, spiritual and mental vigor, comfort meant nothing. The larger the family the more beets could be cared for. Women were prized according to their breeding capacity. The Europeans were a prolific people, but infant mortality was high.

Miss Alice felt that in Ivan had been instilled the worship of money as a symbol of power and of equality and freedom, as in those others. But she saw in him an opportunity to build a crusader for the true values of life. She could break down this money worship, teach him the true place of money in the scheme of things. She would make of him a crusader who might free his people from bondage. She would teach him that the true way to full and abundant life was through truth and beauty, and that the value of money was only in making possible such a life.

"Never, never forget, Ivan, that the beauty of those distant mountains, of the green fields when the water lies on them, of the very images that you build in your mind, are of more worth than all



the gold that man can acquire. Oh, Ivan, it will be hard, but do not let them break you, make an unimaginative machine of you. God didn't mean that man should be that. Man was made for life, and his rod and staff are truth and beauty. Do not fear rebellion if it is in the cause of truth."

The picture of his father flashed before Ivan; Nicholas, as he towered over him in wrath demanding that he use the German tongue, denying him the right to attend school; and, in the boy heart, valor to oppose this autocrat waxed strong.

Quickly the months passed. The Master Alchemist had added the last ingredient in the mixture of spatial and temporal relations of sun and earth that brings spring to Colorado. All winter the great state lay dormant. With the spring, a mighty stirring came, a pulsing of new life, a resurrection.

Spring, dropping one by one her days, beckoned to summer. The heights of the Rockies, shrouded in misty veils that drooped like bridal garments over the virgin white peaks, shimmered under the sun-rays that pierced the clouds, and lifted the snow blanket higher and higher from the forested slopes. Crystal clear streams hurried to join their brothers in the valleys. On forgotten trails, bearded prospectors, answering the never silent call of adventure and gold, urged forward lazy pack mules. Old lumber camps



threw off their lethargy, and new sites were marked. Mining camps took on new vigor. The hum of industry sounded everywhere in the far off places. The pines retained their brilliant greenness, aspen buds tugged at their coverings, shrubs, naked for the winter, put forth their tender shoots and leaves. The columbine, choral bells, mints, hairbells, and numerous snow flowers nodded on the lower slopes. Mountain jays flitted from tree to tree calling their greetings. The tinkle of cow bells sounded higher and higher as the snow line retreated.

Spring had come to Colorado, everywhere was the stir of life. The foreign colonies that hovered on the edges of the towns were stirring--Japanese, Mexican, Russian-German; yellow, brown, olive. The huts, shanties, shacks, and adobies belched forth their human stuffing. Lean dogs nosed through thawed garbage by low doors.

Before the Russo-German shacks, piles of rags and frayed bedding lay in the sun or hung on improvised clotheslines. Heavy women shoveled the winter's accumulation of ashes from floors into the paths that skirted their buildings. Shutters were torn from the half windows that the spring sunshine and wind might enter and purify the dead air. Children raced at tag, hopskotch, and 'wolf,' or fought and brawled until 'boxed' and jerked home by older sisters and brothers. Babies rolled and waddled about the pathways between the shacks, tasting, spitting, drooling. Men squatted in groups, their guttural voices rumbling from whiskered depths.



In the valleys, thrifty farmers prepared their fertile fields for garden and cereal crops. At night, the air crisped with the sting of chill breezes. Frost spars crusted the rims of shallow pools. But the noon-day sun warmed and mellowed air and earth.

Then the water filled the irrigation canals. Ivan was on the steps of the school house when Miss Alice arrived. His eyes were starry, his cheeks flushed.

"Miss Alice, the water is in the ditch. I saw it this morning. It rushed down, shwumm, shushhh, shwumm. It hurried to catch up with the wet it made in front of it. Big foam was on it. It tumbled thistles, leaves, grasses, over and over. Sometimes it pushed them aside." His hands and arms waved in his efforts to dramatize his tale. "Oh, I love that water, like I love you. I wish I could catch it in my arms like you."

His eyes sparkled and danced as he rushed upon her.

"Sensuous, sensuous," she shook her head as she bent to kiss him. He was so eager for her caress. Then holding his pale face between her hands, she asked, "Chicco mio, don't you ever laugh? Even in joy, you are silent."

They rushed gaily about getting things ready for the day. Ivan struggled with his excitement. The hours dragged slowly forward. The noon hour passed, he was back in his seat. He held his book before him, tried to read, but the printing faded. A strange hum filled the room. Then the figures in the picture on the page moved,



stretched their limbs. One that looked much like Ivan walked across the sheet.

Ivan heard it call, "Hello, how are you? Do you know who I am?"

He answered, "Sure, you are Ivan Smirnov."

The figure retorted, "You're wrong. I am King Midas. See, everything I touch turns to gold." The little creature walked off the page onto the desk. "See my footprints!"

Ivan peered at them. Each tiny footprint was gold, "They are gold."

"Yes. See your desk."

"It is gold. Oh, my father will like me if I bring you with me. Then he can have gold, and although I am littlest, I will give him most moneys."

"First I am going to turn Miss Alice to gold." The tiny one started away.

"No! No!" Ivan called. "I want her just as she is."

"You can't have her that way. She shall be gold."

"No," Ivan snapped, "I will chase you back in the book." A struggle followed in which Ivan seemed to lose his identity. He was Robin Hood. He was calling, "I will save Miss Alice. My sword! my trusty sword!" The battle raged, but Midas drew closer and closer to Miss Alice.

Then Ivan cried aloud, "Don't let him touch you, Miss



Alice! Don't let him touch you!"

Silence followed his cry. A deep flush dyed his cheeks. Then a titter of laughter ran over the room. Startled and humiliated, Ivan buried his face in his arms.

"That's all right, Ivan. Sand man just got you. Come, everyone to work," Miss Alice called.

But Ivan was disgraced. When school was dismissed, he slipped from the room without stopping to speak to anyone. He hurried along the road. Then a small inner voice began nagging him. What would Miss Alice think because he hadn't said good night? Why had he run away? She had thought he was asleep and dreaming. He turned from the road, crossed the field and climbed the bank of the irrigation ditch. There he wandered along picking up handfuls of dirt, casting it into the water, watching the ripples.

He didn't want to think about what had happened; he didn't want to think about running away. He tried playing he was George Washington; then he was an Indian scout. But it didn't do any good, that inner voice kept calling, "You ran away, you ran away."

The sun hovered at the horizon before Ivan neared the Smirnov shack. But he didn't go to the house. He lay on the ditch bank trying again and again to maintain the part of the hero that he would make himself. He had been Uncas the last of the Mohicans, Robinson Crusoe alone on an island, Achilles on his chariot. These self-centered heroes were often engaged in weird conflict and



occupations because they were often just names.

Dusk had fallen as he hurried to the 'dobe.' He was at peace with himself. In the morning he would tell Miss Alice that he was sorry he had run away, that he was not dreaming really, just making pictures. His heart lightened, and a smile curved his lips.

Nicholas met him at the door, a scowl on his face. "Where have you been? Lucky it is this school foolishness is over. Tomorrow there is a job for you near the colony. You will forget this idleness. To bed with you, for in the morning you leave early."

"I can't tomorrow, I have to tell Miss Alice."

"What you got to tell Miss Alice? You tell her nothing. You set out the onion and the cabbage."

Ivan stood stricken and silent. Then he turned back toward the bank. He had run away; now he would not see Miss Alice again.

"Where you going? Get into the house," Nicholas called.

Ivan did not hear. He climbed the bank; squatted, peering into the water; tears brimmed in his eyes, overflowed and ran down his cheeks. The refrain beat in his thoughts, "I won't see her any more. She won't think I am dear."

From the door, Nicholas glowered; surprise and anger conflicted. He saw Ivan leap to his feet, stare about him,



then start down the bank. The boy was not coming to the house. Anger filled Nicholas. The whole injustice of the school filled him with indignation.

"Ivan!" he shouted.

Ivan stopped. "Where do you go? Get into your bed. What do you do?"

"I go to Miss Alice." Ivan's jaw set as he answered.

"You come into this house." Nicholas moved forward. Ivan hesitated an instant, then ran.

"Ivan, come back here. I say, come back." But the boy did not stop. A moment Nicholas looked after him, then followed. He muttered as he ran, "The imp of the devil, that school has an evil spell on him. That comes of using good money for that. He shall be taught a lesson."

Nicholas caught the suspenders of the fleeing boy. Ivan kicked and threshed, crying, "I must tell her. She will think bad of me. Let me go." He sobbed, striking, kicking, biting.

"You will disobey me?" the curses of the man and the cries of the boy mingled. When he had vented his anger, and Ivan no longer struggled against the blows, Nicholas grasped him by the collar and jerked him along to the house. Long, hopeless sobs racked the boy. Nicholas shoved him in the door. "Never try that again. I will beat you within an inch of your life."

The next morning, his body bruised and sore, his eyes



red and swollen, Ivan shuffled the four miles to the truck farm where the six Smirnovs were to work. Nicholas's guttural warning followed them, "Be sure you get your money. And mind you bring every piece back with you."

Ivan slunk behind the others. No attention had been given him, but he was sure each of them was thinking about him. He wanted to tell them just why he had acted as he did, wanted them to know the truth, to know that Nicholas was wrong. The fear that he was being criticized by them, perhaps laughed at, sent wave after wave of sick misery through him. But the uncertainty as to whether he could explain to them, convince them, held him silent. He rehearsed speech after speech; he was almost satisfied with one of them when Peter inquired, "How much coins will we have?"

"That is what I was wondering," Alex answered.

"Who can count them to know if we get them all? Father counts them always, but I haven't learned. If they were the Russian, I could," Karl was concerned as the eldest of the group.

Catherine and Ann made no comment. Ivan received a distinct shock. They had not been thinking about him at all. All they could think about was money. He could count their coins for them. He had learned to do that in school. But they would never think of that. They never paid any attention to him except to yell at him to work faster, or to push him around if someone wanted his place or something he had. He wondered what his brothers and sisters thought about.



He knew they didn't see pictures in the water because he had asked them about that, nor did they play war, or hero. He couldn't find anything they did think about. Perhaps Karl thought about the town, because sometimes he wanted to go there, but Nicholas would never let him. In the summer there wasn't time to want to do anything. The Smirnovs got up before the sun came up, and didn't quit work until the dark came. Then everyone wanted to sleep. In winter, when there was no work, sometimes they got tired of sleeping. Then the boys wrestled or whittled wood sticks. There were times when the boys bunched together, talking, but Ivan was always pushed out of these circles as being too little. It was man talk. Maybe it was man talk, but if he couldn't listen, he could read and none of them could.

Ivan was suddenly very lonely. He wanted to talk to those brothers and sisters, share this thought with them, find what theirs were. He turned to Catherine who worked next to him, "Catherine, what do you think about while you hoe?"

"Think?" she said vaguely, only having half heard.

"Yes, what is going on in your head when you hoe?"

"Nothing."

"But, Catherine, something has to. Always things are going round and round in your head. What do you think?"

"I said, nothing. When it is hot sometimes I wish it was cloudy, or it would hurry to be night. Sometimes I wish I had a new dress like the Kronkow girls. But not very often."



"But don't you wish you were not working, or you were pretty, or you had a palace, or you were a king, or you could do something so everybody would look at you and like you? Or don't you wish you could see fairies, or have someone love you? Oh, just lots of things. And while there are things up in front that you can just see, back behind are a lot of them running along that you can't keep up with."

"You better quit thinking like that, you will be crazy. You can't do all the things, so why think about them?"

"Why can't I? Do you ever want to run away from father? or hurt him like he hurts you?" He bent toward her, his eyes wide and frightened.

She looked up, startled. She scowled. "What are you talking about? He doesn't hurt you unless you need it. You do not obey him. He gives us food and clothes. What if he beat you, and starved you? See, he trusts us alone in the fields."

"But that is for money. He doesn't give anything to me. I earn it." Ivan's lips quivered.

"You shut up. You better not let anyone else hear you say that."

"What are you two doing?" Karl shouted, "You better get to work and shut up."

Ivan turned back to his work, defeated again in his efforts to know what went on in the minds of those about him. His



thoughts turned from those about him to the water people. With them he could talk; they gave him answers. Easier and easier, it became to shut out those unresponsive ones.

He was an instrument vibrating with every emotional fancy; he quivered with eagerness when happiness touched those about him; he cowered with fear when anger held them; yet he longed to strike blows when the hot blood surged in him. He wept in sympathy when sadness seized them. All the undercurrents of life swayed him. Moods of the outside world need not be expressed, he felt them; and his own mood was one with them, but all this turned in upon itself, enriching and deepening the resonance of the instrument, but muting the tones the world waits to hear.







Since the early morning, a mounting exhilaration had spread throughout the Smirnov family. Nicholas had burst forth in rambling disconnected words and sentences before the sun mounted to the zenith. In the pink of the morning, as they hurried to the field, the excitement had been among them; it was there as they saw the last star fade from the blue morning washed sky; as they saw the crimson dawn dye the east and reflect from the mountain peaks, bathing the fields about them in its rose glow; as they saw the foothills, black-blue, lighten to indigo, then to rose-traced purple; as they saw them claimed by green. It blazed within them as they heard a milch cow in her distant enclosure moo plaintively, a dog howl obedience to the new born day, a rooster crow his greetings to his harem. They were suddenly keenly sensitive to sight and sound about them. Through the long June day, faster and faster rose and fell their hoes. The sun played hide-and-seek with the woolly clouds, dappling the fields with shadows. Nicholas only grunted when Ivan tried to keep up with the rapidly moving shadow line. White thunderheads in their purity challenged snow sheets on the distant mountains. In the late afternoon, blue cloud masses mingled with blue earth masses in an ever-changing harmony. Again Nicholas only mumbled when Ivan stopped to watch the peaks appear and disappear, commenting that in the mountains there were showers. There were no reprimands today, though one of the Smirnovs dared to lift his eyes from the soil to see the glory of the skies.



Change was indeed upon the Smirnovs.

As the shadows of evening began to fall, the hoe strokes were short and quick. Gone was the easy swing, the sweeping slice of workers without aim or goal, of workers whose todays and tomorrows are one and the same. Muscles were tense, eyes glittered, teeth clenched, lips were close compressed. The chop, chop, step, of the hoers had a staccato rhythm; the step from plant to plant no longer left a shuffled trail; muscles drew the feet high, set them down quick and firm. When the Smirnovs reached the end of the row, Nicholas looked to the west. The long twilight was almost over, the dark would soon settle down. He looked back over the field, the six Smirnovs moved uneasily, waiting his directions. He turned to them uncertainly--Nicholas, who had never hesitated if it were possible to make one more stroke.

Alex shouted, "I'll race you to the other end."

A cry went up. Seven Smirnovs leaped to their rows, the contest began. Clop! clop! space! clop! clop! space! Nicholas's great strength went into each slash, deep and long were his strokes. Karl's stolidity, keyed to speed, tore great gouges into the soft dirt; Catherine and Ann, bewildered looks in their blank eyes, fumbled their strokes, missed ground, dropped farther and farther behind. Peter skimmed the top, shaving the weeds but failing to cultivate the porous soil. Alex's powerful and pliable muscles responded, and he forged ahead. Ivan, wide-eyed, his face marking the strain, the ten-



sion, the eagerness, chopped even with Alex, until his breath came in gasps, perspiration shone on his forehead and lip, his fingers cramped on the hoe, then relaxed and refused to close. Slowly and more slowly he moved, the broad beet hoe turning in his hands. Tears filled his eyes,--baffled, filled with rage, he stumbled along, forgetting he was still a youth among men. He remembered only that again in a contest with the Smirnovs he was failing. Thirteen years of age, he might have passed for ten, slender to the point of scrawniness, every muscle was a hardened cord. But tonight there was no jeering when Alex, having reached the end of his row, turned back to finish out Ivan's row. No one thought of calling him lazy tonight. Too intense was the excitement; too keyed the emotions.

As they made their way to the 'dobe,' they still must find outlet for their emotions in physical action. Peter and Alex raced, shoved, scuffled, and boxed with each other and all whom they came near. Nicholas, unbending for the moment, sent Alex whirling into Peter's arms where they balanced for a moment on the edge of a ditch, then tumbled together, shouting.

But the longest day ends. Around the old shawl squatted the Smirnovs; with them squatted Kronkow and a stranger. The stranger's fingers passed through and through the pile of coins. Ivan's fingers curved in response. Tonight that heap of coins was taking on new significance.

Ivan listened to the stranger talking to Kronkow,



then he listened to Kronkow translating into German. "He would have you bring the money to the bank."

Nicholas shook his head vigorously, "I will not take it one step. He said he would bring the paper for the land here, and get the money. There is the money. I want the paper."

Ivan looked at Nicholas with a feeling of shame, not unmixed with contempt. Why didn't Nicholas speak enough English to transact his own business? Instead of punishing Ivan when he talked in English, Nicholas better listen to the English and try to learn.

Then they were piling the coins. When the coins had been stacked, the stranger counted them into big canvas bags. The fruit of seven years of labor was stored in three canvas bags. The four years on the Kransky ranch had added coins quickly; the last two years the Smirnovs had rented beet land which they worked in addition to Nicholas's work and the beet contract at Kransky's.

As the stranger counted the last coins into the bag he said, "You Rooshins make me sick. Some day a bunch of you will be robbed, then perhaps you'll use the banks. One Russian I know, got cured. He had one thousand dollars hidden in a straw tick. While he was in town one day, his old lady decided to clean house. She started in the bed room. She took out all the straw ticks and emptied them, then hung the ticks on the line. She had gone into the house for a match when the old fellow came in sight of the house. He saw the ticks and knew what was happening. He saw the old lady come out of



the house and go toward the straw pile. I guess he gave his horse the surprise of his life. The old lady thought he was crazy the way he tore into that yard. She knew he was when she lighted the match, for he started yelling. He plumped into her, and sent her sprawling. Then he leaped into that straw pile on all fours. Before his wife could get out of the way, she was half covered. But he crawled out hugging that money bag. That cured him of hiding money around the house. He went to the bank with it that very afternoon.

Henry Kronkow dutifully laughed. "Have you heard this one? A German bought a farm. He paid thirteen thousand dollars for it. When he got ready to pay for it, he and his wife hitched up to the spring wagon, put a milk can in the back and drove to town. They went to the real estate office; carried the can in. Papa opened the can; it was full of moneys. The real estater and papa started counting. Mama was having a rock in the rocking chair. They finished counting. Papa said to the real estater, 'Nine thousand dollars?' The other fellow say to papa, 'Nine thousand dollars!' Papa rush over to Mama. 'Mama! Mama! there is only nine thousand. Vat is the matter?' Mama say, 'You is wrong. It is thirteen thousand. I count it myself.' 'But, mama, ve both count it.' Mama got up and looked at the can. She walk up to it, measure it on her leg. 'Ach! papa, put it back in.' She start stuffing in the money. Papa look at her, the real estater look at her. She smile at papa, papa smile at her. They take the can, carry it to the wagon, put it in, go home, go to the potato cellar, dig



away the straw, take out a bigger can, take it to the real estater. Papa and the real estater count it while mama rocks. It had thirteen thousand dollars in it."

The stranger gave Nicholas the paper on which Nicholas had marked a rude x. Nicholas sat very quiet until the stranger had gone. He answered Henry's questions in monosyllables until Henry, discouraged by his silence, also left. Then Nicholas hugged his knees and rocked back and forth, back and forth. His silence was broken; he guffawed, gurgled, chanted meaningless nothings of uncontrollable happiness. The circle looked on in wonder, grins on their faces.

Leaping to his feet, he shook the paper in the air; he let out a bellowing roar. Ivan felt the blood surge as he watched his father's mad whirl about the room, stamping, singing, yelling. Nicholas grabbed his sons and daughters one after the other, and whirled them until dizzy and unbalanced, each staggered to the wall when Nicholas released him. Then he strutted and swaggered from one end of the room to the other, crashing one wall then the other with his clenched fist.

He shouted, "I, Nicholas Smirnov, have my own land, already I have more than these Germans who were here when I came. I will show them! I will be rich. I will have money, land. Some day they will come to me, me! Nicholas Smirnov! the Russian! Didn't I tell you money gets everything?"

His shoulders squared, a great rumbling roar swelled



from deep within him, mounted louder and louder until the building trembled, until the ear drums revolted against it.

The exultation, the excitement, and the anticipation of the day left Ivan shivering and uncertain. He wanted to shout with his father, but also he wanted to weep. This last bellowing roar shocked him; bruised every tingling nerve; left him frightened, stunned. He fled from the hut, his hand crammed in his mouth to stifle the screams that rose in his throat. Something overwhelming, sinister, hovered over him; it was as though he looked into the depths of a black abyss where grotesque savage beasts snarled and fought, tearing at each other with long fangs while laughing great bellowing guffaws such as had come from the distorted face of Nicholas Smirnov.

He could not shut out the contorted faces of the Smirnovs as, dazed, they staggered against the walls from their father's arms. Ivan fled to the highest point of the bank, where he pressed himself close to the moist, cool earth, buried his eyes. The moon bathed him in her blue light; frogs croaked their night chorus. At last he lifted his head, and peered into the dark depths of the water. His troubled face grew calm; the lids were heavy. He was among his own people, the folks of his imagination trooped forth, his mother and Miss Alice, seemed very near. He whispered, "Money doesn't give you the mountains with the moon over them; it doesn't make the greenness of the fields, the lavender of the flowers. It doesn't give you truth and beau-



ty. Those are what I must live by."

The last summer and fall on the Kransky ranch was a panting half-real time. Into the Smirnov consciousness was deeply imprinted the knowledge that they were land-owners. It was a subtle force permeating every action, every thought. Until this time, there had been little feeling of permanence for the Smirnovs. True, with regular employment at Kranskys, there had come a feeling of safety, a certainty that coins would continue to pour in; but the Smirnovs were still strangers on a foreign soil; there was no sense of belonging. Coins can never give the feeling of dominance, of power, of importance, of reality that possession of land gives to the European. The Smirnovs were creatures of the land. Every Smirnov generation had lived hoping to really possess the land. No man appreciates the land until he has the feel of it, until he rejoices when it rejoices, suffers when it suffers, expands and blossoms when it expands and blossoms. Anticipation filled their work burdened days, until work was no longer a burden.

As the Smirnovs waited to complete the beet harvest before going to their new home, there was a new quality to their step. The plod took on a staccato beat, a quick-step rhythm. The curtain of dull existence lifted from the black beady eyes, a glow took its place. The faces, stolid, ugly, became distinctive in their animation. Antici-



pation brewed a potent elixir; tomorrow was no longer an abstraction, it was a beckoning reality.

Nicholas burst into the adobe the last week of August.

"Kransky will make the last water run this week. Soon the beets will begin to ripen."

Karl grappled with Peter and Alex. He was about to flood them when Nicholas leaped into the fray.

"The old man will show the striplings he is a match for the whole."

The three sons greeted him with a yell of delight. Bodies heaved; breaths came in gasps; muscles bulged under the strain. Karl was a young Hercules, but not yet had his muscles been trained to the long endurance of the older man; too, the three youths had wrestled fiercely together. Nicholas had not forgotten the tricks of his military days, nor of the days when he had held his place as strong-man against all comers while he led the free-booting serving men of Prince Marslov. Slowly but surely he tricked or tired out each youth, and threw him flat on his back on the packed earth where the vanquished one lay breathless, a dazed look on his face. Only Karl remained.

Ivan's face twisted with each effort, in empathy muscle swelled with muscle; yet he shrunk sickened by fear of physical hurt when a body hit the floor, when a hand slipped, leaving the long blood-marked scratch where it clawed for a new hold. The two girls



urged their favorite on to greater effort or booed a loser. At last Nicholas lifted Karl bodily from the floor and sent the threshing body crashing at his feet. Placing his foot upon the inert body, Nicholas lifted his right arm high, his mouth opened to let forth the shout of the victor.

Then he saw Ivan staring at him from a distant corner, "Ah, and here is one of my sons that is not in the fray. The little rabbit hides by his burrow. Out with you; join the fray; see what your muscles can do. Only the women stand by the walls when the male battles."

Crouching, he stalked toward Ivan, who, chilled by fear, though filled with the sympathetic excitement that combat puts in the veins of men, stood motionless. Nicholas grabbed him, lifted him into the air, carried him back to the center of the room. Then Ivan lay on his back on the palm of Nicholas's hand. His first impulse to struggle stilled as he looked up at the smutty ceiling. The fear of high places gripped him, the fear of falling sickened him; but against the impulse surged the desire to be one with this group, to lose his conspicuousness by vaunting bravery--bravery, while his blood ran as water, while perspiration stood out on him, while his clenched hands were cold. Happen what might, he had to win his father's plaudits. Slowly he straightened, stiffened. Nothing happened; the hand beneath him held steady. He whispered to himself, "My father will not let me fall. If I can act not afraid, he will not know;



he will think I am brave; he will claim me as son."

Careful to maintain his balance, he spread wide his hands and feet. Blood filled his veins, strained at every vessel; his head was full; his eyes bulged; he couldn't breathe; he must do something. He drew a deep breath; gave a wild yell, "Victory."

Nicholas, eyes starting in surprise, slowly lowered Ivan to his feet. Ivan, safe, felt the full horror of what might have happened had he fallen, felt the bones give under the impact, felt his breath driven from him. He staggered, caught his balance, bit his lips to keep back the tears. On the floor the three fallen wrestlers sat staring at him; by the wall, the two girls leaned forward with open mouths and round eyes. Nicholas stood with hands on his hips gaping, then he muttered, "I'll be damned."

When the beet harvest was over, Ivan would go into the new land, land that he had helped earn, with a new feeling. He had won the approval of his kind. In him grew a new savagery, a desire to smash and tear, to hurt and wound. During the long days of the beet harvest as he grasped the roots and shirred the leaves and crown, each blow of the curved knife gave vent to his fury. In him, grew the consciousness that he had conquered not only the antagonism of his family, but had conquered himself. No longer need his face show the timidity and fear that flooded him. He had a mask. Bouyed by this security, he actually met life with a new attitude. It angered him; he was bitter at the falsity around him; but he found life



tolerable. He ceased to be only the seeker; he began to demand.



BOOK TWO



We do what we must, and call it by the best names.

---Ralph Waldo Emerson.







From the ridge at the north of the Platte River, Ivan looked out over the valley stretching from east to west. The wheat and alfalfa fields made a green checkerboard. Black loam bands followed pigny men and teams. Silver ribbons marked irrigation canals running full of water. The new green of the trees marked the Platte. To his right the town of Fort Morgan thrust its towers and chimneys above the trees. Beyond the river rose the dune, gray-dotted prairie. Spreading ever to the south in a rising line, the prairie reached to the horizon. At long intervals gray ranch houses sprawled close to the ground; occasional windmill towers doubled themselves in mirages. Ivan had watched the ever changing panorama of this view through the seasonal changes for a year and a half, but he had not exhausted its lure.

The Smirnov's first winter in their new home had been a severe one. Cutting snows driven by bleak winds swept from the north over the irrigation canal, down on the little shack that squatted in one of the bends of the ditch. This dwelling of the Smirnovs was a clap-board shack, ten-by-twelve, with a half window on each side of the building, a door with a patched panel on the south, a stove-pipe with a rusted tin collar stuck through the north end of the roof. The inside was even more bleak than the exterior. A rusted monkey stove served for heating and cooking. A long pile of gunny sacks and rags kicked to one side in the day served as beds at night. The air was always foul with the steam of cooking beans, potatoes with their



jackets, soured cabbage, or none-too-fresh bones.

Immediately after the arrival of the Smirnovs on their own acres, Nicholas had begun work as a general laborer for Franz Alles, a ranchman whose ranch bordered the Smirnov land. It, too, was under the new Riverside ditch. He had taken the Alles beet contract for his family. Part of the time, Karl worked for Alles.

Nicholas found it more difficult to manage his own ranch, to provide and manipulate tools, to sow and reap his crops, and, at the same time, handle a beet contract and work full time for someone else than he had anticipated. There were times during the first summer, when Nicholas's face showed strain, but he muttered, "We've got to do it, it's money." During the thinning and blocking season, the white moon often looked down all night on the bent backs of the seven Smirnovs.

The pictures of that year mingled with all the past flashed on the screen of memory as Ivan, gazing before him, thought of the new experience that he was entering. It was a clear May morning. All the Smirnovs were scrubbing and brushing. Ivan's face still smarted with the rubbing. He looked down on the shack and the yard where Anne, more skillful with the scissors than the others of the family, acted as barber. Each man in turn, she seated on an upturned box. She haggled and gashed the coarse black hair to an even line at the nape of the neck; then she shortened it on the sides and front as best she could. Her long, whitish pink tongue circled her thin lips



in an effort to help the shears.

At that moment Alex shouted, "What you trying to do, pull my hair all out?"

"You, Alex, shut up. Can I help it that the hair slips between the blades?"

She chewed on with both her tongue and scissors.

"Now, say woman, you took half my ear that time."

He had jumped from the box.

Ann grabbed him by the suspenders and again pulled him down on the box.

"Will you sit still? I didn't hurt your ear. Anyway, I only scratched it. It is just red! it doesn't even bleed. If you make another move, I will leave your hair just as it is, one side long, one side short."

"And won't you the fine one be? Anne, I dare you leave it." Peter wiped his red face on the remains of an old shirt.

"Shut up, you, your turn is coming next. I hope she pulls yours out." Alex twisted to see Peter.

"Hold still, will you?" the irate woman beat on the broad shoulder with her clenched fist.

"Shut up, the lot of you. We will never get there if you keep squabbling." Karl put generous smears of sheep's fat on his coarse black hair, plastering it to his skull. The Smirnov men did not attempt to part their hair. It hung, lank and thick, as though



anchored at a central pivot.

"There, there, Karl. Did you ever hear of a wedding not waiting for the groom?" The air rocked with their guffaws.

Karl flushed a dull brick red. "Aw, shut up." But he was not displeased. He wore a bright blue suit. Its padded shoulders bunched high on the muscled frame. The double breast and fitted waist of the coat broadening an already broad frame. The pegged-top trousers emphasized the wide hips and failed to hide the bowed legs. The pointed toed reddish tan shoes squeaked with each step, and Karl swore every other step for the shoes pinched his toes. An orange and white pinstriped shirt, an orange tie, and an orange bordered handkerchief completed the ensemble.

Ivan joined the group. His black hair lay like spun silk accentuating the heart shaped face; the fine lines of his brows lifting to follow the almond eyes were sharp angles. He looked at Karl's brilliance in awe; this beau brummel brother held him spell bound. Ivan was excited, for that day Karl Smirnov was to marry Alexia Kronkow. The Smirnovs were all going to Kronkows for the wedding. Then Alexia would return with them. Ivan did not know just where they would put her, but the idea of a new person living among them stimulated thought. Too, it was Ivan's first social event. Since the Smirnovs moved north of Fort Morgan they had been invited to community gatherings and to the German gatherings, but Nicholas said they had plenty to do without chasing over the country.



Several months before, Nicholas had called Karl to him and said, "Karl, I have been too busy to notice you have a long time been a man. It is not good that a man live alone. It is time we find a wife for you. It is time you have sons to carry on when we are old. I will talk with Henry Kronkow tomorrow." The next day he had gone to Kronkows.

The men talked of many things, but Nicholas could not broach the subject that had brought him. Finally Kronkow said, "Nicholas Smirnov, what is it you would tell me? You are not the man who leaves off his own work, or stops the work of his neighbor to talk the talk that might be left until the holiday."

"It is so, Henry Kronkow. I again come to you for help. It is long past time that my son, Karl, should marry. But I am in a strange land; no other of my people is here. I do not care to send back to Russia for a wife to him. What would you have me do?"

"What you ask me, is not easy to answer. When there is no woman of a man's race, then it is hard indeed, but not as hard as when there is no man of a woman's race. Have you thought of a woman of my people?"

Nicholas bowed, "Yes, Henry, the women of your race are strong women, well able to bear men children; and they are trained to work and obey, but, if it is as it was in Russia, a woman of your race that would marry a man of mine would be an outcast from her people. Is it not so?"



Kronkow thought for a moment before he answered.

"Truly have you spoken, and I am not sure that the same will not be true in this country. We seek to keep our race clean from the taint of foreign blood, but you differ from your people, Nicholas Smirnov. You have dwelt in the colony of my people, and they have found your ways good; you have worked for my people; you speak the language of my people; you are a man whose word is honor. You are filled with the desire to accumulate goods for yourself that you may not be in want. It would be a shame to our people if they could not care for themselves, if they must depend on the charity of others, or must steal. Already you have land; you have strong hands to help you. In all ways you are like my people. There is no reason you should not be worthy of recognition." Kronkow patted Nicholas on the shoulder.

Nicholas threw back his fine shoulders. "You honor me, Henry Kronkow. I have nothing to be ashamed of in my blood. Russians have a great country. But yours have been a stiff necked people. When we lived in the same village in Russia, when we were at the same school, you suffered from your friendship with me."

"And you, Nicholas, know why it was. In Russia, always the Russian was envious of the German because we had privileges; we had money; we kept to ourselves. With all other peoples in Russia, you mingled, but we kept ourselves apart from you. We cast our girls from us if they make the love with the Russian, and if the German youth made the love with the Russian girl and married her; we took her from



her people, but we did not make her one of us. But, Nicholas Smirnov, you are not as a Russian to me, you are as my German brother. If you would wish it so, I will offer my Alexia as a wife to your son Karl. May God grant that my people forgive me."

"Henry Kronkow, no greater honor could you show me."

The two men embraced. Without speech, they stood for many minutes.

"Henry, with the setting sun, I will bring my son Karl to meet your daughter Alexia."

Karl's eyes had been eager as he watched his father's return.

Nicholas announced with pride, "I have found the woman. We will go tonight."

That night the betrothal was made. Kronkow and Nicholas bargained long.

Kronkow demanded, "What has your son to offer my daughter?"

Nicholas retorted, "His two strong arms and a willing back."

"Hump, what is that for a woman such as she?"

"It is enough. What has your daughter to offer my son?"

"To offer your son? Why should any full blooded woman offer your son anything? Remember, Nicholas Smirnov, I know the customs



of your people. The bride gives herself. The groom buys her wedding clothes."

Nicholas was nettled, "Henry Kronkow, I am a busy and an earnest man; I did not come here to bandy words; I came to make the settlement. Forget not, my comrade, it is you who mentioned your daughter when I told you I had come for your advice in choosing a wife for my Karl."

"And why did I mention her? Out of kindness to you. We have long been friends. It is to hold that friendship that I am thinking. For what better way is there than in mingling of blood? Do not forget that I may be cutting off my Alexia from her kind. The finger of scorn may be pointed at her. Not even for the sake of friendship, would I dare permit such a union were this not a new land, and there are many new ways."

"You are right, Henry, and I am glad that it is so, but my son shall give your daughter of his manhood, and he shall give her shelter. More than that no man can ask. He shall furnish music for the wedding feast, and he shall quench the thirst of the guests."

"My daughter shall receive him, and bring forth children to him, children that shall be a blessing in the strength of his manhood and a solace in his old age. What more can a man ask of a woman?"

"Have you forgotten so much of your homeland? Do you forget that the woman brings with her, her bedding and her bride's chest? You see, I know the customs of your land, my friend."

"Nicholas, have you provided bedding and a bride's chest



for your daughters? This is a new country, and every man struggles to live. It is not becoming that you remind me of my duty to my daughter."

"It is your daughter who is coming to a man, not mine. Mine shall be provided. I only regret you have no sons that I might give the pledge of my daughters to them."

"It is right, Nicholas. It gives me much sorrow that I have no sons. Cannot your Karl come to me? Be as my own son?"

"He is the first born, the strongest of all men. Besides, a man should not divide his house. It only weakens it, and helps not the home of his friend. A man's riches may be counted in his sons."

"It shall be as you say. To Alexia shall be given featherbeds, one to lie upon, and one to cover her, geese to the number of four shall she have, one pig she shall have that there may be meat for her in the first months. Few are the Germans, Nicholas, who have the geese and the pigs, but I find it good. Little thought we, when I came to stay in your village, that some day we should be sitting over a table in America betrothing our sons and daughters."

"Youth seldom thinks of the future, my friend." Long they talked and earnestly of the homeland. They talked of the changes in the village after their departure, of friends they had. One by one the Kronkow girls filed up the ladder to the sleeping loft, but the voices of the men droned on. Frau Kronkow nodded. Alexia and Karl sat



speechless, staring at each other in the far side of the room. Then Karl, chin sunk on his breast, slept noiselessly. Soft puffings and ploutings of her loose lips, told that Alexia also slept, though she sat upright in her chair.

To Ivan it seemed that May and the wedding day would never come.

It was high noon when the Smirnovs arrived. Already the yard had many wagons to which horses were tied <sup>w</sup>muching the feed that had been brought for them.

The factory had been running in Fort Morgan since 1906 and with it had come the Russo-Germans. Whether the Kronkows and Smirnovs had met all of them in the year they had been there made no difference; they were friends and must be at the wedding. Knots of men in overalls, in tight Russian coats, in custom made suits, in mail order suits, were gathered discussing the wedding, the crops, the regulations of the factory. The guttural German was broken now and then by an English word that had no equivalent in the German tongue, yet had become a part of their speaking vocabulary. Groups of women in broad-skirted, tight-waisted dresses, with fancy aprons tied around their ample waists and black silk shawls tied over their heads, talked with women dressed in the current styles of the period, home made and factory made. They talked of the bride and of the groom. Many lamented the passing of the old days--a father would deliberately betroth a daughter to a man of a foreign race, a Russian, unless--then there were



half guarded sidewise looks. No, that was not the case here. It must be for the sake of the old friendship; and Smirnov was a 'coming' man. Already he owned land; he worked that land and had steady work on the Alles ranch. The Smirnovs were good workers. Some questioned why Nicholas did not marry, he was not an old man, and he was a good figure. Eager were the tales of the beauty of his wife who had died. Was she a Russian? It was whispered there was much mongol blood, a slave girl trained for the imperial masters. But inevitably the talk drifted to children and their petty ailments, to the work of women. Remedies and recipes were traded.

Children darted in and out among their elders, among the horses and wagons, a screaming, chattering, yelling, tagging, fighting, teasing horde. Young men, clownish in their self-consciousness, approached young women who appeared innocent of the male presence until one girl more bold than the rest, with a sudden start and high giggle, gasped, "O-o-h, are you here?" The ice broken, soon they were joking, laughing, playfully scuffling, participating in mock quarrels. The male, deep voiced, boasting, strutting; the female, preening, twisting, giggling; young animals under the guise of play, sought the answer to life. Those youths would not have to wait as long as Karl for their mates, nor would they wait as docilely.

Nicholas and Henry moved forward together. As the bride and groom stood before the minister, their attitudes were as they had been throughout the courtship. Alexia, unstirred by what was happen-



ing, was docile, passive, calm, receptive. Karl was restless, flushed, eager with the urge of passion long restrained.

Rough boards covered with paper had been placed on jacks in the yard, and the food piled on them. At one end, were the kegs of beer. After the ceremony, Kronkow pounded on an old tub, and everyone flocked to the tables. Each family brought its own mug, plate, and spoon. The bride and groom led the line, Karl's voice shrill with emotion, the bride comfortably grunting at his digs and pinches as they heaped their plates. Soon everyone was eating and drinking. Time after time, the revellers refilled their plates and mugs. Loud and free were the laughter and jokes. Square, squat women waddled from kitchen to table and back to the kitchen again, bearing piles of food, renewing the table. Only Ivan did not eat and did not drink. He was too excited. His eyes glowed; his cheeks were white; his lips were parted, as he drifted from group to group, never smiling, never speaking, listening, listening. Children had tried to draw him into their games, but he hung back. A friendly woman pushed him toward the table, but he drifted aside. He did try to eat a roll, but he could not swallow it.

Then some one stole the bride's shoe. Alexia laughed, "My shoe, Karl, my shoe, someone has stolen it from my foot."

The Smirnovs were on their feet to a man, black threatening looks mingled with a certain stupefaction. How could one steal a woman's shoe? But quickly the smiles returned. Henry explained it was a custom of these German peoples. Soon the culprit had the



shoe up for sale to the highest bidder. The money, he laid before the bride. Again and again, the shoe was sold. At last, glowing and happy, a heap of money before her, the bride stooped to replace the valuable shoe.

Henry Kronkow cried aloud, "Mama, where is Alexia's pillow?"

It was handed to him. He quickly took it to Karl. "Here, Karl, dent this pillow with that fist of yours. The deeper the dent, the deeper these fellows have to go in their pockets."

Karl grinned, doubled his fist, "I hope the fist does not go through so thin a pillow."

Then he plunged his fist into the yielding feathers. The pillow passed from hand to hand, each man dropping his contribution to the bride's fee into the hollow. Many jokes accompanied the coins until at last the dent was filled.

The creak of the fiddle bow across loose strings and the wheeze of the accordeon brought the idlers to their feet.

"I have the first dance with the bride."

"No, I spoke to her the day of the announcement."

"You are slow, I put in my bid when I thought I would be the best man."

"I pin a five dollar bill on the bride, does anyone raise that?"

"You win, I want to dance with her more than once."



Calling, Challenging, scuffling, mingled with the shouting of children and the stamping of the horses.

Soon to the high screeching tones of the violin and the whine of the accordian, both old and young whirled in mazurka's, polkas, schottiches and square dances. As keg after keg of the brew was emptied the dance grew faster, the laughter louder, and the jest broader. Every man scrambled to dance with the bride, and each pinned his bill on her dress, or dropped his coin in the reticule that hung at her belt.

The groom was generous, "Sure you dance with her. Sure, cause I have the last dance." The yard rang with cheers.

The bride had lost her blank indifference. Her eyes burned, and two red spots rode on her round cheeks as she dipped and whirled flirting her numerous skirts until the white hose showed above her high laced shoes. If, in the excitement, a too ardent dancer demanded his right to kiss the bride, she turned eager eyes to her husband, who magnanimously granted the request. Then another bill was pinned to her dress.

When it grew dark, flares were lighted and the eating, drinking, and dancing went on. Kronkow and Nicholas leaned on a nearby wagon wheel watching the melee of the dancers. Satisfaction filled both their faces.

"That son of yours has a way with the women. There will be no trouble in his family." The father of the bride dug an elbow into Nicholas's ribs.



"That girl of yours is the mate for any man." Nicholas's eyes traveled over her as they had many times before. To build his family he must watch carefully. He noted again the strong thighs and muscled arms with their promise of untiring power, the broad hips that meant easy births, the full breasts that gave promise of nourishment for her young. Usually her eyes were soft and gentle as the eyes of cattle. She never chirped nor sang, and she never cried. Silently, quietly, unceasingly from the early daybreak to the night, she plodded her way.

Nicholas sucked in his breath. "Henry, there will be many children. Children means more labor; more hands to work means I can care for more land."

Why had he not thought of that before? There were Peter, twenty, and Alex, nineteen. He must find wives for them. Karl might have had a son old enough for the fields if he, Nicholas, had not been so busy with his money-getting that he forgot boys became men.

His friend broke into his reverie. "Why don't you take a woman? There are plenty who would have you. You are not an old man."

Nicholas's face darkened. "You forget Tamzie. A man does not lay with a woman like that, and ever take another. You did not know Tamzie."

"No. Word of her came, but you, my friend, have never spoken."



"It was on a feast night after a wedding that I met Tamzie. I was a restless one then, as you know. I was the strongest man on the estate or in the village. I could lift a mill wheel myself. We had been dancing all the afternoon when someone shouted the traders were coming. You know they used to come through in the spring, and go back in the fall. They were always a gay lot of thieves, so we called them in. Soon their fires were glowing; pots of food were hung over them. The men were in groups bickering and trading. They had several girls with them. Our village was too poor for them; they were for the army officers or the government officials. Our women gathered about their women, examining their clothes, trading recipes, and talking as women will. In the evening, we all mingled together, dancing, drinking, and jesting. They had their strong man, and many times I was hard put to hold my own against him. Then it was whispered that in the wagon of the chief was a beautiful woman who had not joined the revels. Of course, everyone was curious. After much urging, the chief brought her out. Her face was pointed like a heart, her hair was longer, softer and blacker than any in our group, her eyes were shaped like almonds, and her brows were black lines lifting at the corners. She was slender like the wheat stalk, and moved like the grass in the wind. Her eyes were not bright beads as our women's, but soft like darkness. Her lips were scarlet. I had drunk much vodka, eaten much meat, danced long, and wrestled with many. My blood was hot in my veins! The sight of the woman filled them to bursting. The chief commanded her to dance. A



little sigh came from the depths of her. It blew over me, and fanned the smoldering fire to a consuming blaze. She danced, and, as she danced, the moonlight in her eyes watched the circle of hungry ones about her, then her eyes met mine, went away, and came back. She danced ever closer and closer to me, I could stand it no longer, I walked out to her and held out my hand. She put her hand in mine. It was little and soft. I feel it there today. We finished her dance together. The trader chief scowled. When we stopped, he took her arm to pull her away, but she drew back, and pressed close to me. Our host insisted that the chief let her dance. The chief mumbled she was not for peasant swine, but we danced. Before the night ended, I asked the chief for Tamzie. We bargained. He wanted much for her, and I had little to give. I was heartbroken. She vowed she would die if she could not stay with me. Then I went to Prince Marslav. We understood each other; we could be mutually helpful. The next morning the caravan went on without Tamzie. She was mine.

"She has been dead these many years, but she is in here," Nicholas crossed his hairy arms over his broad chest, "she is like the fever in the blood, burning forever."

"Strange, Nicholas, none of your children should be like her, unless it is this one." Kronkow pointed to Ivan who stood a few paces away. Ivan had heard the story of his mother from Nicholas's lips. She had been beautiful; she was like the moonlight and the sunlight; she did whirl in the dance; she was sweet and soft and lovely.



Ivan had sometimes doubted about the dream woman, but now he knew. He bent forward eagerly to hear his father's reply.

"Yes, strange they are not like her, when I would have had them hers for memory. But had they been, perhaps I would have hated them; for I could never forget, and they could not be her."

Suddenly he turned to Ivan; he stared at him as one who looks at a face he should remember. His voice quivered, low and deep, "Perhaps it is she. He is different from the others."

For a moment, joy flooded Ivan. He was like Tamzie; then the 'different' echoed and reechoed. Suddenly he was tired, frightened, repelled by the noise about him. He yearned for the peace of the water, idly rippling in the ditch; the woman would be waiting. He fled into the night.

When there was no more to eat, no more to drink, the wedding feast ended. Karl brought the bride home. Her feather beds he placed in a corner prepared for them. He loitered outside the shack while the others made ready for the night. In the shack Alexia slumped wearily on a box. She watched with dull eyes the shadows where Catherine and Ann were undressing. In another corner Nicholas, Peter, and Alex pulled off the new overalls, and crawled into their old.

Finally Alexia spoke, "Where is the curtain?"

No one spoke for many minutes; all sound was suspended in the dark shack. Into that silence, Ivan walked.

Nicholas answered, "There is no curtain. We are a



family."

The undressing and dressing proceeded. Alexia became part of the shadows where the featherbeds lay. There were shuffles and sighs as weary bodies were stretched and settled. Then one by one the sleepers were marked by deep breathing and snores. Only Ivan lay and listened. Ivan, watching the doorway, saw Karl enter; a gleam of white for a moment between darkneses, he then became a part of the shack's dusk. There was an inarticulate grunting as Karl slid in beside the drowsing Alexia. The day was ended, loneliness settled its veil over Ivan. Slowly tears came washing away the mystery of the day and the night. As the motion exhausted mind slipped into unconsciousness, the dream woman reached out her hand and led him into cool and peaceful paths beside sparkling streams of water.

The year following Karl's marriage was a jumbled one in Ivan's memory. The constant labor from which there seemed no hour of relief left him weary to the point of exhaustion. More and more his thoughts turned to the constant struggle for money and land. For him there was no thrill in the knowledge that the old shawl filled and emptied to pay more on land. Coins did not stir him; he had lost the feeling that seemed to fill the other Smirnovs. He wondered if he could hold the coins himself, if he would react as he had in past years. He wanted to possess coins for himself; perhaps, he could find joy in them again.



Alexia also brought new thoughts, new appreciations. In the shack were crude chairs, a table, a cupboard, and outside were many more geese, some chickens, more pigs, a garden and a well. Nicholas complained when part of her bride's fee was used for a well. But Alexia could not keep things clean when water must be brought from Alles'. So a new atmosphere had grown up about the shack. Above all things, there was order. Wherever Alexia moved, order followed. Ivan began to make comparisons, first between Catherine and Ann and Alexia, then between the Smirnovs and the Kronkows. Alexia told him of houses in which she had worked. Some of the Germans were getting better homes; for instance, the minister and the butcher in the town.

It was not only in the house that Alexia worked. She was in the field day after day with Karl. When the day was done, she bustled about cleaning, feeding, making benches, cupboards, shelves. Ivan, although too weary to know or care much about the significance of things, helped her. If he questioned why, he always answered, why shouldn't he? She made his physical being more comfortable. Even the food was more palatable although long hours of scolding and nagging failed to make Catherine or Ann into cooks.

Although Alexia made life more endurable for Ivan, he was more conscious and more ill at ease under Nicholas's constant stare. Nicholas, who still worked at Alles' ranch, seemed more gloomy and aloof. In him were signs of change. Coins no longer loosened his tongue. He dropped them solemnly, one by one. When the Smirnovs



squatted together in the circle around the shawl, a chill settled over Ivan as his father's eyes slowly began to circle the group. When they came to him they slid off as their glances met. Then Nicholas's fingers would clutch deep into the coins. Ivan's eyes dilated. Could Nicholas read his thoughts? Did Nicholas know Ivan wanted to kick the pile apart, dash them at him, take what he believed was rightfully his? Again their glances would meet, lock, then both shift.

But Ivan was gripped in a new excitement before the spring came. Karl hauled rough boards from the town and began building an extra room on the shack. Alexia was using the last of her bride's fee. All hands helped with the building. Henry Kronkow worked with the Smirnovs. There was the sound of sawing and hammering from the early morning until the dark. In a few weeks it was done. A bed was brought into the Smirnov house for the first time. On it was placed Alexia's bedding.

The room was hardly finished when all of them were back in the fields. Alexia, heavy with child, labored from dawn until dark, but her face was drawn until the last task was finished. Ivan watched her with a puzzled frown on his white face. When the shack was still, except for the breathings and mouthings of the sleepers, Ivan awakened to see her by the light of the kerosene lamp bending over yards of white cloth. One night, he rose silently, and went to stand beside her. He was embarrassed; he could not find words. Suddenly, as he watched her, she seemed much alone, far from him. When her eyes lifted



and looked into his, they were weary.

"Alexia," he timidly laid his hand on her arm, "why do you not go to your bed? Your face tells me you are very weary."

Her head and shoulders drooped; her hands lay limp in her lap, brown, rough hands on the soft white cloth. The fine stitches in the tucks and hems seemed too minute to come from such hands. Then she whispered, as if too tired to raise her voice, "These must be done. Go back to your bed, Ivan. It is well with me."

When he had gone back, he heard a deep sigh, then the cloth was lifted and the work went on. As Ivan drifted into sleep the face above the white cloth faded, and in its place was the dream woman's.

As spring advanced, the Smirnovs grew tense. Then one morning Nicholas spoke, "I think you will not go to the fields, Alexia."

Morning after morning, Nicholas and Karl looked inquiringly at her before they left for the fields. She shook her head, and they turned away, apprehension in their eyes. One day Nicholas spoke low to Karl, "Do you suppose it is because she was not married by the priest?"

"Henry Kronkow says his minister is as good as any priest. Besides, the evil fortune has not placed sickness on her. Her mother says it is often that way with the first born."

"Let us hope so, but she is long from the fields."



"She will gladly go," Karl answered proudly.

The spring rains had not come; the snow on the mountains was light; the free water run was the shortest in years. Then one afternoon late in May, the clouds rolled high. Black and threatening, they were torn apart by vivid flashes, and, as the ugly gashes closed, the earth trembled with the reverberations of the thunder. High above the earth, the moaning wind mingled with the thunder, but on the earth was sultriness. Chickens no longer chased grasshoppers, but huddled with drooping wings and open bills around their roosts; dogs whined, slinking with lolling tongues and hanging tails, close to their masters; cattle bunched by fences, mooing uneasily.

Ivan, child of the soil, quivered with the uncertainty of nature. Far in the distance, he heard the whine of the wind as it swooped down on the earth, and in it there seemed to come the whine of a woman in pain. He dropped his hoe and raced toward the shack. Looking back over his shoulder, he saw the plowed earth lifted up by the rushing wind, and swirling dust clouds thrown aside. At the door of the shack he paused for breath. Within he heard the low moaning and frightened jibbering of a woman who, for the first time, hovers at the edge of the abyss into which every woman must enter who brings forth life. He thrust open the door.

"Alexia, what is it?"

"Call my mother, my time is upon me." The great arms closed around the protruding belly, lifting it, hugging it to her as a paroxysm of pain dragged another groan from her.



The wind clutched the shack, then released it, leaving it quivering. Ivan hurried out. In his ears rang the groans of the woman. Stabs of thought pierced his memory; questions flashed on the screen of his consciousness. Did the woman of the water, the dream woman, Tamzie, moan like that before he could live? The rain began to fall, first in scattered drops flattening in the dust with a muffled plop; then in a steady beat, and at last in a driving pour. Ivan hurried on unheeding. Miss Alice, Tamzie, money, land, toil--his temples throbbed, unshed tears stung his eyes, but thought pounded mercilessly.

Tamzie, Alexia, have much pain, then something lives --Alexia cries like animals that are hurt, killed--pain--pain--Tamzie died--Alexia might die--pain that there are lives, lives that there is money, money that there is land--lives that there is money--something suffered that something else might be--sacrifice, that was what Miss Alice had called it--Tamzie, then I am here, work, work, work so that there will be more money.

Grief, fear, bitterness, engulfed him. He shivered under the pour of rain. It caught at his thin clothes, beat him, chilled him. But somewhere out of the storm, the dream woman came very close; the fear of life and the bitterness that dwelt deep in his heart drifted farther and farther and farther away.

The driving rain ceased, the drops were fewer and fewer, then stopped; a rainbow rose out of the northern horizon, lifted over the firmament and ended in the river to the south. Through its



prismatic colors shone the trees, the distant horizon. Where it disappeared in the river, the dream woman lifted white arms. The fear left Ivan; aesthetic joy filled him. Beauty once more laid claim upon him.

When Ivan returned to the shack with Mrs. Kronkow, everything was in confusion. The rain had stopped work so everyone was at home. As Ivan and Frau Kronkow stopped, there was a loud cry. Karl came from the shack.

"I think she is needing you."

Ivan shivered by his father, "Can she stop the crying?"

Nicholas looked down at the boy. "You do not know much of births, my son. The crying does not hurt her. It is better so. Who would have thought she would take on so. It is not good that you know so little of life. In Russia, you would have known of mating, of birth, and of death. It would have been all around you. Here you are too much alone."

Ivan slunk away. He knew of mating, that was in his own home, but of birth and death he knew nothing.

Then night closed in. Ivan had not long listened to the snores and deep breathing cut from time to time by moans from the built-on room, when Frau Kronkow hurried in, stumbling over the legs of a sleeper in the darkness. Scolding, commanding, she drove the Smirnov men from the shack. Catherine and Ann were in the room of the sick woman. Nicholas, Peter, and Alex rolled themselves in



their covers on the ground not far from the shack. Karl sat on the steps, his head against the jam, and soon slept. But Ivan hovered about the shack, first near Karl, then beneath the window in the built-on room. Again and again he circled the building. In the early dawn, the moans ceased with one loud cry. Ivan, shivering with uncertainty, pressed close to the building. He heard a thin cry. The old woman called from the door.

"You can come in. It is a boy."

In the dim light of the lamp Ivan saw her wrapping a wizened red and wrinkled form in a blanket. Ivan stared, it was an ugly squirming and twisting thing, yet the old lady fussed over it, talking tender nothings.



## II



With the birth of Nicholas, Karl's son, a new element had come into Ivan's life. Many nights while he lay on the bank in the flood of white moonlight too weary to move, too weary even to return to the shack, the water pictures almost ceased to be pictures. The figures seemed in the air about him and, with them, was always the baby. His thoughts came back to the baby again and again. He watched him kicking and mewling. He watched those around him. No one ever paid any attention to him. Some of the Smirnovs, usually Ivan, carried him to the field in the morning; fastened a cord to his waist band that he might not roll into the water ditches. It was Ivan who fixed a shelter for him. At night someone carried him home, and laid him on the rags in the shack or on the ground while the meal was cooked in the blackened kettle that hung over the open fire. From time to time Alexia lifted the child to her overful breasts, or in the field, knelt beside him, letting the breast hang to him as the four-footed beast. Ivan alone seemed to have any active reaction to him. He wanted the child to be recognized. He called the attention of member after member of the family.

"Alexia, Nicholas knows me. See, he watches me when I move around the room. See, Alexia. Aw, why do you not look?"

"Yes, Ivan, I see."

"At first I wondered if he would sleep always. Alexia, why did he stare so, and yet he looked like he didn't see anything. You could walk right past him, and he didn't pay any attention."



Ivan continued walking about the room watching the child's eyes follow him. "Alexia, why don't you hold him?"

"Why should I hold him? He isn't crying."

Ivan stooped over the baby, lifted him and held him close. When he laid him down, the baby smiled. "Oh, Alexia, he smiled. He is so soft and round. Do you not like the feel of him? See! He holds my finger so tight. Little shivers go all over me from him." He rubbed his cheek against the baby's bare chest.

"He is a good baby. He never cries. My sister cried all the time. What a bother she was," Alexia answered.

"When he is undressed like this, the curves of him, the softness of his skin, or something about him, makes me think of the clouds across the moon, of the water moving slowly in the ditches, of cool grass, or of soft rain. I love him. Whatever is in him that is like all those things, is what Miss Alice said money cannot buy. Alexia, you should hold him, love him. Little babies like to be held up close to someone. A baby shouldn't just be to all of us like this room or these rags we sleep on, or the clothes we wear. Tamzie held me, now I can have pictures of her. He should be just yours, so he knows nothing is just like him to you, that you love no one as much as him. I don't know what it is, but he should be one by himself, everyone should be one by himself; being liked in bunches doesn't make you shivery."

"Ivan, where do you learn all that talk? You are not like a little boy at all. But you must not spoil him. Talking is



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no good."

Ivan was silent but in him had grown dissatisfaction at the eternally being dealt with as a group, being ignored as an individual. If he had been permitted a normal outlet, the fancy world of his childhood would have been absorbed in the interest of adolescence, his ego would have received the proper inflation and he would not have rebelled. But he was without outlet for either thought or emotion. Nicholas, Ivan was sure, was always brooding over him, sinister and stern. Karl was absorbed in work; Peter and Alex were sufficient for themselves. That left only the women with whom Ivan could talk. He had long given up trying to ask Catherine and Ann questions. Alexia would talk to him, but she was so practical. Dreams did not enter into her interpretation of life. One must think in terms of facts.

The rest of the Smirnov men worked about the community, and made outside contacts, but Ivan was bound to the Smirnov acres. His size was a handicap. Week after week, Karl, Peter, Alex, and Nicholas brought home coins. Even Ann and Catherine brought in coins from time to time. But Ivan never had the opportunity, never contributed to the pile. But he knew what his work meant; he knew its value in coins. He had laboriously figured it out. To have coins of his own became something of an obsession. Day after day, he thought about it, planned it, saw himself reach into the pile in the old shawl and claim his handful. He had to have coins.

One day as Karl and Ivan hoed in the field, Ivan



kept thinking of money.

"Karl, do you want money?" he burst forth as they worked.

"We have money."

"I mean for you, do you not want a bundle of money yourself?"

"It is mine."

Ivan stared at him, "You mean you could take money from the shawl and spend it?"

"No, you dull one, you know only father can take--"

"Then it is father's. It is not yours. You cannot buy a shirt for yourself, or a-a-a book."

"Why should I, Does not father buy all that I need?"

"But I want my own coin. I want to carry it in my pocket."

"And lose it? Your head is not right." Karl started, dropped his hoe, grabbed Ivan, "Have you been taking coins?"

Ivan tore free, a red flush spreading to his hair.

"No, but they are some of them mine, and I hate them in that old rag."

Karl stared after him, doubt still on his face, as Ivan hurried away to the opposite side of the field. Ivan hoed savagely, muttering, "The fool--he knows nothing but labor--Miss Alice had her own coins--father thinks he can be Prince Marslov if he gets land enough --I could be Prince Marslov, I could be anybody, but I am the only one. I am pretty--I will have money."



Slowly, more slowly, the hoe loosened the soil around the beets. He approached the lateral where Alexia had started water cress. Again Ivan began to mutter, "Alexia planted it, but she only planted a little of it, so all of it is not hers. She makes money gathering and selling the cress. I know some people to whom she sold it. I could send it by Alles. Alexia used the money for curtains and things father wouldn't buy for her."

He made deep furrows with his hoe, drew conventional designs, then, recalling himself, rushed feverishly with his hoeing, his thoughts keeping pace. He dropped his hoe, and, hurrying to the cress bed, he quickly gathered the amount he had seen Alexia gather. He fixed a pool of water to keep it fresh, then hastened back to his hoeing that his acreage for the day might not suffer.

Alles sold the cress. Ivan had coins of his own. But when he had them, there was nothing he could do with them. Ivan knew the value of coins only in great heaps that were exchanged for land, implements, animals.

Ivan had had the coins for almost two weeks when his father, coming unexpectedly around the corner of the shack, saw Ivan polishing them. Ivan quickly shoved them into his pocket.

"What do you have there?" Nicholas demanded.

"Nothing."

"I haven't handled coins all these years not to know one when I see it. Give them to me."



Ivan took the coins from his pocket. Nicholas snatched them.

"You thief, you thief, you will take the coins, will you?" He kicked and struck Ivan as he crouched stricken by the unexpected attack. "I've watched you as I put them away, your eyes quivering on them. You brat, you son of the evil one, first you take my Tamzie, then you take my coins."

Ivan rolled quickly aside and leaped to his feet. The other Smirnovs rushed around the house to see what the racket was. Ivan screamed, chill with rage, "Give me back my coins. They are mine."

Nicholas struck at him, "Thief."

Ivan rushed in with flailing arms. "You lie. The boss sold cress for me. You lie."

Nicholas's square fist smashed full into Ivan's face, the other fist struck his breast. Ivan gasped, wavered, then fell, blood trickling from his nose and lips. Nicholas kicked him again and again, then whirling on the gaping group, shouted, "Get out. All of you. And don't one of you dare to touch him. The thief."

They fled. Nicholas looked over his shoulder at Ivan. Turned to him. "You would call me a liar, you would try to strike me, me, your father."

He crouched over the unconscious figure, lifted his foot as if to kick again, then strode around the shack.

Two days afterward, Alles called Nicholas to him.

"Ivan wanted me to tell you I sold some cress for him. He has a nasty



looking bruise and cut on his face. It is none of my business, Smirnov, but I hope there is no connection between the two."

Nicholas grunted and walked away, but that night he worked himself into a rage as he expounded the law of the Smirnovs since tribal times, obedience to the father. No son of his should ever strike him and go unpunished as long as strength remained in his arm. "And if it happens, a son of mine is tempted to live always in rebellion, and so far forgets himself as to strike me again and again, he shall forfeit his life, for he is not worthy of life."

Ivan, his face marked by purple bruises and a long cut over his lip, crept to the ditch. No pictures came in the water; burning hate blurred his thought, and crushed the tenderness in his heart.

The summer of 1911 and the following winter were the worst the Smirnov's had known in America. From the early part of May to July, heat wave followed heat wave in rapid succession. Their intensity and duration had not been equaled for many years. Throughout the summer and into September there was little moisture. The sun beat down with merciless intensity from the seared blue of the sky onto a parched earth. By the trail, weeds curled and dried, grated harshly on passing wheels and crumbled to dust; grass withered so that stock had to be driven from the range; corn on the dry land rolled its leaves



and much of it never tasselled; alfalfa fields were slow to bring forth even a second cutting.

That fall, Alles brought in a bunch of cheap lambs from the drylands. He took Nicholas from the beets to help with the sheep. Nicholas rebelled, for never had the Smirnovs harvested a beet crop without him. Too, his crop on his own acres was short; he wanted to be sure to fill his contract. But Alles was firm. Nicholas went about his duties brooding over the inability to follow his own dictates, brooding over the Smirnovs who pulled, stacked, and topped in the Alles beets. To him they were not individuals trained and interested in the thing they were doing. They were machines that must be watched and driven. Didn't the company man constantly supervise his seeding and cultivating, didn't Alles watch every process, spurring him on? Sometimes he visioned himself standing over the Smirnovs cracking the long lash as he had seen overseers doing in Russia in his boyhood. Of course, one didn't use the lash unless there was rebellion. There wasn't, among the Smirnovs, unless it was the young one. It would be hard to strike him again. Nicholas was sure that Tamzie looked at him from Ivan's eyes now, and he could never strike Tamzie.

Odd he had never struck her. Among most Slavs a man beats his wife black and blue, or his friends think he is afraid of her. There were even the old proverbs that admonished man against indulging his women. "He who does not beat his wife, is no man,"



"Strike a wife and a snake on the head," "One devil is afraid of the Cross, the other (the wife) of a stick," "The dog may howl, but the wife must hold her tongue."

A few times he had wanted to, but, when he looked into the solemn duskiness of her eyes, the strength went from his arm. Tamzie could do many things with her eyes, and her body. Once they had heard a wedding song of a bride from the south, and Tamzie had laughed, "Shall I sing it for you?"

Then she had danced a strange writhing, whirling dance that was not of his people, and sang, "Strike your wife only with good cause, and when she greatly vexes you."

That was it, she did not vex him as other women did their husbands, but he had known never would he strike her when she possessed him as then. Sometimes, she sang the old folk song of the young wife, "What sort of husband are you to me? You do not pull my hair nor do you strike me."

Tamzie had been a good woman; she had given him many children. Even after Ivan was born, twice she had been sure there would be another, but each time she lost them, and he hated the scrawny child more.

Now he hated him doubly. The boy had withdrawn from him completely and, with him, he had taken the presence of Tamzie. When Ivan looked at him since the affair of the coin, there was a strange quality in his eyes, they were Tamzie's eyes, accusing him.



By night, Nicholas had convinced himself that Ivan would lead the others from their duty in the field. He was astounded, almost angry, when he learned the acreage had not fallen off. Quickly his eyes darted to Ivan, his fists clenched, for in the black eyes that surveyed him so levelly, he was sure for a moment he saw amusement and contemptuous superiority. He knew Ivan had deliberately spurred the Smirnovs on, so that he, Nicholas, might feel he was of little use. They did as much without him.

The first of November brought a cold wave. Nicholas was frantic. He cursed Alles for a fool. There were still Smirnov beets in the field. Alles should not have brought sheep so early. Beets should always come first. There was no other way, the Smirnovs must again work at night.

Ivan gasped. He had poured every bit of energy he possessed into keeping the acreage up while Nicholas was out of the field. The thought of night work appalled him. He uttered an ejaculation.

Nicholas whirled, "What did you say?"

No one answered, but the air twanged with tension. That night Ivan carried the lantern in front of the puller. As morning approached, he often stumbled and sometimes fell. Nicholas drove the puller on, forcing Ivan to scramble from beneath the horses feet. If the light went out, Nicholas threw clods at Ivan until he started on. When the stumbling grew too frequent, he climbed from the puller,



kicked and shook Ivan back to full consciousness. At last Ivan lost all sense of place and time, he floated along, the water woman always ahead of him, beckoning him on when he thought he could no longer go, when he could no longer keep from sinking into the black abyss just in front of him. Then Nicholas said they would rest.

But it was only for a few short hours that the Smirnovs rested. They were again in the fields, automatons, dehumanized, gray masked, silent except thickly mouthed orders from puffed lips. Red rimmed, bleary eyes peered stupidly from half closed lids. The acreage fell off from day to day in spite of Nicholas's rage or suddenly inflicted punishment on a laggard.

On the morning of November 13, Ivan rose when Nicholas shook him, swayed, staggered a few steps, dropped. He lay inert, eyes half opened. Nicholas shook him again and again. Alexia spoke, "Perhaps he is sick."

"He cannot be, you got to get those beets finished today," he lifted Ivan to his feet, but it did no good.

Again Alexia spoke, "I will give him hot cabbage soup, perhaps he will be better."

Nicholas strode away. Alexia forced the hot liquid between Ivan's lips. But he did not rouse. The Smirnovs went to their work leaving him in his stupor.

Before night a cold wave that had begun in Montana swept south and eastward. In some places the thermometer fell sixty and seventy degrees. The Smirnovs worked frantically finishing the



beets. Their fingers were blue with cold. Nicholas, coming from town with the pulp wagon, walked beside his horses trying to keep warm, beating his hands and cursing in fear that his beets would freeze before they could be siloed. He cried aloud, "It all comes from beating that Ivan. Even the weather has been terrible, since. He is an evil blight. I must leave the beet field to care for sheep because of the curse."

As evening came on, Ivan awoke. He rose dizzily to his feet; looked about the shack. No sound broke the stillness. Fear seized him. He had overslept, what would Nicholas do? He was cold. He was sick all over. He tried to hurry as he went toward the field; but languor gripped him; his legs moved slowly as though weights held them; they had no strength in them; his arms were limp at his sides; the cold shriveled him. He joined the others; Karl thrust a knife in his hands; he moved slowly, painfully, mechanically.

The November cold issued in a series of storms.

Karl also worked with the Alles's sheep. Alex and Peter had work on nearby farms. Even Ivan helped occasionally with the Alles's sheep. Then one day when the roads were drifted full, and only a wagon trail had been shoveled, Karl, hauling pulp from the factory, "got a horse down." He was beating it when a neighbor bringing a load of pulp stopped him. The animal had to be killed. Whether the injury had



come from the fall and effort to get on its feet, or from injuries the man inflicted, was not known, but the neighborhood was ugly about it. The man was a Russian. The Americans talked of criminal action, the Germans recalled tales of Russian cruelty. Alles fired him.

Nicholas screamed aloud in his wrath. Shaking his fists above him, his face purple and contorted, he swore, "Is not this year a hell enough without you getting out of a job? First the drought; then part of my beets freeze; now you make the fool of yourself. The evil is upon me. My head splits with the pain."

The incident, unfortunate as it was, led to a new activity for the Smirnovs. Karl, to placate his father's wrath and to show the 'pig heads' that he didn't need work with them, persuaded Nicholas to loan money, taking sheep for the interest. If the money could not be repaid when the borrower sold his herd, then the Smirnovs should have the right to cultivate land of the borrower until such time as the money was repaid. It was usurious, but many were short of funds, and, with weather conditions as they were, banks hesitated to advance more loans.

After Karl was dismissed, Ivan worked regularly at the Alles ranch. He took on new importance in his own estimation. The work was hard, the exposure trying, but he made no complaint. He was carrying an equal load with the other Smirnovs. It was not until the first month passed and his coins were brought in with the rest, that the inflated ego received its blow. He was still a 'kid,' and



he received 'kid' wages. Everyone took it for granted. Before he rebelled verbally, he knew it was useless; he would only be laughed at, or taunted with his small stature and his slightness. But inwardly the seething indignation grew. He longed for the spring when the water would be in the ditches. Now there was no peace, no surcease from his turbulent thoughts; his longings stirred the rebellion; he could not lose himself even in his dreams.

But before the spring brought the water in the ditches, a crueler and uglier impression than he had ever before known was stamped on Ivan's memory. The elder Kraum was seeking a wife for Josef Kraum. Nicholas was asked to inspect the Kraum household and the groom-to-be. Nicholas offered Catherine, the eldest, and with her the bride's chest and the bedding of the German bride. But when Josef visited the Smirnov home, his choice fell on Ann. Nicholas was in a dilemma; if he betrothed Ann, then Catherine, the older, would be left on his hands; but if he refused to give Ann, then, perhaps, there would be no other offer for her; for he was a man among aliens, and he would have both daughters on his hands.

The latent vanity that lies in every woman burst forth in Ann. If she ever had claim to attractiveness it was in those days that the Smirnovs waited Nicholas's decision. She was not modest; she flaunted her good fortune before Catherine. Ivan grieved over Catherine's hurt, but could not understand her desire for the slow, deliberate Josef.

Nicholas brought the decision to the waiting Smirnovs.



Ann had been chosen. Catherine shrieked in her rage. Jealousy and disappointment maddened her. On her had been placed the stamp of the unwanted. No man would choose her. Clawing, spitting, screaming, she flew at her sister, "You cast the evil spell over him. I watched you turn your eyes on him."

Nicholas grabbed her by the nape of the neck and shook her like a puppy. "Be still, you Jezebel. No wonder a man flees from you, shrew that you are. Back to your dung heap, else I club you."

But she would not be silenced. Nicholas beat her to submission. An impression was indelibly printed in Ivan's memory: three men pressed back against smoke greased walls, their faces startlingly etched in the shadows of the room, their lips curled back from yellowed teeth; two women in a corner, immovable, expressionless, eyelids drawn to slits; a baby's face, swollen, discolored, convulsed with terror; where the light rays crossed, Nicholas's features, distorted; the rise and fall of his arms, showering flailing blows with heavy leather on the writhing woman at his feet; cries of pain, shrieked curses, mingled with the thud of leather, the scuff of feet, gasped breaths, baby's screams.

Peter had been away from the Smirnov shack since the big snow the last of January. He was working for Harry Bauer, a German feeder. He did not return until the frost was going from the ground.



It was evening when he walked into the shack. He went directly to where Nicholas sat with his elbows on the table staring before him. Peter laid down a small bag of coins.

"Here are my wages. I have spent nothing."

Nicholas looked keenly at his son. Many lines were on Nicholas's face. The winter had taken its toll. His fingers opened the bag; gently spread the coins before him. Peter still stood before his father. No word of greeting passed among the Smirnovs. Alex was not at home. Nicholas glanced up. Peter met his gaze, then looked uncertainly about him, at the braces of the roof from which still hung strips of smoked meat, bags of dried corn, of wheat and beans. He looked at the walls, the rough boards smoke grimed and soiled, at the beaten dirt floor, at Alexia's home-made furniture. Then he jerked himself erect.

"Father, I want the girl, Maria Bauer. I want to marry her. Will you talk to her uncle?"

Nicholas frowned, "You mean the pale jade whom Bauer brought from Russia last year? That one is like the willow, she will never work in the field, never bear strong children. The weakness is in her family, Bauer says."

Peter leaned eagerly forward, "But she works all the time. She puts good food on their table; she keeps the house even better than Alexia; she sews them the overalls and the shirts; she tends the babies."



"No, I know what I know. It is only the milk of kindness that Bauer keeps her. She has the pretty face, but more than pretty faces must the Smirnov women have."

Peter's hands clenched as he struck the table, "But I love her and she loves me. Doesn't that make the difference? I will work doubly hard for both of us. And any man lies who says she does not pay her way."

Ivan, squatting in the corner near the stove, shrunk lower; for Nicholas was slowly rising to his feet. He bulged in his anger. He swore by the shades of his ancestors, by all the evil of the world. He accused Peter of defiance, of attempting to bring ruin on the family. Peter, for a moment, stood his ground, but habit was stronger than love or a flaring desire for freedom. He backed to the door, closely followed by Nicholas.

"You will stay on this place if the first woman you see you must want. You will stay among men until I find the woman for you. A wonder your sisters are safe from you. What good is that pale woman? What kind of children would hers be?" Suddenly he stopped, then he leaped forward, grabbed Peter, and, shaking him, cried, "Have you been with that woman? Tell me."

Peter's face was very white, his eyes blazed, his jaw set, "No. Keep your evil tongue from mention of her."

Nicholas shoved Peter from him, "Remember, never speak her name again."



Peter turned away, opened the door. Ivan jumped to his feet and rushed forward, driven by an overpowering impulse. There was neither thought nor reason in his blind charge. He faced his father. "Nicholas Smirnov, what does Tamzie think of you? She was like the willow, and yet she bore you many children. You loved her and wanted her, what if you had been forced to let her go? Think you, she will rest easily in her grave when the heart of a son of hers grieves for the woman he loves?"

No sound broke the stillness, not even audible breathing. For the moment the very night winds seemed silent. Nicholas Smirnov shrank into himself, his face grayed. Fear and horror, gripped the little group. One had dared to speak aloud the name, "Tamzie." A cry like a wounded animal burst from Nicholas, brushing Ivan and Peter aside, he rushed into the night.

The spring, cold, damp, unfavorable, had not ended when Peter Smirnov was married to Rosa Meisel, heavy, flat-footed, colorless. Marie Bauer left for Chicago to live with another uncle, the day the announcement of the Smirnov wedding was made.

It was not a gay wedding. Nicholas was a hard task master. He insisted on the interest on his money to the last cent. Karl, strong man of the country, had not forgotten the criticism of the Germans. He was insolent, often insulting, when he won some con-



test of strength. The tension after the severe winter had not relaxed; there had been too many losses. In the group that gathered around Peter and Alex, there was much banter, Josef Weber led. Finally, he turned on Alex,

"Hey, when will your old man get time to pick out a wife for you?"

Some wit answered, "That will be some time. Didn't you know Nick takes them on only when he gets another bunch of land. He won't do that until another winter comes, and he can get some poor devil's sheep."

Dull red flooded the faces of the Smirnov brothers. Ivan who stood near felt the slow spread of burning hatred well up against his father.

Josef Weber gave no time for an answer, "Pete wouldn't be taking the step yet, but the old man thought he might run the bluff, and take the Bauer girl. She was a pip. Old Nick doesn't believe in beauty. A man has to spend too much time keeping that kind in line. He picks so the boys don't have to worry about losing their girls. They are so homely no one else will have them. But they make good workers."

Peter and Alex leaped to their feet. Only the tuning of the fiddles and the approach of the older men prevented trouble. But Ivan saw Alex's eyes blaze; heard him hiss something to Josef; saw the startled look in Josef's eyes as his glance darted to his sister Agnes, a pretty, lively girl of fifteen. Then Alex, laughing a raucous laugh,



never turned his eyes from her; his short upper lip, drawn back from the yellowed teeth, quivered. She turned to him as though drawn by a magnet. The intensity of the man pulled him from his commonplace-ness. He stalked as an animal who has chosen its mate, and defies the males of his pack to take her from him. Each time Agnes's brother moved toward her, Alex moved more quickly. He was always there before Josef.

Then he swung her high in his arms, "You are going to marry me, tonight, now. We will see what our fathers say to it."

She buried her head on his shoulder, and clung tightly to him. Straight to his father, he strode. "I want your consent to marry her, now."

Nicholas looked at him, at the girl in his arms. Strong were the arms that clung around Alex's neck; strong were the limbs and firm hips that rested in his son's arms; full were the breasts bound by the tight waist. He threw back his head and bellowed a great laugh. He slapped Alex on the back.

"That is the spirit. Take her."

Side by side, father and son made their way through the silent crowd to where the girl's father and brother stood.

Nicholas spoke coldly, imperiously. "My son wants this girl. He would marry her now. The dowry does not matter."

Alex still held the girl. Her father touched her shoulder. "Is this what you would do?"



She nodded her head without lifting it from Alex's shoulder. Alex gave a shout of triumph, "That preacher! that preacher!"

On her father's face was a stricken look. That was no proper way of making a marriage. Never would it be forgotten how Agnes Weber had permitted herself to be courted, and by a Russian. Letters would go back to Russia; the name of Weber would be whispered; for, over there, the people did not know this mad country.

The bride and groom for whom the feast was planned were forgotten. Everywhere was the buzz of voices. Alex carried Agnes to the minister.

"My son, you must put her down."

But Alex refused. Instead, he lifted her to his shoulder. When the ceremony was over, he swaggered out through the crowd, Agnes still on his shoulder.

Ivan, too, left the crowd, wandered lazily homeward, every nerve fiber tingling. The still moonlight from the indefinite blue of the sky flooded over him; the dream woman pressed close beside him; she was not Tamzie. She was now a mixture of all the women he had ever known. She beckoned flitting maidens to her, maidens that rode the moonbeams, maidens who were like the pale Maria, the blooming Agnes, Miss Alice. His feet forgot the earth, he was lifted up, shut away from the sordidness of existence, but he was a physical being alive with sensual impulses. The physical realization of manhood mingled with the world of fancy, and the creatures of his imagination left him breathless.







Five years the Smirnovs had lived on their own land. In the past year, two more rooms had been built on the original shack; two more still dawns had been broken by baby cries, but there had been no hours of agonized waiting. Fortunately, both babies were boys; there would be no reason for rivalry there. That was good, for there was constant bickering among the women, and even the men seemed to argue incessantly.

Nicholas withdrew more and more from the family. He was closer to the land. In him was a genuine love for his own acres. "It is not much yet, but it is mine." He told Ivan, "Always remember, when a man has land, he has something that does not burn, that cannot be stolen, that will forever be his friend: for it will never turn on him. In life, it will be a bed for you, it will give you food, and it will receive you when you die. We are from the earth, we live on the earth and of the earth, and in death we shall go back to the earth."

Ivan felt the bond of sympathy that flowed between the earth and Nicholas as he spoke. When Nicholas lifted soil in his broad and powerful hand, Ivan watched the fingers cradle lovingly about the black burden, heard the voice caress it as Nicholas muttered, "From the earth I earned the coins that gave you to me; all day I work close to you; my feet, they are ever on you; my thoughts, they are only for you. I will be true to you; give me back my hundred fold."

Ivan firmly believed the earth responded. In those



moments, Ivan respected Nicholas Smirnov. In those moments, they might have reached an understanding, but two men loved the same woman, her husband and her son. Because the husband had known her in the flesh, the memory of her, driven out by his own ruthlessness to her son, could not be recaptured. The son, knowing her only in the spirit, drew closer and closer to her until she possessed him. So the two watched each other warily, nor guessed what stood between them, each blaming the other.

The August moon etched the Smirnov domain in black and silver. The house with the two ridges of roof cast elongated shadows beside it. The flickering fire in the stone inclosure lapped at the blackened sides of the iron kettle, and lightened the faces of the women as they stooped over the steaming mess in the kettle. Agnes and Rosa moved back and forth from the open door of the house to the kettle, their elastic shadows stretching and shortening, sometimes disappearing under their full skirts. Their bare feet padded the hardened ground. Alexia stooped between buckets of water on her way to the pen where the grunting, squealing pigs fought with each other over their evening meal, or she directed the water to new furrows in her garden. On the cool earth north of the house, the three children lay curled together, asleep. Alex and Peter leaned against the shack playing mumbly-ty-peg. Karl worked on a piece of harness near the sheep



pens. Ivan lay on the ditch bank. As he looked down on the scene, it seemed the moonlight softened the contours, cast a spell over them. The Smirnovs were in harmony, each busy upon his own pursuit.

Only Nicholas was absent. He had left early in the morning without a word to anyone as to where he was going, or when he would return. Ivan's thought turned to him, to Nicholas's hatred of him. He felt it in a hundred ways. Nicholas gave him the heaviest labor, the longest hours, the most monotonous work. In every way, Nicholas attempted to humiliate him both in the family and among their acquaintances. He belittled his ability, complained of his work, called him 'dodderer,' 'dolt.' Ivan remained silent, but in his own thoughts he continually drew comparisons between his own appearance and that of Nicholas. He compensated for his inferior strength by assuring himself Nicholas had only the brain of an ox.

Ivan had an occasional gleam of what this attitude might be doing to him. He saw himself as a jealous misfit unable to adjust himself to the environment in which he must stay, and fear startled him. He wanted to be liked, he wanted recognition and praise, but he never received that. So he continued the childish hero worship. He watched pictures flash in the ditches; he lived in fancy.

So silently had Nicholas entered the yard that Agnes cried aloud when he stood beside the fire. For a moment everyone paused, looking at him. He looked about him; when his eyes rested on Ivan, they narrowed, then went on. He walked over to the corner of



the building; sat down with his back to the wall. Ivan's thoughts were restless; for him, peace vanished from the scene. Then a flotilla of bubbles sailed down the ditch. In their midst floated castles, hovels, the dream woman, and baby faces. Agnes, Nicholas, the August moon, the scene below him, were all forgotten. Ivan wove his web of fantasy, became a hero to his water audience. From deep in the world of reverie, he was called by the sound of his own name. He sat blinking his eyes, blinded by the force of the present.

The Smirnovs all stood looking at him. Each held his plate and spoon. Nicholas laughed loudly.

"I'll give you something to dream about, then you won't have to watch the pollywogs in the slimy ditch water. You can moon about your own pollywogs. I see you like rubbing and handling other people's offspring; you can try it on your own. I've got a good woman for you."

Every action was suspended where the words had found it. On every face was written a startled, "No, not Ivan." To these men and women with whom he lived, he was the 'different' one, a boy, although they never troubled to think why. Suddenly they were conscious of Nicholas's hatred; they knew it had always been there; and that it had grown with the years. In them rose a desire to put a shield before this youngest one.

But what would they shield him from? Had they not desired the privilege of marriage before it came to them? Perhaps



Nicholas was being kinder to this youngest one who they all knew looked like Tamzie, their mother. As they looked at Ivan, his eyes startled, his curved lips lax, they held their breath waiting for some sound, some action.

Nicholas, too, waited. He, too, wondered why there should not be a 'good' woman for Ivan as there had been for the other sons, why had he used that way of punishing Ivan? Was that punishment? He knew Ivan was not ready for the earthiness marriage brought his sons. He sensed the sensitive dreaminess of the youth, knew how easy it would be to crush him. In that moment he knew he wanted him crushed, wanted that more than the money his services brought. He should have crushed him when he was a baby; but he could not without losing Tamzie also. But he had lost her anyway. Since the night he had beaten Ivan because he thought the boy had stolen the coin, Nicholas had not been able to get the feel of Tamzie. Or had he beaten the boy because he stole the coin? Nicholas couldn't be sure. That was perhaps why he had lost Tamzie. Never had she stayed apart from him, thwarted him. She had been as close to him as his own breath; she was part of his heart beat. Always there had been the image of her warming him, helping him on. But now she had withdrawn. He had watched Ivan, and he was sure Tamzie had entered him. She looked out of his eyes; she was there now; she smiled through his lips; she was in the lift of his head. Had not Ivan been able to raise pictures of her from the water that he, Nicholas, could not see? Had he not heard Ivan talking to her sometimes when the night



was far spent? When a son stole the wife of his father, was he not to be punished? He had waited long enough. He would crush him forever. There were times when a madness seized him, when he felt his hands around the white throat. Yes, he had even dreamed it, but this was better.

What can more quickly crush a man than a shrew of a woman? What can more blur his vision and his dreams? What can more quickly steal the boyish curve and the rich red from his lips? The stripling hadn't begun to be a man. This woman he had chosen would make one out of him or choke him. Nicholas had seen Ivan shrink from Rosa, he had seen his eyes dwell on a pretty face, yes, and he had seen the glow as he watched Agnes and Alex.

But why was the white faced one staring at him? Nicholas's courage was oozing away. It had taken courage, but that stillness--there was not even the croaking of frogs or the hum of night insects. Had everyone stopped breathing? He dared not look to see.

Ivan sat loose and waiting. At his father's first words a flood of memories swept about him; the smiling faces of his dream crew pressed close to him, his cheeks tingled under imagined caresses, yielding bodies pressed upon his; back of them all the dream woman beckoned, smiling, mocking. But his father's eyes drove them away; Nicholas's eyes made him shrink; the strength that held him up-right was slipping from him. Then the eyes released him.



Nicholas spoke, "She is Julia, Rosa's sister."

Breaths that were gasps, almost whistles, burst from the seven listening Smirnovs. The children stirred uneasily in their sleep and whimpered. Rosa straightened; a sneer curled her lips as she looked at the man who dared mate this stripling of a youth that stood before them to that sister, brutal, hardened by work, coarse from neglect and lust, that sister for whom the Meisels bowed in shame. The Smirnovs looked at each other in consternation.

A curtain shut down over the depths of Ivan's eyes. He rose slowly to his feet, dusted his torn overalls, looked over his shoulder deep into the water that lay behind him, looked and smiled. Then he turned to where Nicholas waited; on the face turned up to Ivan was written the conflict of emotions with their underlying hint of fear.

"I will not marry her. I will not marry any woman."

Nicholas jerked, leaped forward, gripped in blind fury; ready to strike; to kill. The opportunity he had awaited had come. This son of his, devil possessed, had defied him. But no terror filled Ivan's heart. No fear filled the eyes that stared at the approaching man. In him was dumb misery. Closer Nicholas came, his vein lined hands worked, then he hesitated, stopped, held beneath the steady stare of his son; fear crept through the savage hatred and held him silent. Long they stared at each other.

Nicholas's voice was choked, "I have chosen. I will be obeyed."



**BOOK THREE**



If people had no vices but their own, few would have so many as they have. For my own part, I would sooner wear other people's clothes than their vices; and they would sit upon me just as well.

--Chesterfield.



I



North of the Platte where the Riverside ditch makes the prairie to bloom, men looked only to the narrow oasis bound on the one side by the river, on the other by the irrigation ditch. He gave no thought that at his back door lay miles and miles of 'brakes' where the long fingers of the numerous drains to the Wildcat spread themselves, making a series of ridges and valleys. These arroyos had been the haven of the cattle men in the decades when the South Platte valley and the land drained by it had been cattle country.

To the south of the river men looked to the far horizon; at sunset to the west where the turquoise tip of Long's Peak lay embedded in the rose of an afterglow; at sunrise to the eastern slopes. The south, too, had its paradise fed by the waters of the river, a broad flat band stretching along the river. It was more luxuriant than the north oasis. Along its irrigation canals great trees threw their shadows over long cool grass that matted on the banks. The south valley whispered of age and traditions; there, men listened to their whispers. The irrigation canals on the south side had run their streams while the north was still sandy slopes where cattle grazed or aspiring farmers plowed, sowed, and then wept when the winds swept over the tilled land carrying the soil to unknown places. But on the south, as on the north, there was only a fertile valley that separated the river from the prairie, the sage brush covered dune prairie that had been grazing land for cattle since the



first settler followed the buffalo and the trader.

The development of the north side of the river valley was new, harsh; the very possibilities of its civilization unknown because it was untested. It was in the formation period; its destiny was being molded by those who took its land in charge. True, the Deuel and Snyder canals had been opened as early as 1871, but they served only a ribbon along the river's edge. It was not until the Riverside, a result of engineering skill, ran its ditches that much of the land was reclaimed. Soon on this north land was heard the clack of many tongues, Russo-German, Mexican, Oriental. From the north came square, squat, dark peoples trodding on flat heels; and slender, sinuous, brown, black-eyed people, dressed always in bright colors, singing and laughing.

The south knew its worth. There was an air of permanence even about the buildings. There was an atmosphere of hospitality. The broad Bijue, the ever full Platte and Beaver, the placid Fort Morgan, invited the boats of adventurous youngsters. From the south came the average American, alert, prosperous; he measured his success by his possessions as his foreign brother from north of the Platte, but he demanded for himself and for his, a degree of culture and a standard of living that comes as a heritage of free men under free institutions in a country that gives lavishly to him who takes or dares to gamble.

From the north side of the river, Ivan came--a product of the crudest forces that were going into the making of that section one of the garden spots of Colorado. And yet, within him dwelt that



divine spark that once lighted makes the martyr, the saint, the reformer, the artist, or the poet. Over him had been emptied the sediment of the Middle Ages as it existed in the peasant people of European races. He had known the backwash of primitive wrath, of lawless violence, of insatiable greed, of lust; but enwrapped in his world of fantasy drawn from within himself, he had escaped its taint, had escaped either assimilation or annihilation. A canvas with its background ready, he waited the blocking in of the picture. He went south of the river where money and land were not fetishes, where the individual, not the group, dominated, where charity, hope, and love were written large in the hearts of men. There he came to know the greatest of these--love.

He left the bank of the irrigation ditch for the dune prairies; but he did not forget the lure of the water. As he went into the cattle land south of the river, he took with him not only the world of fantasy, but also the grief, the memory of his rebellion against the law of his father. Mingled with the grief was exultation.

In the first days, Ivan missed the irrigation ditches. He longed to tell the picture woman of his new life. But most of all, he wanted to tell her of the gold and white girl who played on the big porch of the ranch house and in the yard around it. Since the first day he came to the Northups, Ivan had looked with wonder and joy at Elaine, the seven year old daughter of Stan Northup. She reminded him of the dolls he had seen in the window of one of the stores in town. She was more beautiful than any picture he had ever dreamed. He longed to touch



her tumbly gold hair, her white face with its rose petal cheeks, the beautifully formed red lips, the dimpled fingers and arms.

One night as he sat on the porch after the day's work was done, she came toward him carrying a book in her hand. He held his breath; his throat ached with the intensity of his emotion. Would she bring the book to him? If she did, could he hold her hand in his? pat her cheek as he had seen some of the men on the ranch do? ruffle her hair as the cook did? Closer she came, her blue eyes beneath their long lashes fixed seriously upon him. Then she laid the book on his knee, and opened its pages to a beautifully illustrated story.

"Read," she commanded.

He read, stammering with joy and embarrassment. He stumbled over many of the simple words as he pointed them out with his rough finger. It was the story of a princess and her slave. As the story advanced, Elaine leaned heavier and heavier on his knee. He put his arm about her, and she snuggled closer; blue eyes met black in a look of comradeship. Ivan knew he was not reading well, and shame filled him. Some words he did not know, but he substituted others.

Ivan had not learned to pray, but he breathed a thanksgiving for the school as he picked out the words. That night he began to live. He became a social being. He performed a service without sense of duty or obligation, but from the love for the service. He felt himself essential to the happiness of another being, just as he was essential to the creatures of his imagination. He basked in



the knowledge that he had been chosen, had been recognized as an individual by this superior being. He ceased to be a Russian; he was not a son; he belonged to no group; he was an individual.

When the story was ended, Elaine closed the book very carefully and methodically. "Thank you. You don't read very well, but I like your reading. Now you can take me on your lap and tell me a story. Then I will have to go to bed."

Ivan was not sure how to hold her. He had held Nicholas, Junior and the other Smirnov babies, but they were not as large as Elaine. He was in a panic that he should not please her, but she ordered him very freely in the manner that she preferred. In the quiet hush of the evening, the golden head lay close to the black one; her two white hands were closely clasped in his weathered one.

Ivan was suspended in a world shot by glowing lights playing about and through him. This dainty creature in his lap filled his body with tingling sensations.

He told her the story of the water fairies who answer wishes, the story he had heard in his first year of school. When he had finished he would have held her longer, but she climbed down, lifting her lips for a good night kiss.

"Good night," she called. Then she was gone.

But the pressure of her lips were still on his; the soft weight of her hands in his still warmed him; her light body still pressed his. She was a princess; he was her slave. He saved her from



crocodiles; he picked beautiful flowers which turned to fairies when she held them in her arms; he carried her in his arms through great floods of water, up long flights of beautiful stairs. She put her arms about his neck, kissed him; then she was not a child but a beautiful woman. He longed for the water; somehow in thoughts he could not make the figures stand out; he could not see them. He could only think them.

The story hour became a rite. Elaine came the next night, and the next, and the next. First, while she stood beside him, he read from the book she brought; then, as she lay in his arms, he told her a story. Through the day as he worked he thought of stories to tell her. But think as he might, a story each night soon exhausted his meager supply of experiences.

Ivan had confidence in Tad, the Northup cook; for Tad had initiated Ivan into the Northup service. So one night Ivan approached him, "Tad, vat kind of books has fairy stories?"

"Fairy stories, what do you want with fairy stories? Har, har, ask the Northup kid, she reads 'em. First thing you know she'll be wantin' you to tell her some."

"Did she vant you?"

"Tell her stories? I'd say she did, and her old lady was half sore because I didn't. Why, that kid runs around with that darn book of hers asking every man on this outfit to read to her and tell her stories. Not that many of us could. She's a mighty cute



kid, but she sure can be a nuisance. Better tell her where to head in at the start or you'll be a nurse maid. That old lady of hers is always achin' to load the kid off on somebody."

Ivan stared at the cook in amazement. The man had avoided the honor of serving the child.

"How do you get along with the Missus? Don't let her boss you too much. Stan will tell her where to head in if she gets too tough," Tad continued.

"Why do you not like Mrs. Northup?"

"Gosh, I don't just rightly know. You would have to know Stan's wife what's dead to appreciate it. And you would have to know Stan's mother. Now them were women. Stan's mother was a Boston school teacher what had known Stan's dad before he came to Colorado to buy cow land. When he got his ranch started she came along out here. Brought her books and her edication with her. She was sure a help building up this country. Then Stan's first wife was a lady just like her. Us boys were human bein' to her, just like Stan. She was always lookin' out for us. But this one--I bet if the truth was known, she just lasoed old Stan when he didn't rightly know what he was doin'! He met her in Chicago. Her dad was one of them fellers that sell cattle at the stock yards, brokers or something like that, they call 'em, maybe it is commission men. He took Stan home with him one time because he had a hankerin' after a ranch. Stan met this woman. She made a big play for him, and if the durn fool didn't go



back there Christmas come and marry her. What do you suppose she thought a ranch house was like?"

Ivan shook his head. It grieved him to hear this man talk about Mrs. Northup as he did, but Ivan could not stop him.

"She'd read about them in story books, thought they were big Spanish castles where there was royal visitors all the time. You know them foreigners that used to have ranches in the southwest? Well, when she got here and found just this ramblin' ranch house which is mighty comfortable-like, but not a palace, she was sure disappointed. The only dukes and dukesses she had to entertain was plain honest folks like Stan. She sure bawled him out plenty. She thought his crudeness, as she called it, was Western airs or personality in Chicago, but she found out it was just plain cause he didn't know no better. First year, you could tell it hit old Stan pretty hard, but after that he never paid any attention to her unless she gets to ridin' things too hard; then he hog ties her and tells her where to head in. But he sure is wrapped up in that kid. He was completely happy after the kid was born. Elaine was his mother's name. Sort of fancy name for a New England schoolmarm, but she was a fancy woman. I'm sure sorry he and his first wife didn't have any kids. If they had, Stan wouldn't a married this woman. She's sure good lookin' with her yeller hair and white face. Elaine looks a heap like her, but I hope she won't be like her. All she thinks about is mixin' in with them town folks. She don't have anything to do with the ranchwomen."



It was for Nell Northup that Ivan did much of his work. She never took the trouble to be kind or courteous to the men on the ranch. They were inferiors, and as such, must keep their place. She had not learned that on the range, men are friends, not master and servant. There were many things Nell Northup had not learned, one was the task of womanhood. She pitied herself, in the first place, for having had to give birth to the daughter of a man as stupid as Stan. Nell had been reared by a nurse and she expected the same for her daughter. She refused to forgive Stan when he would not provide a nurse for his child. When Elaine took such an overwhelming interest in Ivan, Nell more and more turned the child over to him. It was taken for granted that he should care for the girl in the absence of her parents. It was Ivan who, when she went to school, tried to help her with her lessons. Together they read them, talked about them. Ivan studied on them long after she had gone to bed. For Ivan, she played her violin and piano lessons, for Ivan she practiced her dancing. And to him, whatever she did, she was perfect. She expanded under his admiration; she lost much of her seriousness. But, if she performed for him, she forced him to learn for her. She criticized his speech, his manners, his dress. He made every effort to meet her approval.

"Ivan, you still say 'de' and 'dat.' You know there are no words like those."

"It is because they sound d--that way in my language."

"There you say 'sound.' It is sound--d--d--d. You say



duh."

"duh--duh--duh."

"That is good. And, Ivan, you must straighten your shoulders. See, do this way. Put your heels to the wall. So. Then flatten your back against the wall. So. Now put your head against the wall, your chin in. Now give a little push with your head and walk off. Now you try it."

Ivan stood up to the wall.

"No, no, do not bow your back out, pull it back. Oh, Ivan, your shoulders are so stooped. That comes from working in the fields. Daddy said they had almost killed you, you poor white faced kid. Now, that is better."

So, as he went from building to building, Ivan squared his shoulders and lifted his chest as she had directed him to do. As he worked in the garden, he repeated over and over the phrases she had corrected, the words he mispronounced.

But Elaine was not his only teacher. Mrs. Northup, interested in her social aspirations and entertaining, impatiently corrected his mannerisms.

"If Stan must insist on having men around the house as servants, I suppose I must put up with them. I am to have a dinner next month, and you will have to serve it. You have shown great improvement in the past year, but the idea of trying to train a clumsy farmer as a butler is exasperating. If I could get a butler closer



than Denver, I surely would."

Elaine interrupted her mother. "He is not clumsy, Mother. He is very graceful. He has learned several of my dance steps very easily, and he does beautifully dances of his own. We dance together, too. Don't we, Ivan?"

Ivan flushed with embarrassment, but Mrs. Northup was too hurried to give thought to the child's words. "No doubt, no doubt. Thank heavens he is not as homely as his race usually are. That would be the last straw."

She talked on and on as she showed him points of service he had not learned. Stan Northup had joined them. He stood uncomfortably by while his wife scolded, nagged, commanded, demanded in a running stream. During the meal, he gave Ivan broad winks when Mrs. Northup corrected some error or censured some of his service, and, although Ivan's face flushed as he stammered apologies, the humiliation was lightened by the man's friendly comradeship. All Northup meals in those days were formal affairs. They were a training school for Ivan.

Ivan always apologized when corrected. One time Mrs. Northup broke in irritably, "Why do you always apologize? That isn't necessary. Just see that you do not repeat the mistake."

"But I am ashamed that I do not do as you wish. I should know. It--it hurts me in here when I do not know." He lay his hand on his throat.



She looked at him in surprise, perhaps thought of him as a human being aside from a servant.

"Don't be silly about it. Everyone has to learn. Excuse my impatience. Stan is so inconsiderate," she cast a withering glance on her husband who sat with his eyes fixed on his plate, "he refuses to have servants who are really trained for this work. However, it is just as well, for one, that was, would not stay in this place. If you are any good, I can be sure you will not stay very long."

Elaine could no longer remain silent, "Father, do you not think Ivan's posture has improved? It is my instructions that make him walk like a soldier."

"For Pete's sake, are you after him too? Lay off the poor devil. Your mother is bad enough without you getting started."

"Oh, please, Mr. Northup, I want Elaine to do it.

"You see she is helping me. It's sort of an exchange, I help her with her lessons, and she helps me know what I should." Ivan hurried to the child's chair.

"Some exchange, but, if they get too hard on you, just let me know, and I'll take you out of their clutches for a few days."

Ivan glowed at Elaine's pleasure, but a despair gripped him when he recalled that many of the things he was being taught were things he should know, things Elaine had always known. He shrank again from being different. He seemed to have no place that he really fitted into. The comments on his personal appearance rankled.



Mrs. Northup complained at his broken and discolored nails, at the calouses on his hands.

He looked at his hands, remembered the teacher's "Ugh! you are bad, dirty, dirty." What could he do with them? He took them to Tad.

"Tad, Mrs. Northup does not my nails like."

"Too bad, isn't it? What she goin' to do about it? Take you to one of them manicurists?"

"What are they?"

"You sure aint up on your society, are you, Roosh? That's dames what pare your nails."

"Do you go to them? How do you keep yours like she wants them?"

"Oh, I aint in her part, besides dish water, bread dough, and things like that keep 'em in shape."

"May I wash the dishes and do the dough?"

"Wowie, wait till I tell the old man and boys that! Say, kid, are you in earnest? If you are, just take that old parin' knife, the one with the sharp point, and clean 'em out. Here, let me show you."

Tad went to work. Ivan bit his lip to keep from crying out as Tad gouged. Tad kept up a running explanation.

"There you are, me boy. Now you wash dishes for a while. Try usin' some cream on 'em to soften 'em up. But why don't



you tell the old shrew where to head in? Stan will back you up. You're letting yourself be a regular mat for her to kick around. Don't get soft. Say, youngster, you're not lettin' this butling business get under your skin, are you?"

"I do not do well what Mrs. Northup expects."

"No? Ain't that too bad. Say, are you expecting to do perfect what everyone asks you to do?"

"I try."

"You are the funniest darn kid I ever saw. You better get over that. Try seeing the funny side of things, or this world will get to be a pretty bitter pill, especially with Nell Northup around."

Ivan had come to be sort of a favorite on the ranch, someone to whom everyone could tell his troubles, his pet jokes, or his reminiscences, and be sure of an interested listener. Someone on whom everyone could try his theory of success, and have some hope the subject would really practice it; someone whom everyone could advise, criticize, or command. Yet, each resented the criticism given Ivan by the other.

Mrs. O'Flynn, the foreman's wife, mothered him. She saved cookies for him, cut out pictures from her one magazine for him because he liked them. She helped him with his work, for there were many things he knew nothing about. He was gardener, care-taker, repairman, maid, butler, and a butt for Mrs. Northup's temperamental outbreaks. Mrs. O'Flynn taught him the short cuts in cleaning, the mystery of pol-



ished silver, the trick of high luster varnish, the way to fluff pillows. She taught him flower culture and the ways of a kitchen garden. She taught him how to raise chickens that they might be ready for the table in the shortest possible time. She even taught him how to wash and iron the fine table linens in case he needed to do them. And, while she taught him those things that were necessary to carrying on his work, she gossiped with him; told him all the happenings of the countryside and of the town. People of whom he had never heard, became characters in his book of growing knowledge. She pictured the home life of the Northups with the detail of an inmate, but there was too much prejudice in favor of the first Mrs. Northup and of Stan. When she learned Ivan had never been to church, knew nothing of the mercy or wrath of God, she began the interpretation of her faith to him. She prayed night and morning for him. Ivan shuddered at the tales of divine anger and punishment, cowered before the prospect of eternal damnation, but drank with joy the promise of love and salvation.

The cowhands chaffed the silent, slender Russian who so willingly did their bidding when he worked with them. But they resented his refusal to take part in their revels. His appreciation of any kindness intrigued them, and his habit of apologizing whenever they corrected him kept them open-mouthed. They were accustomed to being roundly cursed for corrections. He was soon given their stamp of approval, "He's a white man, if he is a Rooshin." But they planned



to put some "backbone in him."

Mike O'Flynn, the Northup foreman for over forty years, hated Russians in general and the best workers from across the river in particular. He hated those that worked south of the river, but they were only a drop in the bucket of his immense wrath as compared with those north of the river that could own land "that should belong to white men." Perhaps influenced by his wife's interpretation of the boy, he 'warmed' to Ivan. He resented that Northup would not let him make a cowhand of Ivan. Whenever he had a chance, he tried to instil into Ivan hatred for the work he was doing. He taught Elaine and Ivan to rope, and their progress pleased him. Constant toil had not stolen the elasticity and coordination of Ivan's muscles; a natural rhythm in his movements lent itself to roping. But to teach him to ride was a harder task. He had so little time; he generally rode with Elaine which meant following her.

The Northups had guests throughout the year Ivan had been there, and he had served them with a certain degree of efficiency. But the occasion, that was calling forth all the extra training, was a momentous one to Nell Northup. It marked her first effort to entertain newly acquired Denver acquaintances. Every man on the ranch knew what was to take place. Each man had to have the regalia of the days when the Northup ranch was in its glory; the group had to swing in beside the cars when the guests arrived and escort them to the house. There would be no question as to an opportunity for horse-



manship; the Northup horses hated cars. The ranch house had been redecorated. New silver and china had been added to the overfull cupboards.

As the day approached, Ivan was more and more nervous about his part. Not only the table service, but the footman's duties, bothered him. Stan roared with laughter as Ivan held the match for a cigar or cigarette, his hands trembling, his eyes almost crossing in his effort at concentration. When he tried to prepare the drinks as Nell Northup had taught him, Stan wagged a bony finger at him, "Are you sure you haven't tried them before you brought them in? Man, look how your fingers hang onto that bottle. It won't get away from you. Just take it easy. Old man, if this spree doesn't go off just as the Missus wants, the world will keep on turnin' just the same. Better hike out with the boys for a while. In the morning our torments will be upon us."

Ivan gladly fled. Mike O'Flynn, Tad, and the cowhands leaned against the bunkhouse. One of them called as Ivan approached, "Hello, tailor's model. Where is that livery? By golly, you look like an undertaker in it."

Tad patted Ivan on the shoulder, "Don't mind Jim. He is just jealous he can't wear one of them black and white uniforms. But, lad, why don't you let Mike O'Flynn make a man out of you? He says you got a natural gift for the rope, and you kin learn to stick to the saddle. Tell that old wench to do her hashin' herself."



"Why is it you say, make a man of me? When I work in the beets, you say, get a man's job."

Mike O'Flynn answered, "Son, Tad's job is no more a man's job than yours. Only in the old days no woman could do it. Women have always been able to do yours. But any honest work you do is all right, don't let them kid you that way. The only thing we mean is that you can do what we are doing as well as you can do that job in there. So why don't you?"

"But Mr. Northup does not need any more cow hands, and he does have to have someone help in that house. I need a job; I get good money from it. Why should I not do it?"

Ivan looked from one to the other. In this past year, he had not had the irrigation ditches to turn to, although he had found one only two miles from the house, and did go there occasionally. With all the interest taken in him, the flood of new experiences, he had not felt a great need. Tonight, as they talked and jibed, he longed for the ditch bank; he wanted to flee, wanted to get away from the taunts, get away from Mrs. Northup's nagging. He attempted no more answers. He remained silent, tears forming hot screens before his eyes, a lump in his throat. As they talked he thought--they talk about my being a man, what if they knew I wanted to cry. I wonder if they ever want to cry? They don't; they cuss. I'll just keep still; they only look at the mask. Sometimes this year I have almost lost the mask, or been the mask, whichever it is, but this old dinner--



Mike O'Flynn's keen eyes had penetrated the silence of the youth. "Ivan, I'm riding over to the leased range to be sure the water is there before we turn in the cattle. Don't you want to ride with me? It will give you a chance to really ride. These short jobs with Elaine are not practice."

The other men waited eagerly. That would make a forty mile ride, and that on the night before the Northup dinner. Ivan went. Three men watched him go. Three men watched him return. Twinkles gleamed in every eye as Ivan rolled from the saddle; slowly made his way to the ranch house.

Tad shook his finger at O'Flynn. "It's a hornet's nest you have upset. Can you picture that kid juggling soup for her highness's guests tomorrow night? That Denver banker and his wife will be sure she lariatied a cowboy for the night."

The night rang with laughter. But a frown was on O'Flynn's forehead. When Tad went to the house, he carried a bottle of Mrs. O'Flynn's liniment.

But not even that pungent healer could loosen the sore muscles. When Ivan stumped into the living room the following day to get his final directions, Mrs. Northup burst into tears. The flowers had been wrong; her favors were a disappointment; her dessert was not smooth. Now, a limping butler-- Old Stan consoled her, but his sense of humor got the better of his discretion. At last he gave up, and howled with laughter. Chagrin was turned to wrath and passed



from Ivan to Stan. Ivan's flesh quivered with the charged atmosphere.

It had been an interminable day. Even Tad's imperturbability was broken. He flinched when the guests caused dinner to be held thirty minutes. He looked at Ivan's white face with anxiety.

At last it was over. Elaine slipped into the kitchen where Ivan washed dishes.

"Ivan, I prayed you wouldn't drop anything. I watched from the head of the stairs all through dinner."

Tad gulped, "Thank God your prayers were answered, lassie."

Ivan just held the child close. Tears were in his eyes as he went back to his work.

"Aw, shucks, kid, don't do that, it isn't worth it."

"It isn't the dinner, it's Elaine praying for me. It's having someone care enough to pray for me."

The door of the back porch opened quietly, a black clothed figure with gleaming white shirt front slipped stealthily out; closed the door silently; stood for a moment listening, then tip toed to the yard gate. Muffling its latch, he lifted it, opened the gate, passed through, then hurried across the exposed ranch yard to the shadows of the bunk house where flickering lights and low voices marked life. No greeting came until the black figure entered the shadows;



then bodies shifted, clothes rustled.

Tad chortled, "Say, Bo, three years of butling has made a good slipper out of you."

There was a long sigh, Stan Northup's voice sounded his relief, "Gosh, Ivan, I thought you were after me when I saw you coming out. Did you get filled up on their bally-hoo? Did you ever see such a bunch of mavericks corraled in one bunch? Not a one of them can talk either hoss or cow. Not since this ranch was founded has there been such an outfit."

Tad shifted his weight, spat, "Depend on a woman. If anybody had told me, Tad O'Rourke should be concocting the dishes I have been fixin' this week I would have told him he was loco. But I'm tellin' you, Stan Northup, some of these days I am quittin'. It aint no right thing to ask a honest cook to spoil his profession by takin' up with foreign dishes."

Mike O'Flynn's deep voice answered, "What about this whole ranch? First thing you know this place is going to be one of them dude ranches like they are getting up in Wyoming. Mike O'Flynn will never be a foreman of one of them things. Already we have to put on fancy vests and chaps and lead horses around for dames. There has been a lot of changes in this section of the country since I rode in here, a gangling kid that could hardly reach the stirrup of a cow saddle they put me on. I growed up with the ranches here. The over-land trails had made a big demand for oxen in the '60's so there were



herds all over the prairies even when I came. But the railroad soon fixed that so the freighters fed out their cattle for the beef market. They made such a big haul on that, that the companies decided the Colorado range was worth buildin' a cattle business like they had in Texas. By 1870 the whole eastern part of the state, clear to the mountains, was taken up. I started ridin' for Stan's dad in 1875. We had the fastest bunch of punchers on the Platte, and we gave any bunch in the state a good run for their money. Stan, here, started ridin' the trails in 1880; he was only ten then but he sure could handle a rope and a hoss. But them days didn't last very long. Barbed wire put a finish to that."

Stan interrupted, "It wasn't the barbed wire that put the finish, it was that fool law in '85 that wouldn't let any fences be put on the public range. You couldn't keep the nesters shut out from the water holes. By the end of the eighties it wasn't a fit place for a white man to live."

"Stan, I still think it was the closin' of the range that broke your dad. He just couldn't bear the thoughts of having to keep cows shut up in fences. I remember when they put that Platte and Beaver canal in, he used to cuss by the hour. That was in '82. And when the squatters begin plowing the ground for wheat, it sure was the red flag for him."

"You didn't like it any better. Except for this garden around the house, there ain't a foot of Northrup land ever been plow-



ed, but for fire guards, and there won't be while I am alive. But it sure aint the old days. Nell has been after me ever since I married her to build a different house. Why isn't that good enough for any woman? Nine rooms on the floor and six upstairs--what more can she want? Of course, if she is going to have a bunch like is in there now, it would need two or three houses."

Soon they were in the "do you remembers." Ivan sat open-mouthed; forgotten were the Northup guests with their constant demands for liquors, lights, wraps, tables, chairs. Ivan rode with the fastest as they fled from Indians, fought to save herds from rustlers, stood their ground before blizzards. He was foreman when being a foreman meant something according to Mike O'Flynn, when twenty men called Northup Ranch home, and a string of one hundred fifty horses wore the Northup brand, and as many as forty thousand cattle were in the Northup herds.

Mike had started the flood of reminiscences, and Mike stopped them, brought the group back to the present. War in Europe was increasing the demand for beef. Prices were not catapulting, but there was more profit in cattle than there had been for several years. Northup needed money; his men were helping him figure means of raising it. Ivan, back in the present, made his way to the house, back to light more cigarettes, shake more cocktails, carry more wraps, move more chairs, place more foot stools. Between times he perched on Tad's stool by the kitchen cabinet and studied or read.



Stan Northup had reasons to seek greater profits, for his wife was making heavy demands on him. She was entertaining more lavishly each year. She was using the ranch as a drawing card for city weary dwellers. She had even picked up the thread of her social life in Chicago which she had dropped in her chagrin at finding Colorado ranch life unromantic and prosaic. Before she had come to the ranch, she had painted too vivid pictures, the reality could not stand the test. But now that she had a circle of gay women, tired business men, a sprinkling of artists, she felt the ranch interesting enough to satisfy the sophistication of her Chicago acquaintances. The ten years she had been away from them had not made the changes in them that it had in her; for they ran in a treadmill.

Nell Northup was bringing a new type of people into Ivan's life, men who toiled, not with their hands but with their brains, who gambled with other people's money; women who used their womanhood as a commodity which was traded on the market for luxury, women who played at the game they called love, women who neither toiled nor spun, who hid under the name of wife or even mother.

Mrs. O'Flynn did not like to have Ivan in the midst of them. Ivan reassured her, "Mrs. O'Flynn, there is ~~is~~ not one of them like you."

Minnie O'Flynn's wiry little figure straightened, her gray eyes snapped as she snorted her disdain, "And I guess there isn't, or Nell Northup wouldn't have them hanging around there. I don't like



them. They even try to vamp Mike O'Flynn, old and dried up as he is. What kind a young feller like you do agin them? It isn't no wise fair.

"You are staying on this ranch too much. A young feller should have some fun. Why don't you go to town with the boys? Now I don't approve of their carousing around, but there is such a thing as just naturally being too good. A man isn't made that way, unless he's a saint. And you ain't a saint because you never go to church. It is just one of two things, if a man doesn't git rid of the Old Adam that is in him by tearin' around with a gang, he bottles it up inside him, and it stands to reason it will pison him. On the other hand, if he is too good, it's a sign he isn't healthy, or the spirit is just plain beat out of him. He gits so mild he is sissy. Women have got in the habit of sayin' they want a well behavin' man. So they do, but they don't mean one of them meek kind. If they do find one of that kind they keep pryin' to see if they can't rouse him. If they can't, they are plumb disgusted, and, if they can, they are worse disgusted."

"But, Mrs. O'Flynn, I don't have time."

"Don't you be givin' too much of your time to Elaine. She will be growin' up and makin' friends and then where will you be? You're spoilin' her. And don't you be givin' all your time to them women of Mrs. Northup's. It don't hurt them to hunt their own footstools. The idea of a grown man having to carry their shawls for them and put them over their shoulders. They don't fool me; they're just



tryin' to flirt with you; they'll ruin you for honest work, then where will you be? A good woman is a blessing of God, but a bad one is sure the horns of the devil. Since you got all fatted up and cleaned up with that sleek black hair sweeping back from your broad forehead, and dippin' down to a point in the middle makin' your face look the shape of a heart, it makes you naturally interestin' to a woman. That black and white makes you look so slender; fact is, if they made man angels, I believe you would be a good one; and your eyes are so big and luminous. Your mouth was just made for kissing. I bet your mother was proud of you. Your lips is so red, they are no wise natural. There you go blushing and blushing and apologizing when there isn't a thing to apologize for. I'd swear if you wasn't such an unbegiling creature, you do it just to make a woman's heart turn to water."

"Mrs. O'Flynn, I can't help it, honest I can't."

"Go on wid you. Who wants you to help it? Do you ever hear anything from that no count family of yours?"

"No, I saw my brother on the street one day, but he didn't speak to me."

Ivan cursed the tears that would come in his eyes. Twenty-one years old and still have to have the feeling of tears. He wouldn't listen to the woman any longer, he would-- He stopped, what would he do? In the house were people, people, people. The men ignored him except as they needed his service. As though he didn't un-



derstand what they talked about. Stocks, bonds, banks--always money, money, money--just as the men whom he used to talk to for Nicholas. But these men didn't work for theirs as the men Nicholas knew. They sat in big offices--hadn't he heard one of them describe his new suite of offices for Mrs. Northup--they bought and sold scraps of paper. He had asked one of them to explain about those stocks and bonds and organization of companies. The man had looked surprised, but had explained. Afterward, he told Mrs. Northup her man apparently contemplated being a financier. Then Mrs. Northup lectured Ivan on his relationship to her guests. She had concluded with a statement that rankled.

"Remember this, no guest is really interested in the servants of the hostess except for the service they give, or occasionally to amuse themselves. Do not bore them by trying to appear intelligent. They do not expect it of you. They know you aren't, or you would not remain here."

But Mrs. Northup no longer resented Ivan as a serving man, his silent aloofness, his quick, courteous apologies, his unusual appearance, his unresponsiveness to the interest any woman showed him, added much to the atmosphere of her house. She now insisted that he remain in livery at all times except as he gardened. He was indispensable as far as Elaine was concerned. Mrs. Northup never gave the child a thought except as Elaine interfered with demands on Ivan's time.

Ivan was reconciled to the work, the jeers, the slights; because only through that could he continue his companionship



with Elaine. He was willing to make any sacrifice for that comradeship. He hated the parties; he hated the indifference of the men; he hated the jeers and open sneers of the two cowhands, the disapproval of Tad, and of Mike O'Flynn; he hated the fellow-sufferer attitude of Stan Northup. But most of all he hated the women. They discussed him in his presence; they asked Mrs. Northup questions about him while he laid wraps about their shoulders or adjusted foot stools, questions which she answered evasively and indefinitely. Had it not been for these things, he would not need the mask any longer, but as it was, he used it much. He walked among them like a wooden Indian. But he could not avoid flushing at their comments and advances. One woman in particular drove him to the ditch bank. He had to talk about it, and the water people were his only confidants aside from Elaine.

She was a tall, slender, languorous woman, unattached to any member of the groups she came with. She plainly amused herself at Ivan's expense. She did not conceal her efforts to invite his attentions. She talked of her failure, with the other guests, as he moved among them. She constantly sent him on errands, kept him by her whenever possible, called for him whenever she knew he was about the house, asked his advice on personal things; and then laughed at his confusion when she was unable to strike from him the response she desired.

As Ivan squatted on the grass covered bank, staring into the water, he was disappointed. The pictures did not leap up to meet him as they did when he had watched them every day. The dream woman finally came, and then Elaine, then this new kind of woman that



harrassed him. He moved uneasily as he watched her in the water world. She was catching his hand, his coat, pulling him down beside her; yes, even on her lap, running her finger tips over his spine; she didn't pull him toward her, just left those hated pointed fingers rest there, as she let them rest on his hand when she wanted him to do something for her or thanked him for some service, but he felt an irresistible force drawing him closer to her. A flame seemed to burn within him, tormenting him until he yielded. For one joy filled moment he held her, then slowly she grew larger and larger, and he was being smothered, crushed, then the water was a blank of rippling waves.

"Ivan Smirnov, if it ever happens you do forget and hold her like that, she will smother you; she will play with you, make you forget everything for her, then she will one day be tired of you. You have heard Nicholas tell <sup>Henry</sup> Alex Kronkow of the fine ladies in Prince Marslov's house; how the prince lost a great estate for one of them, then when she could get no more from him she laughed at him. 'A poor man is a fool to fall for a pretty face,' Henry said. Nicholas answered, 'Any man is a fool to fall for a pretty face, but there is something about them that gets you anyway.' She isn't pretty. Besides I have Elaine."

The dream woman seemed to mock, "Does Elaine satisfy what this woman has called up in you?"

The water was flooded with pictures; Karl's wedding, the pulsing darkness of the room that first night; Alex's wedding, again



he saw Agnes on Alex's shoulder, saw her in his arms as he went out of the crowd. Ivan again walked among the maidens, and the dream woman, that was no longer Tamzie but all the women Ivan had known and dreamed, called from the moonbeams, from the breezes.

Horses' hoofs clattered on the road, slid to a stop.

A girl's voice called, "Ivan, Ivan, are you there?"

Ivan leaped to his feet, "Elaine! Elaine!"

He laughed aloud as he hurried to her. Why had he thought she was not all he needed for complete happiness?

"Elaine!" he called again.

They tied her horse to the fence and went back together to where Ivan had lain watching the pictures.

"Ivan, what have you been doing here? Why didn't you bring me? I hunted for you to ride with me."

Ivan hung his head. The memory of his efforts as a child to show others his water pictures flashed before him. He couldn't tell her what he had been doing; for he couldn't have her laugh at him. They had understood each other so perfectly these three years.

"I can't tell you, Elaine. You wouldn't understand, you would laugh at me."

"Why, you know I never laugh at you. Please tell me, or I will think you do not love me."

Black eyes met blue. Elaine moved closer to him, burrowed her hands into his. "Please, Ivan."



Then he told her of his childhood, his mother, his loneliness, of the pictures that kept him company. He watched her as he talked. Her eyes grew rounder and rounder, sometimes they filled with tears that overflowed on her cheeks. There was no laughter.

"Oh, Ivan, I've had pictures too. Only mine were little ones in the lily pool. Mine just never stayed the same. They were not wonderful like yours. First there was a little girl like me, then the picture was like my father only he had fancy trappings like the prince in the Sleeping Princess. Then the picture was like my mother, she was a Red Cross nurse, then a nun, then an actress with lots of plumes and jewels, and then she was an angel. After you came, a knight rode on a charger, and he was like you. Aren't you glad we both had pictures? Tell me more about you."

"There isn't much more to tell, only I've been happy since I came here. First, I was sad because I had not obeyed my father and married the woman my father picked out for me, but I was glad, too."

Elaine bristled. "I guess you better be glad, because you are going to marry me. The idea of you marrying an ugly Rooshin woman. You shall not."

Ivan smiled and patted her hand, but back of the smile was a little ache at her words, only he of Rooshins was not ugly to her.

"Tell me some more about here."



"When I came to work for your father, he said it was not an easy job because I didn't know so many things I would have to do. I believe your father was sorry for me was why he hired me, but I wanted work, and I wanted to get away from my people. When Tad took me into my room and said, 'This is your room,' I couldn't talk, I just sank down in the chair. A room all by myself, and a bed. When I got up, my legs were shaking, I patted everything in the room, the bed, the dresser, the drawers, the book shelf, the books, the chair, the rocker, the pictures, and the paper on the wall. I love it yet."

"But Ivan, that room isn't very nice. Father scolded mother when she had them fix it into a room for the houseboy as she called him then. It was just a storeroom."

"I know now, Elaine, that it isn't a very nice room, but it is so much nicer than where I had lived. That room is as big as our whole house was, and there were seven of us to stay in it. I have been so happy here. It is another case where there must be a sacrifice if there is to be happiness. That first night, I shall never forget. Tad came up after supper, dinner, I mean, and said if I would come down he would show me where the shower was. The only shower I knew was the kind it rains, but I went. When he said Mrs. Northup demanded that the house employees shower at least once a day, it seemed I was back in school again, and the teacher was saying, 'Ugh! you are dirty, dirty!' And the towels, it is nice to wipe on towels. Then there was the wash basin at the pump with soap right



by it. It even makes me ashamed now to remember how much I did not know."

"Mrs. O'Flynn says that you are a naturally clean person. She says there is a difference. Most of the Rooshins look greasy no matter how much they scour, but you look clean even though you are dirty."

"See here, young lady, have you been discussing me with Mrs. O'Flynn?"

"Oh, everybody discusses you. Even the women that visit mama. You know you are very unusual."

Ivan shut his eyes. There was that woman intruding again.

"I'm glad you didn't say 'different,' I feel like a sort of curiosity whenever I hear the word 'different.'"

"Why? Anybody would like to be you."

"Flatterer," suddenly he had the girl in his arms, he rocked her back and forth. "Elaine! I am too happy here. It will not last. Always there must be sacrifice if you have the things that make you happy. I have everything, everything, money, and you, and I do not give anything--just work. Happiness lasts only a little while. Then it will vanish, but pain lives always, to me it must come again."

As suddenly as the mood swept him, it was gone. He blushed furiously. He was not demonstrative for he feared rebuff. What if he had offended her? He was more and more ill at ease under



her steady bright gaze.

"Oh, Elaine, I didn't tell you about that first night, did I?"

She shook her head, but continued to stare at him.

"I will never forget the 'feel' of the sheets when I slipped between them. They were the first sheets I ever slept on, the first bed I ever slept in. When I thought about my rag pile at home, I wriggled like a young pup in relief at losing his first flea. It was great."

They laughed together, laughed immoderately, both had come close to a new and unknown experience. Then eyes looked into eyes, stilled the laughter; slowly they leaned together. Her arms reached up around him; he held her close; he kissed her hair, her eyes, whispering, "My angel, my angel." Then he released her.

"Now, princess, I must go home. I will be cast deep in the dungeon for neglecting my duty to the fair ladies. But I had to come away. If I had not I would never have known about your pictures. Now I am not 'different.' There is someone like me."

"Why did you call me princess? Am I like a princess? Am I in your water picture?"

"To myself I have always called you princess. You are like a princess, more beautiful than the most beautiful picture princess I have ever seen. And I am your devoted slave."

"Oh, Ivan. You are such a handsome slave. Much better



looking than any of the men mother has."

"Stop it! I am already floating on air, my head will burst if you keep up your flattery. Let me put you on your horse."

"We are going to ride double. Don't you remember the picture of the princess when the prince carries her off?"

"But I am not a prince, I am only a slave." His face was very solemn.

"That makes no matter. When I command you, you must obey, or why should I be a princess. You get on the horse and lift me up."

So they rode home. As they rode into the yard, the woman who had driven Ivan to seek the water watched with jealous eyes. Ivan's devotion to the girl and his seeming indifference to her, angered her. As the man and child came toward the house, she quickly settled herself on the settee. She watched with bright, hard eyes as Ivan stopped Elaine to adjust the bow she wore on her hair, then curled some of the golden hair, that was disarranged, over his long finger, watched the girl lift innocent confident blue eyes to the dark ones above her. She watched as Ivan stooped and kissed the parted lips. She laughed mockingly, "I wouldn't resent a nurse if he were as charming as you. Really, the child is quite too old for so much brotherly gallantry, and quite too young for so much gentlemanly courtesy. She cannot appreciate her rare good fortune. If you



are interested in changing positions, look me up. I'm sure you would find a big girl more exciting, and more satisfying. Yes? And I am sure quite as safe as a child, if that is what you wish."

Elaine, eyes flashing and nostrils quivering, retorted, "No, no. That isn't what he wants. You wouldn't mind having a lover like him either, but you can't. I am going to marry him when I am old enough. Am I not, Ivan?"

Ivan patted the hand that lay on his arm, but his face was flushed and troubled, "If you care to."

The woman's tinkling laughter followed after them as the man led the girl away.

"Elaine, your mother says we are not to be rude to a guest. You were very rude."

"But, Ivan, she is making eyes at you all the time. She is disgusting. I really don't see how you keep your head under it, for she is a deuced attractive woman. There must be something in you that we do not know about."

"Elaine!" Ivan's voice was sharp, his eyes clouded, "do not talk so. That is not my little princess talking. Where have you heard such things? You should not even know of them."

Elaine began to cry, "I heard father tell mother that. He said to get rid of the woman. She isn't fit to be with respectable people. But mamma said everyone had her, in fact she was sort of a fad. She is the New woman. If she wanted to amuse herself



with a country bumpkin like you, what difference did it make?"

"My dear, we have forgotten her, have we not? We will not remember there are such people." But in his mind ran the thought that there were uglier things than labor, birth, and death.







The year of 1917 brought an era of change, cataclysmic for many. Elaine Northup was eleven, a slender graceful girl who danced like a fairy, played the violin with the abandon of an artist, loved passionately the horses in her father's string, the flowers in Ivan's garden, her father and Ivan. But she was selfish, pampered, willful. Whenever she was at home she followed Ivan in whatever he did, demanded that he read for her and tell her stories. She brought her friends home with her, and they, too, preempted Ivan. He had to help all of them with their lessons, had to tell them stories, had to do his roping stunts for them, had to dance with them and for them.

The love he had for the girl had grown; it filled his entire life; it shut out every unpleasantness. Through her, he received all his pleasure; through serving her, he gleaned happiness; in her approval, he found joy. The criticism of Mrs. Northup, the advice of Mrs. O'Flynn, the jeers of the men meant nothing; he dismissed them as jealousies because the golden creature preferred him. And she did.

When she was ill, it was Ivan who stayed with her, answering her every want. When there were new dresses to choose, he picked the colors. He helped her write poetry, he worked mathematics for her, he read her history for her then told her the story. For Ivan, there was no life outside the confines of the Northup ranch except as it touched Elaine.



When April 6, 1917, came and passed, it left a country patriotism mad. Suddenly peaceful men who had truly adopted the country as their own, who were loyal to it as far as their understanding went, were dragged ignominiously before a flag they had hitherto respected and to which they were willing to do homage; and they were forced to humble and abase themselves. Suddenly the abstract word, "citizen," stood a specific and concrete thing. Intention, past actions, integrity of character, meant nothing; citizen was the criterion by which everyone was judged. Ivan was not a citizen; citizenship had meant nothing to him. It was a word with only a dictionary meaning until suddenly men were demanding in strident voices, "Are you a citizen?"

He turned to Stan Northup, "Am I a citizen?"

"Thank God, no."

The two Northup cowhands had enlisted. Stan sent them off with hand shaking and back slapping, but swore because he was increasing his herds to meet the demand for beef and he was left short handed. Ivan now had his turn with the cattle. He rushed from the corral to the house. He was again losing his sleekness.

Mike O'Flynn, fiery Irishman that he was, since he was too old for service wanted Ivan naturalized; wanted him to enlist.

"Stan, that feller just belongs to you. You can make him do whatever you want. You better get him naturalized. Send him to the army. It would make a man of him."



"You old Irish fool, what do you want to do? Take my last hand? I am lucky he is a Rooshin."

"That feller isn't even a good Rooshin. A man doesn't have no mount of backbone in him if he doesn't belong to some country. Why if he went back to Russia--and that old man of his should be sent back there--Russia wouldn't have him. They would run him out. He doesn't talk like a Rooshin, and the Good Lord knows he doesn't act like one. For all his juggling dishes for so long, he is really a white man, and he should belong to a white man's country."

"Mike, you tend to your own business. I won't have a cowhand left if you keep tryin' to make soldiers of them."

Ivan and Elaine, their faces serious, hurried to Stan.

"Father, Ivan and I have been talking. We have decided that he should join the army since--"

"Join the army? Just let him try joining the army." Stan's face was purple. "I just got this old fool settled and now you start in. If everyone joins the army, who is goin' to feed the army? How am I goin' to get cattle on the market without cowhands? I suppose you and Minnie O'Flynn will help."

"Listen, father, until I finish. Since you have no sons, Ivan could go for us."

"That is eleven year old reasoning for you. What about those two fellows that just left? How many sons do you suppose I have to have?"



"Father, will you please be still? Then Ivan could vindicate his father and the Russo-Germans. Now Ivan tells me those Russian Germans and his father really think America is a very wonderful place. Ivan has heard them tell about how much better it is than either Russia or Germany--have you not, Ivan? But they just do not understand about this war, they do understand that when the United States goes to war it is everybody's war, and if you go to war you get paid for it, and if you stay at home you pay for the war but you get paid back. That is the reason they have tried so hard to get out of buying liberty bonds. It is only land that they think is safe for money. Why, Ivan's father would not even take a check for his work; he had to have coins. What would they know about bonds? They would think their money was just being given away, and that they would never get it again. That is what would happen in Russia if there was war, the poor people have to pay for it, and they never get anything back. Really, it is an awful lot to expect people to learn all in a few months. They even painted the Smirnov house yellow because they didn't want to buy bonds. They finally did, though. Not even I understand all this war business and bonds perfectly."

Old Stan grunted, "I guess you don't understand it at all. If you got the high idea that this one Rooshin, who isn't really a Rooshin at all, will make people feel any better toward the rest of them by going to war, you are mistaken. Ivan, do you want to go to war?"

"Mr. Northup, Elaine thought--"



"That's what I thought. 'Elaine thought.' Well, Elaine gets over thinking. You are staying here; you will be busy enough to satisfy both your patriotic impulses."

Ivan's relation to the war was thus briefly settled. But another brick was added to the wall that shut him from contact with his fellowmen. Northup's protection saved him from great annoyance, but the stigma of the Smirnov name was on him. That Northup later helped him to citizenship, could not erase it. Ivan had again been made a pawn in a sacrifice that was too great a price for the returns received.

Under the new hurry and rush, Ivan saw less of Elaine, but the tie was not broken. When O'Flynn went to town, Ivan still sent for little gifts, a bow of bright ribbon, a handkerchief, a candy favor, a trinket. She still met him at the door when his work in the ranch yard was done and his duties in the house began. Many nights he fell to sleep over the books he tried to read or study.

New cattle was entering the Northup feed lots to take the place of fattened ones that were driven to the pens. Grassers were brought in; kept a few months; turned into the lots; then sent out again. It was a time of rush and flurry.

But time and experience never stand still, and man does not step in the same river twice. Elaine had left infancy and childhood, and now she was approaching adolescence. Nell Northup had great social ambitions for her. Mrs. Northup had never been able to



mold her husband into the man she wanted him to be. Marriage had not satisfied her. She turned first to carving out a place in society for herself. Now that her daughter had passed the trying and uninteresting age of childhood and girlhood, Nell was determined to make her a means of advance. Mrs. Northup realized her own attractiveness would soon fade, she had almost reached the peak of her success, but, through a talented and beautiful daughter, she might reach unlimited heights. She must concentrate every effort on the preparation of Elaine for the fulfillment of those ambitions.

She found difficulty in making contacts with her daughter. Elaine had her own interests, her own ideas, her own ambitions. Nell Northup began to break down and set aside these obstacles. It was not easy, and she was not a patient woman. Ivan stood in her way.

First, she talked to Elaine about Ivan. She criticized his owl-like silences, his inability to express himself, his quaint mannerisms. It was adroitly done, not pointed comments but satires, imitations, caricatures. Then she began discussing the companions a girl of Elaine's age should have. But Elaine was not interested in her mother's opinions nor in her mother. She listened politely, but she was bored. After a few of these discourses, she didn't conceal her boredom. Nell was not accustomed to boring people. In her own mind, she decided the girl was as obtuse as her father. It would really be difficult to overcome what now seemed a regrettable childhood



influence.

Ivan began to feel the sting of the woman's disapproval. It was difficult to keep up all the things he must do. His work was never satisfactory. She expected the same service from him as he had given when his whole time was devoted to the house. Ivan doubled his efforts, but Nell always found something to complain about.

He noticed that Elaine seldom met him at the door, and, when she did, she looked back as if frightened. Then one day when he came to the house unexpectedly, he overheard Mrs. Northup talking to Stan.

"Stan, it must stop. I will not have her tagging around with that Russian as though he were her brother. Today she cried when she was leaving because she couldn't tell him goodbye. She said he would be hurt because she hadn't seen him. It certainly wasn't her fault she hadn't. I practically had to hold her last night when she saw him coming to the house. And she acts just the same when people are here. What do you suppose they think?"

"If I remember, some of them sort of envied her."

"Stan, will you shut up? You know as well as I, that this idiotic companionship must stop."

"She has been doing it ever since he came here. Why raise such a rumpus now?"

"She was a child then. Normally, children outgrow their nurses. I did."

"You have outgrown most things of your youth, have



you not? But what is the difference? The fellow is respectable. Why, anyone who has really known him, knows that. They all think he is as decent a fellow as they ever met."

"Stan Northup, will you never have a sense of the fitness of things? A girl entering high school and still hanging onto that Russian scum, still kissing him good night just as she does you, in fact more enthusiastically. What business has he in the house, anyway? What business has an able bodied man, twenty-two or -three years old, doing out of the army, anyway? Why isn't he in the army?"

"Because I don't want him there. And you keep out of that."

"Well, he isn't any good in the house since you insist on his working all the time. He smells like a stable. He belongs in the bunkhouse, and that is where he is going to be sent. If you won't do it, I will. He should be discharged. He has no respect for class levels, but since he is such a valuable man and you cannot run the ranch without him, I suppose he will have to hang around. But he is going to stay away from Elaine. The trash, the slacker, Ugh!" Her voice was shrill.

Stan Northup was uncomfortable.

"Sure, Nell, sure. If that's the way you feel about it. Mike has wanted him for several years. Thinks Ivan could be trained to take his place. I'll be glad to have him working with Mike steady. I have always felt sort of mean keeping him at this house job when all



the boys razed him so. But understand this, I'll not get anyone to take his place in the house. You're a snob, and about as cheap as you make them. As long as the fellow was any use in taking care of Elaine, he was welcome to work himself to death for her, but when you need something to do to pass your time, he is kicked out. You're not putting anything over on me, Nell. You'll cut out your dumb parties, or do the work yourself."

Ivan did not listen to more. He silently left the house. He tried to shut out what he had heard. He did not want to think about it. There grew within him a great fear, a feeling of insecurity. His companionship with Elaine was menaced. She was bound up with his feeling of peace, joy, hope. Before he had known her, there had been none of these. Because he must judge the future by the past, a future without her was a black abyss, pain filled, and its extent unplumbed. He tried to recall the dream woman, Tansie; any of the fantasies that had been the companions of his loneliness before Elaine filled his thoughts. But only one face answered him, Elaine's. Again he felt the brand of 'different,' and it rankled. He had been fighting his antipathy of the term. His difference from his people in physical appearance was an asset; his difference in mental attitude, Elaine thought, made him akin to her.

His thoughts darted from one thing to another, seeking escape; but they were dragged back to Elaine. He had to give her up. His companionship would injure her. Then he reasoned with himself--



that is not it--I will not injure her--I will make her more beautiful, more perfect--but Mrs. Northup sees she is beautiful--she wants her, too. She is afraid of me--she knows Elaine loves me--but what is the difference who Elaine loves--that woman has money and power, she can take her away from me--I will find a way. But Nicholas is right, money and power gets everything.

Ivan moved about with drawn face and haunted eyes. He watched the sun, and knew only its heat; he saw the moon, and found only darkness; he heard the calling and laughing of men, and marked only noise; he bowed beneath the rain, and sensed only moisture. The 'feel of life' was gone; there was only behavior, mechanical reactions. Faith and hope without which no man lives, was going.

He mumbled to himself, "Elaine will soon be home. I must decide. If I stay in the house, all the time that woman will drive me with her tongue. Elaine may believe that I am not doing my work well. She may think ill of me. Her mother will keep her away from me. I will never see her except when her mother is with us; I will be awkward under that woman's looks. I will not stay there. I will ask Stan if I may move to the shack where Mike lived before Stan built the new house for them. Why had I not thought of that before? Elaine will come there with me. I will really have her all to myself. In my own house, I can be a figure. I won't be a servant there. Why have I not thought of that before?

A look of relief came into Stan Northup's eyes when



Ivan approached him about moving, but in his bluff way he questioned. Ivan felt sure he wanted to know if Mrs. Northup had spoken to him.

"What is the matter? Don't you like it where you are?"

"Very much, but I like the outdoor work." Ivan knew the little room over the kitchen would always be a beautiful place in memory.

"Then you want to give up butlering altogether?"

"I wouldn't just say that, Mr. Northup. But if you can use me outside, I would like that."

"Missus hasn't been ridin' you lately, has she?"

"Not in particular, sir."

"Not in particular, heh? Sort of a habit with her. I don't blame you; it isn't a man's job. Then you been doubling up since the other boys left. Guess I will have to get a woman for the house. Mike's been wanting to train you for a foreman. Says he is getting too old for his job. Go ahead and let him try."

Because Northup had a guilty feeling about Ivan, he fixed the shack as comfortably as the building would permit. In the one room he placed the furniture Ivan had in his room in the house. In the other, he placed a couch, a table, an easy chair, a rocker, and some book racks. He filled the rack with books.

"Any time you want more books come to the house after them. Thought maybe you would be interested in bookkeeping if



you plan managing a ranch. You will find some books here."

"Mr. Northup, you've been good to me. I will try to repay you. It doesn't seem I have ever been anywhere but here. You and Tad and Mike seem like my fathers."

"You're an unusual youngster. I know you are a man, but you sort of seem like a boy to me. I guess I do have a fatherly interest in you. But you have changed a lot since I picked you up that day, scared, tired, <sup>and</sup> with no place to go. You got brains and guts. If you keep on stickin' to me you'll come out all right."

Ivan waited eagerly for Elaine. When she knew what had happened in her absence, she rebelled against it. With the unrestraint of youth she told Nell Northup more nearly the truth than the woman wished to hear. Elaine fled to Ivan. She cried out her grief in his arms. He told her of the plans he had for them. They would have many happy hours together. She would come out to his shack where she would be the princess, and he would be her slave. Then they inspected the royal domain together. They planned long rides together, and, just in case they were not permitted to see each other as they planned, they would meet at the irrigation ditch. They had the air of conspirators when they parted.

But Nell Northup had also planned. Elaine was soon caught up in the excitement of the new venture of high school. To make the break from the influence of her father and Ivan more complete, Mrs. Northup arranged for Elaine to remain in town. She wanted a private



school, but Stan refused that. She filled the week-ends with parties, contests, entertainments, and visits. Ivan did not see Elaine for weeks at a time. There were no more bright ribbons, pretty boxes of candy. The first weeks he had brought them as usual, but they lay unclaimed on his table for weeks. When Elaine did come, she took them with a perfunctory, "Thank you," then hurried to tell him of some new adventure. There was not time for secrets to be shared, for dreams to be told, for plans to be made. Then even the visits stopped.

Ivan had never gone to town except on rare occasions when necessity demanded, but he began going whenever anyone asked him in the hope that he might see Elaine. Once and once only, he went to the house where she stayed, and asked for her. She was out. He felt frozen by the coldness of the maid and by his own timidity. He saw Elaine only once. A gay group of youngsters passed him, entered a drug store. He followed. After a time, Elaine noticed him. She waved and called to him.

"Ivan, Ivan, how are you? Come over here with us."

Ivan's heart hammered; a fixed grin hurt his face as he approached them. Elaine continued, "You remember Ivan, don't you? Remember the roping tricks he used to do for us, and the dances?" She whirled to one of her group. "Madge, I have it. Do you remember that dance where you approach your partner, salute, whirl, and all that business? Why not use that for that number we have to give?"

Ivan was forgotten as they all chattered together.



Elaine did not mean to be unkind. She was just young, eager for life and adventure, intent on her own small world. Nell Northup was no fool. Ivan did not go to town again, he settled back in the rut of existence. There was only Elaine's gay call as she raced along the roads, or her friendly smile when they met. But hungry hearts feed on morsels; he took out each little incident and treasured it; he began to return to his dream world. In it he built a shrine and placed therein the memory of his princess.

The war was over but there was still a profit in wheat. Besides speculation was everywhere infecting the air. The mad whirl, created as an aftermath of the maelstrom of war, still gripped the world. The Northup ranch and its inhabitants were in the great wash.

Mike O'Flynn slapped Ivan on the back, "Why, you old sun-of-a-gun, sort of put one over on me. You actually gone and done it? Rented a wheat farm. But you'll make it, you'll make it. Did you have the money?"

"Yes, I had to empty my money sack to pay the rent and deposit enough for the salary for the family on the place. Mike, I don't believe a Smirnov ever before took chances like that with money. It is plain gambling. We are not a betting people. When Nicholas Smirnov hears of this he will be sure I am possessed. His methods are slow-



er but they are surer. He would never put his hopes on the haywire ideas of an old Irish cow foreman." Ivan's face was grim, although he joked.

"You can't go wrong, son. Haven't I told you just how to do it? And to think I thought half the time you weren't listening!"

"I've done as you told me. There is seventeen hundred acres and this the third year for wheat. It is the ranch forty-five miles south and west of here. That is the most desolate country I have ever seen. Miles and miles without a tree, and the houses far apart. I hired the woman and her two sons that tried to raise wheat on the land the last two years to do the work. Rented the implements on the same rent they had."

"Don't you worry, son. You'll make a killin'," Mike chuckled.

"Yes? That is what that woman and her sons thought, but they barely made expenses."

"Wheat is going to be worth money for a year or two yet, and that land has its good year about one in four. Next year will be its fourth. We will go down to see how it is getting along."

Mike O'Flynn was one of those men who know everything about their own job and have big ideas about many other jobs. Ever since the war had created the demand for wheat, and the prairie on the ridge between the Platte and <sup>the</sup> Arkansas was broken, Mike had expounded



on the possibility of big money from wheat. All the time he and Ivan rode the range, Mike talked wheat, wheat, wheat. When he went to town he spent his time with the men interested in wheat. He knew the dates for sowing, the best method of taking care of newly turned sod, marketing costs and conditions, methods of harvesting, men who were interested in renting implements for wheat farming. He knew available wheat ranches, the possibilities of crops. Theoretically, he was a successful wheat farmer. Ivan listened carefully and, in the night when he wished to get away from the thought of Elaine, he went over this data. He, too, began to listen to wheat men. O'Flynn's theories seemed grounded on facts.

To combat Nell Northup, Ivan needed money. He counted his savings. He had enough to finance the project.

That evening Mike met Northup at the gate of the ranch, swung into the seat beside him. He was bursting with his news.

"Didn't I tell you that Rooshin has a head on him? He rented that big wheat ranch I tried to get you to rent. He'll make more on that in one year than you will in ten years on cows. He is going to make a better manager than I ever did. It is just in him to bring in the dollars."

Northup grumbled, "Yes, and hold onto them."

Mike ignored the remark. "He's a smart feller. Look what he has done since he has been here. Came in 1913, didn't he? In the six years he saved enough to turn this deal. Say, I found out he



made a little during the war, too. He furnished some of the Russians north of the river with cattle and sheep, and then took a share of the profits. Never spends anything except for Elaine. Since she is gone, he saves all of it."

"Yes, he and his tribe will be sittin' pretty in this valley when the rest of us are in the poor house. While he is makin' money, I'm layin' it out. Mike, I have promised that darn woman I'll build a house."

"What's the matter with that house? It's been here forty years. Always was the best lookin' house in the country till they built some of them new ones the last few years. I remember when your granddad built it. I was still ridin' herd. Don't you hate to see it torn down? Gosh, man, you just can't do that."

"You see, it's this way. Elaine's going to be out of high school in a couple years, then she will be going to college. It doesn't make so much difference what kind of house she's got now because everybody around her knows us, but, when she gets away from here and brings back her friends, they might not think so well of her. You know, after all, Mike, birds are known by their feathers. You and me are sort of old fogies. We don't keep up with the new fangled notions."

"I guess you are right, but it won't seem like the same old place. Things are changing too fast for me."

"If you will notice, most of the really progressive



people are building. There is a whole row of new houses in Morgan, and they are fine ones too."

"Stan Northup, I don't see as that makes any difference in the people. I think folks has sort of lost their heads with all these high prices and this excitement and rushin' around they're doin'. Better slow down a little, or we will be gettin' into trouble. Them arguments you been puttin' up are not yours, they're Nell Northup's. I never knowed you to be quotin' women's ideas before. Another thing, Elaine is drivin' that car too fast. Even Ivan's worryin' about it, and, when he thinks anything she does is not perfect, it is time to look into it."

"She is sort of burnin' up daylight but she is a good driver. She sure is a grand kid." He sat deep in thought. "But I'm afraid Nell will spoil her. All she thinks is havin' the kid performin' or going somewhere. She is never at home a minute. I don't hardly get to see her. Last week she give a recital and two numbers at dinners in Denver. Every week it is something."

Mike rubbed his chin. "I wondered when you would get to thinkin' about that."

"Times change. We are old timers, Mike, old timers. Times will never be like they used to. Hello, Ivan, Mike says you are a wheat baron now. Might let a fellow in on your big scoop."

"Thank you, Mr. Northup," Ivan stammered, "I'll be glad to. I didn't suppose you would be interested, seeing it is wheat."



Stan laughed, "I'm not. Cattle is good enough for me. Mike had tried to rope me in on that for the last two years. I'm not that kind of sucker."

"Don't mind him, Ivan. He will be whistling a different tune when harvest comes in next summer."

But Ivan thought about it much. Sometimes he was sure that Stan was right, he had been a 'sucker' roped in by the over-enthusiasm of a man who knew nothing about wheat. But as he and Mike visited the vast field from time to time, his enthusiasm returned and his confidence. Ivan, too, had listened to the schemes for quick money, the building of fortunes on street corners.

He saw the seed bed when the drills had made their fine lines down the acres. He saw it when the black loam pin-striped with green lay damp from a slow rain. He saw it when the tender blades made a soft mass stretching away to the horizon. He saw it a green waving sea. Then he saw it in the glory of its fruitage.

He looked out over the golden sea. It rippled into waves under the caressing breath of the July wind. A soft swishing murmur filled the air. Each heavy head swayed gracefully on its slender stem bowing and courtesying to its neighbor, whispering of its golden horde. Ivan's heart raced with the beauty of it. For long he had forgotten beauty except as it swelled in the human form. He felt himself sway with the movement of the field; his head bowed with the bearded plumes. He felt the full glow of the fruiting time of life within him.



self. He knew the spirit of the harvest.

Soon, all was stir and hurry. The stamping of horses, the creaking of harness, the clatter of combines, the put-put of engines, mingled with the excited voices of hurrying men. Then the harvest began. Bleached stubble trailed after the combines. Into sacks, ran the golden grain. Truck followed truck hauling away the precious cargo.

Ivan's hands trembled when he received his last check. The Smirnovs had never used banks, nor had they gleaned in such sums. For one self-satisfying moment he dreamed of parading his wealth before the Smirnovs. He would vindicate himself, justify his actions in the one way that he knew the Smirnovs would understand. In place of the slip of paper he held in his hand, a huge pile of glittering gold pieces were in the room; around them, stood the illy-kept and smelly Smirnovs, their eyes bulging, their mouths open, staring first at the coins and then at him. He, in the black livery of the Northrup serving man, leaned non-challantly by the window, the light from the coins and from the window focused on him; suddenly they all dropped to their knees. Nicholas lifted his arms to him, "My son, forgive me. I did not know how wonderful you were."

But it was only a dream. Never would Nicholas Smirnov say that. Ivan was not sleek and smooth. His hair was matted with perspiration, his overalls were dust caked. In his hands was the slip of paper, a slip of paper that he might trade for land, and within his con-



sciousness was a great self-complacency, but, within his heart, was loneliness.

In the years that followed the war, the tempo of life was speeded until only the keenest could keep abreast the pacesetters. Human nature had perhaps not changed but it took on a different veneer. The Northups swung with the tide.

As Ivan sat in the high school auditorium waiting for the commencement exercises to begin, a kaleidoscopic view of the past few years spread before him. And as he viewed it, he repeated to himself, "Nothing remains the same, all is change. Today we are not what we were yesterday; tomorrow we will not be what we are today." He looked over the assemblage. He saw among them a scattering of the Russo-Germans, parents who looked uneasily about them, ill at ease in that group, yet tinged with a certain pride. They were parents whose fathers had not cared much for education, but they were seeking to give their children advantages denied to them. He saw ranchers who, like Northup, trusted to cattle, who had failed to read the signs of the time, and were in financial distress. They had built up their herds to meet the demands of war, and they had been caught with those herds. They had seen the beef market 'go begging' while their mortgages went on drawing interest, waiting the time of foreclosure. He saw wheat men who continued producing the maximum acreage;



crying for war markets because they must pay war prices for production. He saw ranchers who had grown beets since the industry first opened in their section, sweating under the new regulations the factory was placing on them. Philippine sugar was drugging a market already gorged by over-production to meet war demands. He saw merchants and shop men who still flourished, but were beginning to complain of holding worthless paper. He saw bankers who looked harrassed.

The Northups sat with the social elite. Ivan watched with smoldering eyes the proud lift of Nell Northup's golden head. She was polished, adamant, scornful of the pathos about her. She felt it so common that her daughter should graduate from the public schools. He imagined he heard her explaining, "It is Stan's democratic idea that Elaine should graduate from the public school." During the war, her name had headed Red Cross committee lists, charity entertainments, welfare projects. Since the war, there had been a gayer and gayer whirl of activities. The more conservative social group had long been left behind. Many lines marked Stan Northup's face.

Northup had built the house Nell wanted, a palatial structure after the style of the old Spanish dons in southern California. But it was not a home to Stan. Ivan recalled a conversation when the house had first been finished.

"I guess it is all right. Building has cost a mint of money, more than I had anticipated. And the inside was planned and finished by a fellow Nell had down from Chicago. He was a friend, but



he sent a bigger bill than a highwayman would be expected to. That furniture doesn't look like a ranch house to me. I don't believe I'll ever feel at home in it."

Ivan had asked, "Does Elaine like it?"

"Yes, she is crazy about it. At times she seems very like her mother. I've always hoped she would be like my mother, and I used to think she would. But what time does she have for developing character? This always going, going, going, isn't good for young girls."

"Times are changing, Mr. Northup."

"Some things must remain the same if the world keeps on being a fit place to live in, things like truth and honesty and respect."

Ivan, in his obscure corner of the auditorium, wondered if those things still persisted in the form Stan Northup's mother had known them. He, Ivan, had failed to keep the tradition of his people. His head drooped as he remembered. Again he felt the hot shame that had filled him when he had left his father's roof, but now, as then, there was mingled with it exultation. Nicholas Snirnov was dead. And Ivan had not known until Mike O'Flynn had heard it in the town. Then one day Ivan met Karl, Alex, and Peter with their wives, on the street. They were taking care of their father's will. Ivan spoke his native tongue less fluently. He had had more use of the German.

"I am never in the town. So seldom have I seen you.



I am sorry about my father. I always wanted him to forgive me."

It was Agnes who answered, "That does not matter. For long he hated all of us. He talked always of Tamzie and of you. He was forever getting you mixed. He thought you had taken Tamzie away from him. He thought you did it because he beat you when you had that coin. He tried, sometimes, to drive us all away so you would come back and bring Tamzie. It is better that he is dead. Now we can live."

Alex caught her arm, "Put a curb on that sharp tongue. He was our father."

It had been long since Ivan had heard a woman thus spoken to. He was shocked at the appearance of the group. Karl was an old man although not forty; Alexia was broad, heavy, and her clothes were in the same style as her mother's; Agnes, too, was heavy, although she made an effort to keep abreast of the times in a tawdry fashion. She was only a few years older than Ivan, but she had coarsened and looked unkept. Rosa was uglier than in youth, if that were possible. Each woman had borne children at least every two years, sometimes oftener, but death made heavy inroads. Alexia had lost two in succession in the early months of pregnancy. She was always sighing, and was in much pain.

Ivan dared not go on thinking about them, criticizing them. "Where is Catherine?"

"She is at home. She is almost blind, no good to



anyone," Karl answered.

"What do you plan to do? How much land have you?"

Karl answered again, "Two hundred and forty acres.

We will keep on as we have done."

Agnes interrupted, "We are not, we will farm it together but each shall do as he wishes with his share of the profits."

Then they all talked together, arguing, bickering.

Ivan frowned, a sense of shock again filling him. There was such confusion, such clacking of tongues, harsh, unmelodious. Had it always been that way? He had not recalled his home with pleasure, but this was worse than memory painted it.

Karl turned from the rest, "It is only by a chance that you did not share in the land. Casting out a son in this land does not keep him from sharing in his father's estate. If Henry Kronkow had not heard it discussed, father would not have known about making the will."

"I am glad he knew, but it would have made no difference, I would have returned it. I have money."

It was good to tell them that. Those brothers hated and scorned him, although his labor had helped earn part of the land that they denied him share in. Within him, Ivan knew he was ashamed of them; he disliked even to talk to them there on the streets, and he did want them to envy him. He enjoyed their looks as Peter questioned, "Is it true you have made much money, thousands of dollars?"



"It is true, and I own my own land. Mine is under the Platte and Beaver Ditch, the old ditches are the best."

These people who had always made him feel as a stranger, he would make them sorry; they would wish he lived with them.

Again Peter questioned, "You have stayed by what you told father? You have married no woman?"

That startled Ivan. No, he had married no woman, but not because he had told his father that.

Peter continued, "What will you do in your old age? You will have no children; who will take care of you?"

Ivan drew himself to his full height; he spoke with cold contempt, "South of the river, men do not depend on children to keep them. They have children to love and to cherish. Those men take care of themselves, and I am one of them."

The Smirnovs looked at each other, then at him. Karl again was spokesman, "That comes from separating from one's people. What you have done is not good. You cannot forget the ways of your fathers, and not be destroyed. Should you die today, your life is as nothing. You are barren, only a name."

Ivan twitched, heart and blood seemed to leap, to gather in his throat. If he were destroyed would there be no son to live after him? But there was time. He heard the echo from the past, "The idea of your marrying an ugly Russian woman. You shall not. You



shall marry me."

"Elaine," he whispered, as the orchestra began its overture. The curtains opened. Ivan gripped the edge of his chair. Elaine was in the orchestra; he found her; his eyes did not leave her. Then the curtain closed again. There was the shuffle of feet as people settled themselves for another number. In the orchestra were two German boys. Their parents sat near Ivan. He listened abstractedly to their eager talk about the boys. Then again Ivan looked for Elaine. She was not there. The curtain closed; opened. The members of the orchestra shifted to make room for a vision that walked among them. Elaine carried her violin in her arm. Perhaps Ivan knew the greatest joy that had ever come to him in those moments when the girl poised, with lifted violin bow, waiting the accompanist to give her the note; and the greatest ecstasy when at last the bow settled on the taut strings, and the deep tones of the G vibrated through the hall. Her golden hair lay back from the white brow in heavy waves. A half smile parted her lips as she lost herself in the melody she played. Her slender body, tightly swathed in green lace that flared in a froth at her knees, swayed. Ivan's every fiber answered the call of her violin. There was no present, no past, no future. There was only harmonious unity. There were no faces, no figures, only lights and shadows focusing on a brilliant central point. And there was sound, sound in which one floated, rocked gently by the essence of existence, or lay at peace buoyed up by the spirit.



He was startled by the clapping, jerked back into himself. In the hour that followed, Tamzie and Elaine were intermingled; the dream world and the real, met. The past four years were swept aside. Elaine was the comrade again. He looked forward to seeing her, telling her his plans. He had a secret to tell her. Suddenly he knew why he had told no one except to boast of it to his brothers; She was to have been the first who knew of his land.

The next evening he hurried to the house to see her. He thought of Mrs. Northup's irritation; wondered if she would prevent Elaine coming to meet him. If she did, then they would meet at the irrigation ditch. He had been foolish to let Mrs. Northup worry him, to be afraid that this friendship would harm Elaine.

Stan met him at the door, "Hello, Ivan, come in. Anything I can do for you?"

"I came to see Elaine."

"They left this afternoon. Nell and she went to Denver, then they are going up to the cottage at Estes for the summer."

"I didn't know." Ivan felt dazed. He stood without moving.

"Come on into the den. It is sort of still around here with them gone. It has surely been a noisy place the last few weeks. Getting graduated is some job. But it was great. She is a fine girl. I'm looking forward to having her around home from now on. But here I go talking about that girl like an old woman. Mike tells me



you made pretty good on sheep again. If you keep on, you are going to have that old dyed-in-the-wool cowman sold on sheep. How I hate the smelly devils."

"It isn't a matter of liking things of that kind. It is a matter of money. I guess most men would rather raise wheat than beets. It isn't nearly the work, but there isn't the money, either. You've got to make sacrifices whatever you do. I did have good luck. My losses were light, and the lambs made the biggest gain I ever had. That fellow who cared for them this year is good." As he talked his thoughts were straying--she isn't here, I can't see her --she didn't tell me--things are not as they seemed--there has been change.

"Have you thought of investing your money? There is a ranch west of here that is going at a bargain. I don't know why any man would want cattle now-a-days but things have to change. It is a bargain. He has to sell or the mortgage will take it."

"I have already bought land. That is what I came to tell Elaine."

"Where? When?"

"Several months ago. It is on the Platte and Beaver. The Paine Place. He was speculating, you know, and was cleaned out. Had to sell to cover his losses."

Northup was frowning. For the moment Ivan was just another Russian, and he had taken the place of an old and established



American. "I suppose you will stock it up with a bunch of Russians, raise beets, and feed sheep. The country along that river isn't a fit smelling place for a white man. Mike O'Flynn thought he could make a cattle man out of you. He made a blankety blank mistake. If the whites would stick together like you Russians, we might be able to keep our heads above water. You have been feeding sheep five winters. Has it ever been an American who tended them? Not once, every time a Russian, or German as you call them. When you buy land, do you buy it of a Russian? No, it is an American. Why didn't you buy cattle land? You could buy a thousand acres for what that hundred cost you."

Northup paced the floor. Ivan felt very small, in him grew a mean wish, that some day he might tell this man what he should have done. Always someone telling him what to do, but I never dare give advice, yet I make more money than any of them. That is it, they are jealous of me--I will have to answer Northup--why doesn't he sit down, he charges back and forth like a bull in its pen--Shall I tell him I never hired a Russian? There isn't a Russian around here to hire. But he knows that; he said I would call them German. It won't do any good, it never does any good to talk. He thinks he knows it all.

Ivan was calm and courteous when he spoke. "This is hardly the time to begin ranching, is it, Mr. Northup, even if you could take over a place that was making money instead of picking one



out of bankruptcy. Most cattlemen are cutting their herds to a minimum. The day of the big herd is gone. I couldn't afford to take the losses you have taken the past three years. Your cattle went on the market at twelve dollars in 1919, a year later at nine, and this year at six, yet your taxes have raised continually, your help is just as expensive, your general expenses are higher. Besides, there isn't the market for beef. When you feed sheep, you feed on a narrow margin, but, if you make, the money is big, because you can care for so many in a small space. True, you lose in the same way, but it is worth a chance. Prices have held there, and feed stuffs are not in proportion. As for my hiring Germans to care for them, an American farmer that is dependable enough for me to risk my money on, won't do it; he is on his own, too eager for big profits and quick money to work on shares. The bankers will back him, so why share with me? Then he counts the cost of his labor. The German doesn't, money made in winter is money gained. I have rented to Germans for the same reason; they are dependable."

"The bottom did go out of the cattle market in 1919, and it has been getting worse. Ranching since barbed wire came, has not been so much a big profit as a building up of your capital. You reinvest most of what you make. But it is clean work and a man's job. If handling coins is what you're interested in, ranching won't give them to you."

"That is why I have taken my chance on irrigated land.



I will feed sheep although I do not make much because the land needs the fertilizer."

Ivan was tired, unhappy, lonely. He had land, but no one with whom to share the joy of possession; he had plans for that land, but no one to whom he could confide them. He heard Northup haranguing on and on, but he did not comprehend. Then one phrase associated itself with his thoughts, ". . . always changing, and it isn't for the better."

Ivan answered from the depths of his detachment, "Yes, always changing. When I came here I was an unhappy, miserable kid wanting something, hurt by everything. Elaine was a happy little girl, loving everybody, loved by everybody. Then I was a happy fool, thinking I had all there was in the world to have, and that I was giving nothing in return. But I was giving everything, sapping myself dry, pouring it into a plant that had no roots. I was thinking there would be a golden harvest when I might reap my fill. There is nothing, nothing. Elaine goes on being loved by everybody, finding new ways of living. Change is the spice of life to her. I am miserable because things change. Only last night when I heard her play, I made myself believe there really wasn't change; it is just that things seem to change as they grow and develop. I was happy in that belief. But I was wrong. When I hold the seed in the spring, it is one thing; when I see the plant in the summer, it is another thing; when I pluck the fruit in the autumn, it is still another thing. All is change, and it isn't for the better."



He rose from his chair, rubbed his hand across his forehead and left the room, not conscious that Stan Northup stared after him.

That night Mike O'Flynn died. Mrs. O'Flynn called Ivan when the first streak of light appeared in the sky. Before they got back to the O'Flynn house, Mike was dead. Tad cursed as he stooped over his old friend. Stan Northup slumped and grayed as Ivan watched him. In Ivan's own heart was horror. For the moment, the child terror of death returned. Not since his mother died, had Ivan come in contact with death. Yesterday Mike O'Flynn talked with him, planned for the week's work. This morning he lay a lifeless husk, rigid, unresponding. By him his wife said her rosary. From time to time she reached over and patted the ashen cheek. Each time Ivan gritted his teeth, and cringed back.

Stan Northup called Nell. Ivan waited to see when Elaine would come. He hated to think of her coming near the thing that had been Mike O'Flynn, but he wanted her with him. Stan's eyes were bright; his lips thin when he came from the telephone.

"When will they be here?" Ivan eagerly inquired.

"They won't. Parties, parties. What is a dead friend when there is a party? Oh, I forget, he isn't a friend; he's just a foreman. Yeah, a foreman, the man you have slept with, ate with, rode with, lived with. The man that has shared your troubles for nearly fifty years, who stood beside you when your father was put in



the ground, isn't your friend since you happen to pay him wages. Some day that woman will go too far."

Ivan shuddered. Did men feel that way about one another? His life was empty, terribly empty. He was swept up in loneliness.

It was a busy summer for Ivan. He and Stan worked alone. There were no more gatherings in the shadow of the bunkhouse. Minnie O'Flynn had gone to her sister in the east. Tad had left the Northup ranch. When Mike was gone he could not stand the loneliness and the memory of the old days. "And I can't stand that woman. The idea, leavin' old Stan alone when he was broke up that way. I can't stay, even for Stan."

One cook served the Northup ranch. Ivan ate with her in the kitchen of the ranch house.

A sort of hopeless lethargy had settled over the ranch and over Ivan. During the day there was little time to think of anything except the tasks at hand. In the evenings his thoughts went to Elaine as inevitably as a saint to his god. There was always the cycle--he had been happy in her happiness, the she had gone, and there was darkness--she must return, then there would be happiness again. He found only one escape, that was in books. In trying to follow the courses Elaine had taken in high school, he had found much difficulty;



some he could easily master and they gave him much joy. He read more and more. Here and there he found his thoughts set forth by others. With books he lost his shyness, laid aside his mask. But he still hoped to regain his companionship with Elaine. As his former disappointment faded in the past, new hope sprang up. A few times during the summer, she had driven into the ranch, but only for a few hours. She was always surrounded by gay companions. When she came home for the winter, Ivan assured himself, everything would be different. They would pick up the threads of their lives where they had dropped them four years before.

Northup bought a herd of grassers in the mountains. He wanted Ivan to bring them in for winter fattening. Before he left, Ivan went to the house to inquire about Elaine. The housekeeper retorted, "She ain't home, and the Lawd only knows when she will be. Home is the last place you would expect to find either of the Northup women."

"You do not expect her soon?"

"Mr. Northup told me to get the house freshened up; they were to be home any day now. But that doesn't mean anything. They may be in Chinees before they come back."

Ivan was gone two weeks. All the last day as he and his two helpers drove the herd, he thought of again seeing and talking to Elaine. His throat tightened with the same feeling he had as a boy when he anticipated some pleasure. In his thoughts she was not



the careless seventeen year old girl with her ridiculous grown up clothes, her sleek hair, her rouge and lipstick. She was the ten year old child that had been his comrade. He reveled in the responses he had her make when he told her about his land. They would plan a house and a lily pond. He knew she would like the name, "Dream Acres." When the cattle were corralled, he quickly washed and dressed. He went to the Northup door, very quietly listening for Elaine's voice. This time he went to the front door. He hoped Mrs. Northup would answer. But it was Stan Northup who opened the door.

Ivan's breath caught as he remembered. It had been Stan Northup who had answered his ring before.

"Hello, Ivan. I've been out to look at those yearlings. You brought them through in fine shape. Come in and eat with me. I'm just starting."

"I came to see Elaine."

Stan's face was sober, a little lined. He scuffed the floor as he answered. "She and Nell left yesterday."

Ivan hated the chill that crept down his spine; a premonition. "When will she be back?"

"I guess she won't be back till spring. They finally decided on Virginia, although I can't see why Boulder or Denver wouldn't have been just as good. Both the colleges have good standing. I don't see the sense of college for her, anyway. It isn't as though she had to make a living. But Nell insists it is the thing to do. Anyone that



is anyone now days has a college education. You go there to get social standing, not education; to meet eligible men. Elaine couldn't meet the right people in a western school; she has to go to one of them finishing schools or whatever they call them. Nell went with her. Seems like a long way to have Elaine go. I had planned on having her home this winter."

Ivan turned away; he couldn't stand the sound of the man's voice. He knew he had been fighting against just this; that he had never had any hope of Elaine's returning. He had been, again, fooling himself with dreams. In his room he sat with relaxed body. He faced the necessity of adjusting himself to life. Always he had adjusted life to himself. He stripped off the armour he had so carefully forged, and stood up what remained for inspection.

There you are, how do you like the looks of yourself --you are just an undersized Russian, five feet and seven inches-- you have a pretty face, but where is its strength?--Why does this girl mean so much to you?--She had given you the recognition you demand--You are afraid people will really know how weak you are, so you keep away from them. You are not sure of yourself.--That is why you spent all your time on a child--you thought you had her fooled. --You have tried to still your loneliness and inferiority by self-hypnotism and fantasy--you pretend that you are indifferent to people, yet you crave their approval and companionship. You miss Mike O'Flynn and Minnie and Tad--You may fool other people but you cannot fool



yourself--The time comes just as it has now come to you, when you must face yourself--You must see yourself as the dwarfed thing you are--It is even an accident that you have made money--It was Mike O'Flynn who really made your first money--You always do what other men point out, you never think or act for yourself--You won't even think of Elaine as a young woman--That would mean a new situation to cope with, and you try to slip through life without change.

Ivan leaped to his feet. "It's a lie, a lie. I do think, I do act for myself. I am not a weakling." He rushed from the house. Everywhere echoed the chanting of all the voices he had ever heard, "a dumb Rooshin, a dumb Rooshin." It was dawn when he returned. His face was lined and drawn, but his shoulders were squared and his jaw set. He picked up the mask that he had laid aside, carefully and deliberately adjusted it.

"Dreams, yes. Why not dreams? Isn't money, power, love--everything, a dream? Do they not all fade? Today Stan Northup has them; tomorrow it may be I. If I can be happier with dreams, I will dream, but I will not be fooled into believing in happiness, it will not last. I will know that there is no reality. All that exists are ideas. Things are only what we perceive them, phantoms that vanish when they are no longer thought. Sacrifice, sacrifice, everywhere, and for what? For a happiness that turns to ashes as you hold it. Why plan for the future, take from the hour what it has."

Ivan felt very old and very wise; he had a great contempt for life.







Ivan sat at the window of his living room watching the shadows pass back and forth across the Northup windows, just as he had sat there from time to time the past four years, watching the shadows cross. There came to him, muffled by the walls and distance, the savage beat of jazz which blended with the whine of the raw night wind that blew in around the loosely fitted window.

The four years that Elaine had been gone had seen many changes. It seemed to Ivan that he had always watched and waited for something, something which he did not attempt to name. He watched the Northup's growing extravagance. He heard the rumors that floated about the town and country. "Nell Northup is flying high, and that girl of hers is spendin' the old man's money just as fast as in the east. She hasn't been home since she went to college. But their sun has a settin' day a-comin'. It has stayed up about as long as it can. What goes up has to come down."

Ivan knew that Nell Northup was playing the markets. She used tips that came from her friends. But she lost as well as made. The cattle market remained 'flat.' Stan was crochety. He swore at the times, at the world in general, and at Ivan in particular. His friends withdrew one by one before his belligerent attitude. He railed, "What's the country coming to when your hired man, a damned Rooshin, can make money and a white man faces bankruptcy. Answer me, Answer me! Don't stand there staring like an owl."



And Ivan always answered, "It is unfortunate."

Ivan listened to all the arguments, the recriminations, but he knew that Northup only argued in an effort to convince himself. The times might have something to do with his financial condition. It was getting harder and harder to make money from the land, but the Northup extravagance had much to do with it, and the Northup stubbornness. Ranches could be made to maintain themselves if herds were small enough, if as much roughage as the dry land would produce was grown on the home ranch, if expenses were kept to a minimum. All agricultural pursuits were suffering. The irrigated lands had their problems. The market for sugar had not opened up. The restrictions were greater and greater. Acreage was cut; sugar content raised; fertilizer required. Sheep feeding became more and more a gamble. Truck gardening was increasing, but the profits were low. The entire agricultural industry was in turmoil. Everywhere there was the cry for the "good old days."

Of all these things Ivan thought, and to himself answered, "You do not want the good old days. You are a country that has gone entertainment mad. Look at that house yonder. Everything, love, loyalty, peace, are forgotten in the mad scramble for pleasure. If you dance you must pay. It is only I that live in the old days, and I have lands and money."

The older generation of the Germans wailed that the younger was 'coming to nothings.' Occasionally a German lost his farm, made a 'flyer' in sheep, and lost all his savings. Here and there a



girl married outside her people. The elders nodded their heads, "Yes, she will make him a good wife, she is trained to work, to save, and to obey. She will like the American ways because she will not have to work hard. But what will happen to our sons if that keeps on? They will not be able to get wives among their own people if our girls marry these dancing Americans, and the American girls are no good to our boys. All those girls know is how to look nice, and how to use the can opener. They marry to have a good time and a good living. Their ways are not our ways."

Some of the German girls played with the dancing Americans, but did not marry them. Then there was grief and shame in their homes, and there was more bitterness against the younger generation. A few of the younger German men were going into professions, some were entering politics. These tried to interest their elders in government. If they must live under the government, why should they not shape it to meet their needs? The elders only shook their heads, "We leave it alone, let it leave us alone. This always changing is not for the best."

Ivan had watched this strange panorama that was life, watched this people among whom he had dwelt, and he murmured, "Soon they will sacrifice for a new idol."

He stirred uneasily. Often he questioned himself, "Why do I stay here to let Stan Northup insult me, to be called a hired man and a fool? Why do I not go to my own farm? Sometimes I



get my salary here, sometimes I do not. But I will get it sometime. I will be paid for everything someday. I am waiting for something, perhaps to say, 'I told you so?'"

Many times he pictured that telling. As he watched the shadows cross the window, he found not a detail that he would change in the picture. He saw the Northup pens filled with sheep, Stan Northup's face purple and distorted watching them, Ivan with a mask of assumed indifference watching him--the bottom land on the southeast corner of the Northup range covered with cane waiting for the silage cutter while Stan Northup swore that no plow should ever touch his land, and Ivan laughing as he told him he had no land--Nell Northup ordering him from the house while behind her, guests stared at him. He heard his indifferent answer, remote and detached, "Madam, I shall be glad for you and your guests to remain as my guests, but, if so, you will have to endure my presence." He pictured the look of consternation on their faces as they glanced at each other, the scramble for the fauning masks which each quickly put on. They grouped around him, one by one their masks fell in amazement; for they found him interesting.

But would that be surprising? Was it not true that from time to time men with whom he had dealing sought him out because they had by chance stumbled onto some age old principle that Ivan, in working out, had given a peculiar twist? At first Ivan had refused the invitations of those people; avoided them. But more and



he came to mingle with them; for he was getting something from them that he could not get alone. Each time he caught an exchange of glances between a husband and his wife, Ivan knew they had not expected to find manners or thought in the hired man of a rancher, a Rooshin. And his anger flared. Perhaps he should tell them being a butler was good training in conventions. But he always decided against it, decided to let the good lady wonder. Did he speak Russian?--yes, and German, too--Oh, she was surprised to learn that. Had she not known that there were no Russians in her section of Colorado? She had heard it, of course, but everyone called the foreign element Russian. After he left these kindly ones, he was sure he knew what happened. The wife exclaimed, "We must see more of him. Who would have imagined they were such interesting people, and so intelligent."

The husband, beaming, would reply, "Yes, didn't I tell you so? But there is something about him--I can't get next."

And he was always asked to return. In four years his circle of acquaintances had widened, for he had gone again and again. But that made no difference with the big house where the shadows crossed and recrossed the lighted window, and where jazz blared far into the night.

Ivan turned wearily from the window. Yes, he had gone as he had watched the big house, but why? He always came back to the blended creature that had been Tamzie and Elaine, to his struggle



against the forces that refused to recognize him, to his waiting.

While Ivan watched the shadows across the Northup windows, Stan Northup mingled among his wife's guests, glancing from time to time at his watch. Their dancing, singing, drinking, and bridge playing bored him; besides, he needed to think. But they were slow in leaving. It was long after midnight when the last car left. Stan hunched in a chair, too tired to move. When Nell saw him, she came to his chair. He moved uneasily; for he knew what she wanted. The house must be redecorated. She had found a firm that could duplicate the furniture that had been in the original home from which the Northup's was copied. Before she had time to speak, Stan raised his hand in protest, "I can't afford it, Nell. I've told you before that I have borrowed to the limit. I can't do it. Please let's not go in to it again."

"But, Stan, you do not understand. I haven't mentioned it before, because I was sure it would be evident to you. Elaine will be home now. Her eastern friends will be visiting her. They must not find these atrocities. They all cry of 1920. She must have the proper background, and what would be more fitting for her style of beauty than the old Spanish? The house is built for it."

"Listen to me, Nell. If you keep up, she will have parents in the poor house. She may be able to keep out of there herself, although I don't put much faith in this college education she has been getting."



"Nonsense, if you are not making money it is your own fault. I, a woman, am doing very well. I have kept both Elaine and me in clothes. This Russian of yours, they tell me, has cleaned up enough to furnish two houses. If he can do it for himself, let him do it for you. I really think you should give him a freer hand. He seems to have financial ability."

"Are you asking me to put sheep on this place?" Stan was on his feet glaring at her.

"I am asking you to be yourself. You prat about loving Elaine and get positively maudlin about her, but everything that I want for her you complain about. I had to fight to get her in college. I have had to coax and cajole you about every vacation she has had, the first summer to send her to Maine, the next year to cruise the Carribean, and last summer to Canada and Alaska. You are always standing in her way. I am about through ever asking you to do anything to help her."

"Nell! Nell! You know I love Elaine as much as you do, but I've got to think about her future. This place is all I have--"

Nell Northup burst into tears, "Yes, her future! What kind of future? You want her to have to worry about money as I have, drudge, drudge. The only future she can hope for is a good marriage, but without a fit home to bring young men into, how can she make any kind of a marriage? My poor baby, my poor baby," she sobbed on and on.



At last Stan threw up his hands in despair. "All right. I guess they can sell the house for enough to pay for decorating it. I'm sure I don't have the money to pay for it."

As summer approached, everything was in a blaze of excitement; Elaine was coming home. Ivan could not analyze his emotions. Perhaps he was glad, but he was not sure. In the four years of her absence, he had deliberately built up the memory of the child and Tamzie as the blended character he had visioned under the magic of her violin. He realized what was left was not the reality. He had no means of knowing what Elaine would do to this ideal. He shrank from the unhappiness seeing her might give him.

Stan Northup was as a drunken man. There must be everything for Elaine. He threw himself into every plan. He talked of nothing but Elaine. He counted the days until she would start home. Then one morning a telegram came. Stan opened it, held it in his hand a few minutes, then crumpled it, and shoved it into his pocket. His elation was gone. He climbed slowly into his car, drove out of the gate. Ivan watched him turn the car toward town.

As Ivan cleaned the cattle pens, he wondered what was in the telegram, and he became uneasy. It must have to do with Elaine. He scoffed at himself. What difference could that make, if it did? But scoffing did not stop his thoughts. Mrs. Northup had gone to be



with her for commencement; perhaps it was from her.

Four hours later Northup returned. He stopped the car, but did not move. Ivan watched him. Panic seized Ivan; he must find out about the telegram.

"What is it, Mr. Northup? Can I help you?"

Stan Northup drew out the crumpled paper. Elaine was going to Europe with a party of friends. She wanted money. Her mother approved.

"The banks won't let me have any more money. I have tried everywhere to get it."

There was no resentment, just a dull statement of facts. It struck Ivan as a blow. This was one of the things he had been waiting for, anticipating. A flame scourged him. It would be his money that would keep Elaine in Europe, or prevent her from going. He could keep her sun from setting, for the hour of reckoning had come. He knew then, that was why he had hoarded during the last year instead of investing.

"Does she have to go?" Ivan heard a voice asking, but his thoughts cried, "She must go, that gives me my opportunity."

Stan slowly shook his head, "No, she doesn't. But Nell has wanted her to travel. Those people have money. I've never failed her, I can't now, but what can I do?"

"I will be glad to let you have the money."

Stan gripped the edge of the car until his knuckles



and fingers whitened, "I never thought I would come to this. I can't do it. Your wages aren't paid for over one-half this year. You understand I am so heavily mortgaged there is no security for your money."

When Ivan held the note in his hand, his eyes narrowed as he slowly pulled it between his fingers, "Someday I shall tell her."

Spring came again, a gray spring with damp, chilling weather--gray sky, gray fogs, gray earth, cold winds laden with gray dust and snow. New calves shivered; staggered bravely a few steps; then settled back to die. Lean mothers, shaggy from the winter range, called mournfully for three days then joined the herds again. In the clammy air nothing was ever wet but nothing was ever dry. Barnyard soil stuck tenaciously to boot soles. Tempers were ragged.

It was as if a plague rested on the Northup ranch. If Ivan had the Midas touch, Stan had its antithesis. Everything he touched turned to clay and ashes. He fought stubbornly for his traditions against the persistent Ivan and fate.

"Mr. Northup, let me try a row crop in that valley on the southeast section? There are two other valleys that I am sure will raise alfalfa."

"No! I tell you, no! I've let you add hogs. But you shall not plow."

"I added hogs, but you lost as much as I made by plung-



ing in cattle. You will have to leave the market alone."

"You--Rooshin thief, who is asking you for advice? You and your breed must always be telling someone how to do things. What do you know about it? Just because I've borrowed money from you is no sign you own my soul. If I want to feed cattle, I will feed them. You keep your mouth shut until I ask your advice. You think you can tell me what to do?"

Ivan did not permit the raging bluster to pierce his imperturbable gravity, though he flinched beneath the names. Ivan knew Northup was being ridiculous.

"I do not mean to tell you what to do, Mr. Northup, but if you keep cattle you must--"

"I must, must I? Get out! Do you hear, get out!" He shook his fist in front of Ivan's face.

Ivan moved wearily away. These outbreaks were becoming exceedingly tiring. The man had lost all sense of reason. Try to make money for him, and receive curses. It was no use. Ivan muttered, "Pig-headed fool, and I once had an inferior feeling to him."

The following morning Ivan had just finished feeding hogs when Stan came to the pens.

"What are you feeding?"

Ivan looked at him. He didn't like the tone of Stan's voice. He debated whether to answer. Plainly Stan was irritable, was hunting something over which to work himself into a rage.



"Bran mash, pulp, shelled corn."

"You Rooshin double crossin' houn', you feed them that when you know the market is down."

"Those hogs go on the market this week or next, they must go on as tops, and that ration is the only one that will hold them." Ivan spoke sharply.

"Are you telling me how to feed? I was takin' care of stock when you were still rootin' around in a Rooshin swine pen. You can't feed corn that way, and I won't have that dam beet pulp on the place. In another week you will be wanting to lend me more money. You're fired, do you hear? You're fired. It is you have broken me with your high ideas."

Ivan's jaw set. Should he attempt to justify himself? He decided against it; it would be a waste of time. The man was without balance. Ivan hated quarreling, better be maligned.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Northup. Remember you will need bran and pulp tomorrow."

He turned away before Northup should burst in his rage. Into his dusky eyes came a malicious twinkle. He had really scored; for Northup wanted someone with whom to quarrel, someone on whom he could vent his rage against the fate that he was unable to manipulate. Ivan made his preparations for leaving. It wasn't much of an effort. A few books, a few clothes, a box of papers. It really didn't make much difference. He went out into the yard to find a box. Stan Nor-



thup had gone without finishing the rest of the work. Ivan went ahead with the day's task. Next morning he would leave.

But before Ivan had left the cabin the next morning, Stan was there.

"What are you doing?"

"Preparing to leave."

"Leave?" Stan bristled. "What is this talk about leaving? Don't you know we have to get those hogs on the market this week, got to get the herds divided and in the pastures? Why, man, you can't leave. You're the only person I've got to depend on. If it is because of what I said yesterday, just forget it. I get hot under the collar and I just have to have someone to take it out on."

"Yes, Mr. Northup, I understand. We will have to have feed today."

"I know, Ivan. But I don't have the money. I asked about it yesterday, but they wouldn't even run me for the few days until I sold. The market isn't dependable, and the Northup name isn't worth much these days." Stan Northup was a weary old man, beaten by circumstances.

"I'll get it for you. You can give me a check payable when the hogs are sold."

"You are fine, Ivan, fine. Not many men would let an old fool like I am treat him like a dog, then do what you do for me. It humiliates me." He wore a hang-dog expression out of keeping with



the blustering cowman air of the past.

"We will not talk about it." But Ivan did talk of it to himself as he worked among the cattle that day. "So you think I do it for you. Well, I don't. I do it for myself, for Elaine. I won her happiness. Some men put their money into beautiful buildings, pictures, statues. Why should I not put mine into a beautiful woman; own a life. That is what Mrs. O'Flynn's God did, owned human lives. Lives must always be paid for. Tamzie sacrificed her life for mine. This Elaine is apparently happy, but she doesn't know the price of happiness. I am buying that for her. She doesn't even know there is a price. Neither did Stan Northup until these last six or eight years. The Russian and German women do worth while things with their lives, but not many of them are beautiful. But even the beautiful must make their sacrifices."

The sun warmed the earth, ground squirrels were tan and black streaks on the green slopes, blue and yellow wildflowers lifted pert heads and nodded in the breezes. Magpies dashed adventurously out on the prairies, then rushed back to repair their Japanese patterned residences. Sleek red calves did gymnastic vaudeville acts for proud mothers who caressed them with rough tongues when they ran to them for approval. Cocks crowed and strutted as they led industrious harems from worm to worm. Already summer was sending out



her 'feelers.'

As he breathed in the morning air, the depths of Ivan's eyes shone. "Mr. Bull, the world is happy today. I believe we will take you out to the herd on the west range. I wouldn't mind being a cow on that range. That canon has the longest grass on the Northup holdings, and it is always cool. I wonder if cow heavens aren't like that?"

As he returned, Ivan surveyed the Northup house. "Huh, doesn't look as though the Northup lords have risen yet. No wonder the early bird gets the worm. I am the early bird, only I am an eagle. I--"

His breath stopped, his eyes opened wide. His throat went dry and tight. Out of the patio whirled a golden woman in a mad dance of abandon. The long rays of the sun caught her. She threw her arms, beautiful long white arms, to the sky; she dipped and whirled and turned. Her short golden hair held a hundred glinting lights. She cried aloud, "I love it, oh, I love this beautiful country. I had almost forgotten how the prairie stretched out to meet the sky. Daddy! Daddy! how could you let me stay away so long?"

Northup laughed from sheer joy as he watched her again whirl into her dance of joy. A vivid, flaming, golden creature, an aurora seemed to encircle her. Her answering laugh rippled out over the morning. This was Elaine, Elaine the woman.

If she had come home a woman, Ivan, as he watched her, leaped from a somewhat ascetic adulthood to manhood. The passivity



of the four years was gone, the indifference, the lethargy, the waiting, the watching. He was tinglingly alive to his finger tips. He knew what he wanted. For this glorious creature he had been preparing since the first moments when he had groped into the wells of his being seeking an answer to the loneliness that gripped him; since his first questioning of life and its purpose and his relation to it. Perhaps he had been preparing even before that, before conscious life itself. The answer to all things had been there, but he had not known. This woman, this glowing creature drinking in the morning air, embodied the answer. That was why he had kept her sun from setting. Her glory must not be dimmed when she came to him.

He fled into his shack. He dashed about lifting this object and that. Then he fled to the irrigation ditch. He squatted peering into the water, whispering, "Please, please." Then he cried aloud, "There you are." The water figure danced in mad abandon.

"I will dance with you." His teeth clenched, his jaw was white, his body swayed as he stared into the water, little panting laughs escaped him. Then he was silent, still.

Softly, very softly, he began to talk. "I was always the slave, but now I cannot be. I will be the knight, and you will be my queen. I will keep you queen."

His face grew grim, he was in the midst of a struggle. He sighed, "My queen, you need have no fear. I shall serve you until death do us part."



But his emotions were too deep for play acting. He sank down into the grass, stared into the water. A silver lighted path opened; Elaine in trailing white clouds walked forth from a glinting light; her shadow silhouetted on the silvered path. She came closer to him. He stood waiting. Her shadow fell at his feet. She lifted her arms; he held her hands in his, drew her nearer, nearer; held her in his arms; but, as his lips touched hers, the vision vanished.

He leaped to his feet and rushed back to the ranch yard. He hurried to the house. There he hesitated, looked at his clothes, at his hands. He turned back to his work. He had not finished feeding when Stan and she came hand in hand to the corrals.

"Ivan, here is Elaine. Elaine, you remember Ivan?" Northup glowed.

"Sure, Daddy. Hello! Ivan. Can you still do Mike's roping stunts? Oh! Daddy, the darling calves."

"You ought to remember Ivan. You sure used to stick to him. Your mother was peevish about it. Almost upset the ranch tearin' you two apart."

But she was not listening. She was playing with one of the calves. Ivan hovered obsequiously near.

"By the way, Dad, do I still have a horse?"

"I say you do. Doesn't she, Ivan?"



"Yes, Elaine, your father has kept Glee, the daughter of Glee the First."

"I want to see her. May I ride right now?"

"Sure. Ivan, bring Glee in. Elaine will change her togs. Bring King for me."

As they walked away, Elaine hanging on her father's arm, talked on and on. "Daddy, I can't believe it is true. To feel the wind blowing through my hair again, to race out to the rise. Oh! Oh! Oh!"

Ivan turned away. Fierce jealousy gripped him. She hadn't asked him to ride with her. Stan Northup was going. He, Ivan, had to get their horses. "I won't. I've got work to do. I can't leave things go to rack just to get horses for people to race over the prairie."

A musing look soon took the place of the frown. A woman with golden hair flying in the wind was riding a black horse over the prairie--the horse stumbled--fell. The woman lay moaning on the ground--a black haired man leaped on the slender pony and rushed to her--stooped without alighting from the saddle--caught the woman to him. She lay in his arms--she opened her eyes. No, that wouldn't do; he didn't want her hurt. He swung listlessly to the saddle. The freshness of the morning was gone. Flowers drooped slightly in the rising heat; the barnyard fowls trailed lazily into the shade and settled comfortably. Calves pushed busily at their mothers' flanks.



As Ivan swung his rope and the loop settled over the neck of the spirited black animal, he stated aloud, "It's her first day home, I guess she would have to ride with her father. I will see her soon."

But Ivan found himself as effectually barred as though she were a curio in its cabinet and he an observer hanging on the rail with a "No Admittance" sign before him. She greeted him with the cordiality she showed to all the things of her girlhood.

He complained to the water image, "She doesn't think any more of my being here than if I were an ordinary rancher. She must recognize I am a force in her life, an influence just as the earth and the sun are. I am going to tell her so. The way Stan Northup is strutting around you would think he owned the earth, instead of taking me around the shed every few weeks and asking for another loan. It's a wonder he doesn't get writer's cramp signing his name to notes."

If the Northup ranch had blazed with lights and rocked with entertainment under Nell Northup's solitary regime, it threatened to burst with Elaine at home. Day and night the long drive buzzed with racing automobiles filled with gay laughing youth, pleasure-seeking middle age, and defiant age. The only lull meant Denver or some other City or home.

Ivan resorted to subterfuge. Instead of seeing Stan at the pens or in the yard, Ivan avoided him, then in the evening he went



to the patio. When he finished his business, if Elaine were on the patio, he would speak to her if it were possible. Always he had some question to ask her. He studied hard and long to find the questions. They were concerning pictures, statuary, cathedrals, people. She answered them, but did not pursue the conversation.

One night she and Stan were alone on the patio. After Stan and Ivan had finished their plans for the week, Ivan walked to the arch leading from the patio where Elaine lounged, looking out over the moon-swept prairie.

"Do you still dream, Elaine?"

"Dream?" she lifted her eyes to him. "What do you mean, dream?" A tolerant smile covered her lips. Lulled by the caressing winds, the stillness of the prairie, the moon washed plains, she felt at peace with the world.

"Dreams about yourself. You used to tell me yours."

"If they were as fantastic as I recall them now, they must have amused you. Only fools and imbeciles dream in today's world." She looked back into the night.

Ivan turned away, baffled, hurt. She had forgotten the dreams. If she had forgotten them, then she had perhaps forgotten their hours together. He did not want to leave her without doing something to recall that past to her, yet he was unable to face her indifference. Perhaps she tried to tell him he was a fool--or an imbecile. She watched him. For a moment he hesitated at the edge of the terrace,



the moon struck full on his face. The years had not greatly coarsened the fine texture of his skin, and it had not burned it to the red brown of most prairie dwellers. Where his hat band rested, the forehead shone ivory white in the moonlight. The hair still swept back from its unusual line. He was slender, wiry, and moved with silent smoothness that epitomized grace. He looked back at her, his eyes wide and deep. For a moment neither moved.

Elaine smiled, "I didn't see much of Russia, but I saw many Russians. They were handsome men, but no more handsome than you, Ivanisky. Paris had a few exiled noblemen with that look in their eyes. You will never be old, will you?"

Perspiration dampened his forehead. His veins ached with the rush of blood that burned through them. Was she telling him that other men had loved her, and she had not cared, or was she mocking him. They both smiled. Elaine turned back to the prairie moonlight. Ivan went to his shack. The exiled noblemen of his race had the same look in their eyes--perhaps they, too, loved.

On a beautiful afternoon in November when the warmth of the summer seemed to have returned for a last farewell, Ivan and Stan were discussing ways and means. Ivan was pleading for sheep. Stan slid deeper and deeper in his chair. His chin rested on his breast. Ivan pitied him, saw him again as he had rushed into his



shack on a night in September. In his hands he clutched a mass of bills. He waved them as he shouted, "Tell me, what is a man to do? I told them we were broke, and this is what they call going easy. Parties, dances, dinners, theatres charged, all charged, or checks written for which there is no money. Dresses, curtains, coats, hats, shoes, luggage. A thousand dollars worth of bills in Denver. They can't buy on credit here, no one will trust them. But because these people here respect what the Northup name once was enough not to black list me, those women will take advantage of it and go to Denver. Women, women. And Elaine, I didn't think she could do this."

To cover the bills and to save the old man from utter humiliation, Ivan sold young stuff that might otherwise have gone into the feed lot or been held over for another year. But there were new bills, and interest was piling up.

Stan Northup was a discouraged old man. His steps lagged, his sandy hair was rapidly graying. His spirit was breaking. He no longer boasted of the grand days of cattle ranching; he no longer complained of the times; he no longer swore at the encroaching foreigners. He went his way silently and grimly. The week before, when Ivan had again mentioned sheep, Northup had only turned away; he had not answered.

But Ivan was pleading again. And as he plead, in him struggled the desire to crush this man who had so often scourged him with his thoughtless words, against the desire to ease the burden of



one whom he felt had opened life to him. Stan lifted his hands and spread them in a weary gesture of defeat. "Do as you like. I must have money. Get it any way you can."

Ivan whispered to himself, "There must always be sacrifice, no man has anything he calls his own without it. He is but paying his price for Elaine. His agony and her indifference make me wonder if I, too, will not pay for her in heart's blood." Aloud he drove the man farther into the depths of his despair.

"Mr. Northup, I wish you could decide what you will do about the roughage for another year. The ground would be in much better condition if it were prepared now."

Stan's face went white, "Ivan, for nearly seventy years the Northups have claimed this land, no plow has ever touched those acres except to run fire furrows. It has been our boast it never should. Isn't it enough that sheep will bleat in those pens? Man, cannot you leave me in peace?"

Suddenly Ivan had little sympathy. He had known long days under the beating sun grubbing out his existence for money. Why should this man squirm at the sacrifice of a time worn tradition?

"I have given you the figures. If you raise your own feed, grain fatten only for ready money and when the market is right, cut your expenses to a minimum, you can make this place carry itself. But you will have to live as ranchers, not as your banker or broker."

"Oh! God. Money, money, money, buy, buy, buy, bills,



mortgages, expenses. It wouldn't be so bad if I didn't have to face it alone. Man, do you know every furrow will be as hot tongs furrowing my body, it will be cutting my own flesh to run plows across those prairies? It seems I have lost faith with my father and my mother. My daughter, who bears my mother's name, is just another Nell Northup. I've messed life. My father used to take me out to the top of that rise and boast it was God's own land untouched by man. There isn't better buffalo grass in this country. Call it sentiment if you like, it's part of me, like my name, my honor." He had leaned excitedly forward, but now he dropped back. "Honor, name--if it weren't for you, I couldn't lift my head. I wouldn't have a roof over me. Honor, name, mine doesn't amount to a thing."

Ivan was silent. There was nothing he could answer. As they sat staring into the emptiness of the past and the uncertainty of the future, Elaine joined them.

"Father, I just had a telephone from Mrs. Derk's man. Mr. Derk is ill and will not be able to take me to the concert. He wanted to send his man, but I didn't want that. Will you go? Mother has a bridge dinner. You and I never go anywhere together."

"No, I'm ill, too. I don't want an eighty mile ride, and then have to listen to an infernal violin wailing the very insides out of me. You don't have to go. Can't you stay at home? We can be together here."

"But, father, I've planned on it for weeks. I know the



violinist. I would go by myself, but I don't want to stay in town. I am tired."

"Please, Elaine, may I take you?" Wild hope made Ivan's voice thin. It sounded strange even to his own ears. He recoiled from her cold, appraising glance. He hated to be appraised by anyone. It was intolerable that Elaine, the woman, should judge him. She smiled. He resented the smile. It wasn't kind. It had sharp little points that pricked him. It was an amused smile. It had been a long time since anyone had laughed at Ivan.

"All right. Six thirty. We will take my coupe."

He bowed and quickly left the patio.

She laughed to herself.

"What are you laughing at?" Northup inquired.

"Oh, father, I was just thinking this might be worth advertising. Quite a sensation it might create. Elaine Northup of the Junior Guild attends concert with former Russian butler, now manager of her father's ranch."

"Elaine, you can't do that." Northup gripped his chair arm. His face worked in his agitation.

"Can't I, father? I wouldn't bet on it if I were you. The young man seems to interest you. You make good use of him, why not I? And he is interested in me, uncomfortably so. I'm bored, do you understand? bored. I'd do anything for a bit of excitement. I hate this damnable useless life."



"Don't be a fool, don't do anything you will be sorry for. That man's life is too closely bound up with ours." He wanted to tell her their obligation to the Russian. But that would be confessing to Elaine that he was a failure, and Northup was not ready to do that. "Ivan is easily hurt. He's different."

Elaine laughed again, "As I remember him, quite different."

She would have been startled had she known how nearly Ivan had interpreted her thoughts. He hurried to town. He was determined she should not laugh at him again.

It was an unreal evening. Ivan knew by Elaine's quickly covered start of surprise when she opened the door for him, and by the flash of admiration that he met her approval. He did not know whether she felt the charged atmosphere as they rode toward the city, but he thought she did. He was silent, even his usual uneasiness in new situations was lost. He was conscious that she glanced at him from time to time. He knew before she spoke that she intended to.

"Formal black and white is very becoming to you. I should have remembered how well you wore it." Ivan did not answer. Was she reminding him that he had been her mother's serving man? He decided she wasn't. She was attempting to make conversation. She continued to watch him.

"There is a peculiar quality about you, you look as though you had a candle lighted within you. Do you have some special secret when you gleam that way?"



He trembled under the words, and glowed under her friendly smile. The mask wrinkled at the edges and began to crumble. He smiled. He had to look at her. Did she know he enfolded her in that one glance, shut her off from reality? His hand whitened on the wheel. She couldn't know that, for she was not used to watching people's thoughts. Then he prodded himself, "Say something, you fool, say something."

"Yes, I have a marvelous secret, the secret of the source of all life." He mentally clapped himself on the back--fine, Ivan, fine, that is high sounding and intriguing. She will have to answer you. There is the answer.

"Won't you tell me about it?"

His thoughts toyed--what would she do if I told her? Shall I say, "You are the secret of the source of my life. I have hunted since a child for it. I have saved for it, suffered abuse in silence for it, dreamed for it, studied for it. Men have called me 'different' and it has rankled, but, if I should have this source of life, I must be different. Sacrifice is demanded for every happiness, and sacrifice at a tremendous price. But it is worth it. You are worth the sacrifice of life itself; for without you there is no life."

Her voice startled him, so far had he drifted.

"You will not tell me about this wonderful secret? You used to tell me your secrets."

She remembered, remembered their secrets together. "Some



day, Elaine, if you want to know."

The violinist could not have chosen better to enhance and complete Ivan's mood had he known Ivan was in the audience, and had he known the mood. Elaine felt the sublimity of this mood, felt Ivan's deep appreciation.

"It is a pleasure to have a companion such as you, Ivan," Elaine whispered between numbers.

He couldn't answer, his throat was too full. She talked on as they waited for the second part of the program. "This artist has much to do with the success of his programs. He is what every woman dreams of, illusive, suave, polished. His personality radiates to those about him. He projects himself beyond the footlights."

It was over. Ivan waited while Elaine renewed her acquaintance with the violinist. Ivan was as one who has slept deeply, peacefully, then wakened through a beautiful dream to a scented, murmuring world where one wanders, half drugged for the moment, seeking to grasp full consciousness. The beauty of sound was yet so much a part of him, it would suddenly flood his being only to die out again as he became a part of his surroundings.

Had there ever been such a night? Moonlight could not be a reality and yet so unreal. The moon hung, a great silver disc against an emptiness of phantom blue, color or not color. A white ribbon of road wound between lines of black cut by frets of gray; undulating waves of earth splashed with sagebrush daubs and their shad-



ows slipped away and vanished into the horizon. Stillness that pressed down and intruded on the conscious left imprints and mixed itself with thought, mixed itself as Elaine's eyes, with their puzzled depths, were mixing themselves with Ivan's thoughts. Confusion filled him. A sense of detachment was taking possession of him.

Then they were at home; he stood at the arch of the patio. The moonlight was tangling in her hair, catching in her eyes. Why didn't she go, why did she linger as if loath to leave him?

"Ivan, where did you learn about--" she hesitated for a word, she spread her hands in a gesture, "all that, music composers, pictures, all the things you have asked me about these last months?" She did not wait for a reply. "What has made you different from your people, do you really belong to them? I have seen your brothers and their children in the town. They are stolid or arrogant and forceful, and ugly. But you--one doesn't describe you, for one is not sure what you are. I met the son of a Russian Duke in Italy. Tonight you remind me of him. He said funny things, cruel mocking things--he said of his people, if they had what they asked of life they grew stolid, dull, or heartless. It was only through rough adversity, sacrifice, that they bloomed. Do you have what you want? Or is it wanting that makes you as you are? The music tonight seemed at times to come through you to me. I remembered my girlhood dreams tonight. I haven't dreamed of knights for years. My dreams seemed to mix with yours. I have a curious feeling about you tonight, Ivan. Why are you, you?"



Lights blazed within him; thoughts burst; words leaped to his lips, mingled with other words, choked him.

"I am because of you. I--you--it--I love you." He saw his intensity push her back, startle her. It startled him. "I was happy, not unhappy alone, you were everything beautiful,--light, color, form, love, honesty, truth, bravery. I gave everything to you, then I was happy. And you were happy, too, were you not? Your dreams had me, my dreams were you. You were mine." He hesitated before the surprise in her face, saw disdain take its place. He cried sharply, "Don't do that, you do not understand. You were in here," he beat his hands on his breast. "Then you went away, your mother sent you away. I was alone again. Elaine, you don't know what is to be lonely. You won't ever let me be lonely again, will you?" He caught her hand. "I found you again. I bought land for you, I called it 'Dream Acres.' We were to be together there. I saved money so when your father couldn't have money to keep your sun from setting, I could give it to him. Every year I make more money, just for you. Don't pull from me. Elaine! Elaine! don't you see when you came back you were gold, sunshine, everything. You warned me, you gave me life. Don't look like that. Why are you angry? I have everything for you; you gave it to me; I will give it back to you. Marry me, Elaine. You must, so that I may have sons and not be destroyed. They will conquer the world, they will-- oh, I don't know what they will be, --everything." Faster and faster poured his words in his effort to stop the flood of emotions that crossed her face,



scorn, contempt, disgust. "I have money, we will keep the Northup ranch just cattle, it will be your palace. I can give you everything, cars, concerts, horses."

She stopped him, her voice the clink of steel on brittle glass, "Not different, after all. A Russian peasant and just a man. There are things money does not buy."

Her face was strangely old.

Ivan was alone. He murmured, "The language of my father, possessions, money was all I could think of. A Russian peasant. When I need words to express new thoughts, they are gone. I am only Nicholas Smirnov's son."

A hush hung over the prairie, heat waves too heavy to lift themselves rolled close to the horizon. All day the sun had beat down from a seared sky. The roses in the garden drooped and wilted. The leaves on the Chinese elms that bordered the long drive hung listless. The poplars back of the arbor showed the white of the underleaf as they waited the breeze. The fish in the pool lay suspended in the shadows of the miniature bridge. No sound broke the stillness until from the south came the clatter of the cultivator and the beat of horses hoofs.

Ivan drove through the yard to the machine shed. His horses were white with foam. His clothes, dark with perspiration, clung



to him. He had come from the cane field in the southeast bottom land. He remembered the beautiful picture the land had made in the late spring when gay wildflowers nodded in the southwest wind. The long black loam ribbons had trailed after his plow, velvet against the emerald. As he plowed, he had felt perhaps he was desecrating the land, that the shades of the past might be hovering over him despite the beauty. For Stan Northup, driven by his debts and accumulating bills, had consented to permit the bottom acres of the Northup ranch to be cultivated.

Now the cane was curling in the heat. Ivan whimsically wondered if it might not be old Stan's wrath that was blistering it.

Three months before, Ivan had gone to the patio and found the listless beaten old man waiting for him. The strong frame was bowed, the red tan of sixty years in the open had given place to palor. He hadn't moved when Ivan crossed the patio. He had just started talking.

"Ivan, it seems sometimes that I have sat here forever. Sometimes I forget that I ever rode the range, that out there toward the river was dotted red with my cattle, that we fought for water rights, fought rustlers, fought for the love of fighting. Then Stan Northup bowed to no man. Today, except for the kindness of a Russian immigrant, men would nudge each other as I pass."

"If you had had a son, it would have been different. Man's life is not complete until there are sons to carry on for him.



That is the hope of life. We live, make mistakes, but we point a way for those who go after us. They pick up our load, carry on. I failed my father in that, but he has sons that were faithful."

Ivan's mood fitted the old man's. "Perhaps you are right. I always hoped for a son, but when I had Elaine I was content. I don't know what will happen to her. But you have not come to listen to the garblings of an old man. Smirnov, I cannot pay you. Here are the mortgages and notes. I don't know why you bought up all of them, why you have had them all come due the same day, but whatever it is, you have been patient and kind. Perhaps you were right, and the ranch could have carried itself if I had listened to you, but it is too late now. I can't lift this load." He raised the handful of papers. "I'm too old a man. You will do better with it than I have. We will settle these however you like. God! what a fool I have been."

Ivan crawled stiffly from the cultivator. He looked to the house as he straightened stiffened muscles. As if his glance had brought it, the leaves on the trees stirred. He turned to the garages. "He is out again today. Every day for these three months he has gone hunting money, money, money to pay me. In the few minutes after he told me he couldn't pay me, told me to do as I liked, I lived a lifetime. I lived all the plans I had made for humbling that old man, for turning this place into a paradise where I might rule with Elaine. And in those few moments, I loved Elaine enough to give up all those dreams, to tear those papers in shreds. In my agony I humbled myself before



him, let him see my great love. But he didn't understand, just as she had not understood in the months before. I lifted those papers and cried aloud, 'I love Elaine. For her, I will tear these papers in shreds.' He scorned me. He thought that I, I, Ivan Smirnov, would buy the woman I love. Let him sweat, let him rot. I will not tell him he did not understand me, not if it were to save his life."

He struck the horses a sharp blow. The lines in his face deepened perceptibly. Deep within his consciousness a still voice whispered, "Perhaps your resignation was only a gesture. You do want her, you are not willing to renounce your desire for her since you have had time to think about it. Your desire for her is the reason you have not told him he misunderstood. It was only under great emotion that you could make the sacrifice. You know it is easy to be a hero when the band plays; but in the still of the night with no one to applaud it is a different thing."

"My conscience talks to me again. All right, perhaps I do want her. Why shouldn't I have her?"

"Do you remember what your brother told you?"

"Surely I remember. There is never happiness if a woman feels she stoops to marry a man. But Elaine would not stoop. See what I have been able to do for myself. That brother said I was the first Smirnov to lose my head over a woman. How does he know what I will get from that woman? He didn't get from Alexia what Nicholas got from Tamzie, because Nicholas could never take another woman, and Karl has an-



other woman before Alexia is dead two years. You cannot bluff me, I will not tell him."

"You are irritated because you didn't get patted on the back when you made your grand gesture. You are humiliated that anyone would believe you were not perfect. Didn't Northup have a right to misinterpret you? Why shouldn't he see you as a 'Rooshin' using money to twist from him what you had not been able to get otherwise. He would remember that you had asked to marry Elaine, and that she had scorned you. He sympathized with you then, really believed your story that everything you did had been without thought of reward because of your love. He didn't resent it as an upstart action from an inferior. He believed it was some Quixote idealism. But now you are showing your true colors, bargaining for her as Nicholas bargained for Tamzie. Is it a surprise that he misunderstood you? Why don't you be a man and tell him now?"

"O shut up! There is the Northup car. Shall I go over and make the old fool speak to me? I haven't been near the house since he treated me the way he did."

The car came to a stop. Two men hurried out. They beckoned to Ivan. They were lifting Stan Northup from the car. Ivan ran.

"What is it, what has happened?"

"The doctor is coming, he said bring him home. Northup was talking to me when he dropped. I didn't know what to do."



Ivan opened the door for them. Elaine's white, frightened face chilled him. He stood beside her when the doctor told her there was little chance for her father's recovery. If he did, his mind must be set at rest from all worries. His condition was the result of nervous strain and exhaustion.

"He is too old a man for such an attack. Elaine Northup, I have known this family for a long time, but I never expected to see the granddaughter of Stan Northup's mother left her dad scour this country hunting money as he has done to pay for her wastings. Thank God, she didn't live to see the state Northup Ranch is in."

Ivan shrunk into the shadow of the room as Elaine turned to look at him. The iciness of her stare frightened him. In her warred forces that environment, heredity, and habit had fostered. She had known there were money difficulties, had known her father worried about the bills, but she had not known the seriousness of the situation until the past few months, in fact, did not know just what was involved now. She did know that Ivan was connected with it, -- all her discontent with the useless round of life since her return from college swept over her. The futility of life gripped her. The intense waiting of Ivan poured over her in its fullness, caught her, gave her a feeling of being captured and bound by intangible chords that could not be broken. As she struggled, all her enmity concentrated on him.

Nell Northup wept loudly. Ivan would have left the house, but Nell caught his arm.



"Don't go, Ivan, you must help us. Stan depended so much on you."

Ivan looked quickly at Elaine. Scorn curled her lips. He turned to go, but Mrs. Northup still clung to him, "You can't go. I won't let you."

"Mother, you forget yourself. Ivan undoubtedly has his reasons for going. Remember father trusted him. Now he would not want to lose any money. What does a dying man matter, so long as there is money to think of?"

Ivan flushed. "I am not thinking about money. I was doing what I thought best under the circumstances. If you need me, I shall be glad to stay."

"We do not need you. The Northups have never needed you, they never shall." Her voice was deep in her throat.

"Oh, Ivan, don't pay any attention to her. She is excited, wrought up; she doesn't know what she is talking about. She doesn't know what you have done for us. There hasn't been a month for the past two years that Stan hasn't told me I didn't know what I was doing, if it wasn't for you we would all be in the poor house. Please, Ivan." Her voice rose in a wail.

Ivan remained silent. She cried more loudly. Elaine turned impatiently. "Don't make any mistake about it, I know very well what you have done. But stay if it will keep her quiet. Remember, stay out of father's sight. He must not recognize you."



In the days that followed, Ivan could not free himself from a feeling of responsibility for Northup's illness and Elaine's grief. He bore Elaine's scorn for he could not explain to her that her father had misunderstood him. He could not humiliate himself by telling her his wounded pride had kept him silent. It wouldn't have done any good if he had. He told himself, again and again, that the man need not have raced over the country hunting money. He was insane, a fool. He hadn't acted intelligently in all these years the ranch had been going in debt. It was as much Elaine and Nell Northup's fault that Stan was ill as his. They had forced Stan into debt. Torn by conflicting thoughts, he lived in torment. He did all that was possible for the stricken household, but he kept out of Elaine's way as much as possible.

Two weeks Stan Northup lay between life and death. Two weeks Elaine had stayed by his side. Day after day, he repeated the story of his losses, his mother, his father, Mike O'Flynn, his wife, Elaine. Then had come the crowning blow, he had resigned himself to Ivan's taking the ranch; he would ask that their places be reversed, Ivan be master and he the foreman; then they might stay on at the Northup Ranch. He couldn't live without Northup Ranch. But Ivan, too, had failed him. He would tempt her father; for the ranch he wanted Elaine. Stan lived again the days and days of pleading for money. He had groveled, begged, prayed. The Russian should not have the land. The land quivered beneath his desecrating tread. If Elaine had loved him-- but she didn't and the Russian would force her father to give



her to him. Her father couldn't, if he wanted to. Little by little, Elaine pieced the story together.

Each day the doctor admonished, "You must put his mind at rest. I don't know why he frantically hunted money but whatever it is, is still preying on his mind. It is up to you."

The long twilight of the hot July day ended. Moonlight, steel white, etched the earth in lights and shadows. Ivan slumped in his chair, arms hanging loose at his side, his chin resting on his breast. His mind was a treadmill where the circle of his thoughts beat their path. He must be at peace with the Northup household. They were wrong, it was they who had misunderstood, but he must have forgiveness for his part in the tragedy. He had not told Stan Northup that he had not meant to trade the mortgages for Elaine, and so Northup had put forth his last energy to maintain the honor of his name.

Ivan had been staring at the shimmering band of moonlight, unbroken by shadows, spreading from the doorway to his feet, when suddenly a silhouette lay on the silver band. He lifted weary eyes. Elaine stood in the doorway of the shack. The white band of moonlight ran over her and spilled on the floor; before her lay a black shadow on silver. Surprise kept him silent.

"Ivan."

"Elaine!" He was on his feet.

"If you still want me, I'll marry you," her voice was low, hopeless, pain-smothered.



"Elaine! You did understand. Thank God. I could not bear it as it was. You care!" His head drooped, tears ran over his cheeks.

Elaine stiffened, her voice cut the air, short, sharp darts, "For the mortgage, everything we owe you, I marry you."



**Book Four**



How many shaken  
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind  
Unbounded passion, madness, guilt, remorse;  
Whence tumbled headlong from the heights of life,  
They furnish matter for the tragic muse.  
E'en in the vale, where wisdom loves to dwell,  
With friendship, peace, and contemplation joined,  
How many, racked with honest passions, droop  
In deep retired distress.

--James Thomson, "The Seasons."







The drought was broken. The cane unfolded its leaves; the roses lifted their heads; the poplars quivered and danced under the pelting raindrops. Even the prairie seemed less brown, seemed to have borrowed from somewhere a tinge of green. The slow patter of rain sounded on Stan Northup's window.

Stan Northup was a very weary man. He had been struggling in a black morass for untimable ages. Sometimes he struggled free of it and, in those moments, he had always found Elaine. But soon the black pall enveloped him again, and the struggle began all over again. The patter of the rain soothed him; the fumes cleared from his brain; the langour of his limbs gave way to weariness.

His eyes darkened. Ivan Smirnov and Elaine entered his room. They spoke no word as hand in hand they came toward him. They stood beside his bed. He looked from one to the other. Then Elaine spoke, "Father, I am glad you know me this morning. I want to tell you something that I hope will make you as happy as I am." Her voice was low, full, and firm. "I am going to marry Ivan. Since you have been ill, I have learned many things. It would not be possible to live without him."

Ivan felt a flood of joy that filled him; a rush of reverence that brought him to his knees beside her. He lifted the hem of her skirt and pressed it to his lips. He bowed his head on



her father's bed and wept. It had all been so strange last night. She had been in his shack, but she had been so cold, then she had fled, and, suddenly mingled with distant thunder, he was sure he had heard her crying terribly, horribly. But when he had rushed out calling to her, there was no sound. Now she had said, she could not live without him.

He explained, "It isn't grief, it is joy I cannot name to you. So long I have loved her, and now to know that she loves me in return is almost a greater blessing than I can bear. I will be kind to her. Rest in peace, and quickly return to health. There shall be no more plowed fields on the Northup ranch, if that is your wish, sir."

Again the old man's eyes turned to the woman's face, then to the man's, searching, searching. There was compassion in his voice, "Elaine, why have you done this?"

"Because Northup acres are dearer to me than anything else, except you. If I lost both of you there would be nothing left. So much is my fault. Ivan has loved me all these years; you have told me what he meant to me in my childhood. Should it surprise you that I should again turn to him?"

"If I could only be sure," her father's voice broke. "He has not talked to you?"

"It is I who went to him and offered myself. You can be sure. It is the best way. Mother is happy, and I hope you will be."



"But what of you, child? There are some sacrifices too great."

She did not answer but, stooping, kissed him. Her face was transfigured. He looked at her in awe. She smiled down at Ivan as he knelt by her father looking from one to the other. She laid her hand on his head for a moment. Then she hurried from the room.

Ivan turned to the man, "Mr. Northup, I am sorry I did not tell you that you had misunderstood me, that I never meant to trade the mortgages for Elaine. I was hurt to think you had not more faith in me, that you did not realize love for her meant more to me than money, that I would give her the ranch, and we would forget that you had ever owed me money."

Peace filled the sick man's heart. He slept. When Elaine returned to the room, he tried to talk to her of Ivan, but she laughingly turned away. She had closed the roads behind her.

Stan Northup sat in his wheel chair looking out over the frost bound garden when Elaine came into the room. She was listless; blue shadows were under her eyes.

"Child, it is not necessary that you stay with me all the time. I am well now, and I have been for many months. We will have to get used to these worthless legs."



She smiled down at him, "Tired of me, father? Have I been so poor a nurse that you would get rid of me?"

"You have been perfect, but you are a young woman, your interests are not those of an old man. Then you are only six months a bride. A husband can rightly claim the time of his wife." Stan watched her closely as he talked. She fingered a group of cards beneath her hand. "Do I not know the invitations that are stacked on that table? One always needs friends, my dear, even if one does have a husband and a father."

"Please, father, don't joke about it. I would rather stay with you."

"Elaine, look at me. Are you happy?" His face was troubled.

Elaine laughed, "Of course I am happy, you goose. And to please you I will go. Some of these days you will be pleading with me to stay at home, at least long enough for you to make my acquaintance. I have enjoyed this being of some use. Life had been such a senseless mill."

The boast had been easy, but Elaine found it much more difficult to act than she had anticipated. She had married her father's hired man; she had married him for money, for security for herself and her father; if what the doctor had said was true, for her father's life. She was not a snob, but she could not forget the contempt with which the Russians were treated. She had married one of them. She could not kill the contempt she had for convenient marriages, and she had made



one. She hated to face her friends, but she meant to keep her word.

Evening after evening, Ivan came in, called for her, went from room to room seeking her. It was always Stan Northup who told him where she had gone. Nell Northup, now that her husband was better, had again entered on her round of entertainments. It had been a great humiliation to have Elaine marry Ivan, but Elaine had never been tractable, she had not paved the road for the social successes Nell had planned. When the Northup finances reached the state they had, Nell had been thankful that the girl could and did save them from the disgrace of bankruptcy. Nell never questioned how tractable Ivan would be. His evident devotion to Elaine would assure them of money. Besides, as soon as they were on their feet financially, Elaine could divorce him. As a divorcee, she would create a greater sensation than she had as a debutante.

A change had come over the Northup household. The great house was hushed. Sometimes as Stan Northup pushed himself about in his wheel chair, he felt it was a waiting hush; there seemed an expectancy in the very air.

The joy and eagerness had left Ivan's eyes. He no longer called Elaine's name when he entered the house. He spent long hours in the library with Stan Northup, reading or listening to the old man's reminiscences. He managed the household and the ranches



with an ease that drew comments from Stan. The house no longer rang with jazz, laughter, and song. Many people came and went. People whom Ivan had met, and in whose homes he had visited. They came in the evenings, husbands and wives together. They left their regrets that Mrs. Smirnov was not in. Ivan, painfully humiliated to have them know Elaine and he did not spend their leisure time together, exerted himself to make them forget her absence. Stan Northup enjoyed those evenings; he watched with curious eyes and let no hint of surprise show. Illness and adversity had done much to mellow the old cowman.

Stan always placed their cards where Elaine must see them. He watched her as she fingered them; he never failed to tell her the details of the calls. Slowly the pile of simple white engraved cards grew. Ivan never made any mention of them; only Stan talked to her of them.

One late afternoon Elaine came in, walked over to the tray and fingered through the cards. She looked from under lowered lashes at Ivan who sat deep in a book, unaware of her presence. She knew when he discovered that she was there, he would lay down his book, hurry to her. He would inquire if she had enjoyed her day, would take her coat, would bring her a chair, would bring her a refreshing drink. Then he would withdraw into the shadows, but, whenever she lifted her eyes, she knew he would be watching her. Had it not happened day after day? Did she not plan as much of her time away



from home as she possibly could to avoid those seeking eyes?

She again fingered the cards. She couldn't go on the way she had been. She tossed her head, gave a smile to her father who also spent his time watching her. She moved quickly to the door of the library.

"Good evening, Ivan. Do you have any plans for the evening?" Her voice was coolly polite.

He leaped to his feet, hurried to her, his eyes lighting. "No, is there something you would have me do?"

"I am tired of bridge. Since your friends prefer the informality of evening calls, we had better take this opportunity of returning them."

He stood bewildered and uncertain. He felt she was criticizing those people. "They are interested in knowing you, Elaine. I believe you would like them. But if you do not care for them, we do not need to go."

"One does not so easily disregard one's social obligation."

He flushed but did not answer. They went, and Ivan glowed with pride. He had never known the full extent of Elaine's charm. She, in turn, was astonished to find the respect and genuine affection his friends had for Ivan Smirnov. She thoroughly enjoyed her evening. She was ashamed of her petty malice, and, as they drove home, she told Ivan how much she had enjoyed herself. She made no



effort to flatter him, and he thanked her for it.

Elaine was drawn more and more into the activities of Ivan's group. Soon their interests kept them much together. She went everywhere with him. They motored together, danced together, spent week-ends together, and, although they were usually with friends, there grew up a sort of companionship between them. She was spending more time with her violin, and, in the evenings, often took it out and played for Ivan and Stan. Stan Northup's face seemed less lined.

Nell Northup was chagrined at this change in Elaine's life. She found herself in a peculiar position. She made only one attempt to entertain in the old style at Northup ranch. Stan Northup in his wheel chair, Ivan courteous but cold, and Elaine sweet but restrained dampened the spirit of the group. The party was not a success. She was omitted from certain small affairs that she had attended, first in her own right, then as Elaine's mother. The general affairs still were open to her. Nell attempted to persuade Elaine to accompany her, but she failed. Then she began a series of lavish entertainments at the club. One day a group of bills came to Ivan. They belonged to Nell.

Ivan held them for a long time, a frown on his forehead. Ivan had added a milch herd and chicken pens to the Northup ranch. He continued to build up the beef herds, he was raising and selling purebreds. In these ways, he made the Northup ranch maintain itself. He had begun to pay out the notes and mortgages which he



held. He had placed every member of the Northup ranch on a budget and an allowance. Nell Northup had hers. He knew she had lost heavily in the market slump, that she still gambled at bridge. He suspected she sold information that she was able to get from friends, but he had not believed she would dare open an account in his name.

He could not go to Elaine, and he would not go to Stan Northup. Stan had almost regained his strength, but he was sensitive about his crippled condition, and he felt very keenly his uselessness. Ivan was attempting to overcome this feeling. Northup kept all the accounts, and Ivan placed the beef cattle under his management. Ivan would not take this new problem to him.

He waited that night until Nell came in. "Mrs. Northup, may I speak to you a moment?"

"Oh, surely, but, please, if it is anything that will take much time, may we not wait until tomorrow? I am so tired."

"I am afraid it is something we must take care of now. Apparently there has been some mistake in these accounts. Here are things that I believe are yours, charged on my account."

She was startled but quickly recovered herself. "Impossible! What are they? Is it not possible they are Elaine's?"

"Shall we call Elaine to see if they are?"

"What is it you wish to ask me?" Ivan started; Nell shrank back. She would much rather take her chances with Ivan. Elaine stood in the door.



Ivan's voice trembled, "Some accounts I believe were mischarged. They should be on your mother's bill. I wish to get them straightened up immediately so that the error may be corrected and will not be made again."

Elaine came to the table where he stood. She spoke coldly, "Why are you so sure they are my mother's?"

"You have never made a charge to my account."

"Has mother?" Elaine looked at her mother.

"No," Ivan spoke brusquely, "This is the first time."

"The things are mine. I will take care of it. I am sorry, mother, you were annoyed."

Ivan did not move. His face was stern; his eyes puzzled. Those things were not Elaine's; they were Nell Northup's. Elaine had deliberately put him in the wrong, and she had lied. He went to the library and, from his chair, heard the murmur of voices, sharp, commanding, pleading, followed by sobs mingled with an earnest voice. When Elaine passed the door her face was white and drawn. She was soon followed by her mother who was still weeping. Shame for Elaine burned in him, then pity--shame that she had told him an untruth, pity that she must protect her mother.

With the unstable economic condition, if Northup ranch was to be cleared of its heavy indebtedness, the budgets must be cut



closer. There could be no new cars, there would be less entertaining, less travel, less help both in the house and on the ranch. Ivan figured long. Weary and unhappy, he walked out into the night, and, from force of habit, was at last on the irrigation ditch. His thoughts made their cycle--if Northup acres were clear of indebtedness, there would have to be a cut in expenses; to cut expenses would require the cooperation of the entire household; but, at any cost, Northup acres must be cleared; and it must clear itself so that Elaine would feel it had paid itself out so there would be no obligation to him. She must be free from a feeling of obligation to him.

Ivan's dream, that Northup ranch should be used only as a playground and home for Elaine, was gone. That dream went when Ivan realized what marriage for a mortgage meant, and when in the ditch water he had seen her face with its cold, hard eyes looking back at him. Then he had determined he would make Northup ranch pay for itself, but, while he did that, he would make himself indispensable to her, he would be kind to her, he would be everything he knew she expected of a man so that she must come to him. She would have to love him. Always he watched her, waiting to see her eyes clear and kind.

But it was going to be a struggle. The country was in the grip of an economic condition that had taken the name of depression. There were so many things to distract his mind from its one definite purpose, winning Elaine Northup. Tonight he was weary of waiting, weary of struggling. He shuddered, bowed his head. If he could only



forget.

He thought of Tamzie and Nicholas, wondered if they were united. With the thought of them, came the thought of his rebellion. He was free from the bondage of his people, but what was his sacrifice to be? Would it be as his brother had said, would he be destroyed, would it be as though he had never lived? He leaped to his feet. Not that, he would not think of it. If that were true, why suffer the loneliness and unhappiness he had known, why fight always, why not join Nicholas and Tamzie? But, before he was free even for that, he must clear Northup Ranch of indebtedness. Aloud he moaned, "How long, how long."

He hurried to the house. In the patio the three Northups sat reading. It flashed through his mind, that in the many years he had been at the Northup Ranch it was only since he was master that the three Northups had spent much time together. It was only in the last few months that Nell had begun to join them. He hesitated to tell them that their allowances must be smaller. He shrank from the criticism they must make, if not verbal, in their own thoughts.

Quickly he stepped forward. He did not hesitate. He told them what would have to be done; gave them figures. When he had finished he said, "I do not know what this year will bring. There is no market, but we must make the effort. If Elaine is ever to be free from the burden of the indebtedness of this ranch, it must be through all of us."



The three Northups looked at each other in surprise; two of them, perhaps, in consternation. Stan Northup's voice was thick, "What do you mean, Ivan?"

"When she married me, there were mortgages and notes. Northup Ranch was by all rights mine, not hers. I want it to be hers, not something she has in return for herself. The money it pays back to me will, of course, be hers also, but Northup acres must be the Northup's, not the gift of a foreigner." His intensity and vehemence held them silent. But Elaine colored, under the eyes of her father.

Stan spoke softly, "It is a Quixotic idea, Ivan, but I hope we can do it. Perhaps as much for you as for her. The Northups owe you much."

Elaine retorted, "I hope we can make money, but I don't care whom Northup acres belongs to, Ivan or us." She turned to Ivan, "If you make it pay for itself a hundred times, it still belongs to you as much as to us. What is mine is yours, understand that once and for all times." Her eyes met his, but, under the humbleness in his, hers blazed with anger. Why must he always give her the feeling that she was in the wrong? Why must he be so humble?

Nell Northup sighed. "Cut your budgets wherever you want them. This depression has not only taken the land and the profit, it has taken my ambition. I am an old woman, and I've been forced to recognize it. When Elaine became so thoroughly domesticated, my opportunity as a social mentor vanished. I've literally dragged this family



up every rung we've climbed on the social ladder. I can't do it any longer. You're not socially ambitious. After all, I guess it doesn't matter much. The group I had chosen seem to be the waster's and they have gone to pieces under the present strain. I am both disillusioned and disappointed. I'm disillusioned for I've discovered it isn't I, it's what I give; without an unlimited purse you just as well drift into the backwashes. The only rating I had was the dollar and cents rating, or my ability to create a thrill. Oh, there are a group of old ladies who can, and do, gather together, but there I am disappointed. Instead of creating new interests, they spend all their time talking about the past. Rather than be on the fringe mulling over the past, I'd be an eccentric recluse. To a weary old woman, Northup Ranch seems sort of a haven. Besides, this group of people you have gathered around you are charming. If you will permit, perhaps I can become a passive member of your circle. They do not seem as stodgy and set, as I had judged them from my superior heights. Anyway, Ivan, count me as a supporter of any changes you may need to make. Perhaps my car can go. I'll probably need help in this new role. Another case of the spirit being willing."

She rose to her feet, and all of them stood with her. She laughed, "Is this a benediction? Thanks for the moral support." But as she walked away, head bravely erect, tears were in her eyes.



Stan Northup bowed his head.

It was the late evening on Ivan Smirnov's third wedding anniversary. He watched a Viking ship ride the sunset sky, ride into a crimson sea as did the Vikings of old when they sailed out of their northland into the west, a royal purple ship traced here and there with gold. The figurehead at its prow was a monstrous dog, its nose lifted as if to scent the way, its long ears slightly ruffled by the wind. Misty figures filled the boat, and, as he listened, a chant was wafted to him above the ripple of the water. Lightning cut the southern clouds. He knew not if the phantom warriors chanted a peace offering to the water gods who resented their daring, or chanted defiance to the southern storm king called up by enemy priests to bar their way.

Then the lines of the purple cloud ship loosened, spread, re-formed, the color darkened. A Roman galley, silver edged, with its golden oars at rest, lay in a pearly sea. Tropic trees of crimson rose from a flaming orange island. A boat song filled the air.

But ships dissolved into blue clouds; crimson seas were drab distances; enchanted islands vanished; boat songs were the twang of mosquitoes. But Ivan still stood on the irrigation bank and stared into the western distances where the last faint coloring of the setting sun was wiped out by rolling clouds.

Then he returned to the patio and its dim lights where



Stan Northup in his wheel chair waited for him. Soon Stan drifted into reminiscences ~~of the past~~. Seeing the far look in the eyes of the man who sat with him, Stan shifted to stories of Elaine; for he knew Ivan's thoughts were never so far that they did not return to listen when her name was spoken.

Clouds rolled high in the sky; the wind was uneasy in the tops of the trees. From the room back of them, clear and haunting, rang the notes of the "Old Refrain." Ivan was sick and shaken when it ended. Stan Northup sighed.

"You have been married three years. It has made a great change in Elaine. She seems more like my mother each day. But Nell is changed, too. Peace seems to be coming to Northup Ranch, despite these trying years we call depression."

There was no answer. The violin again sent out its harmony. When the last notes died, slow steps approached the door. Ivan was on his feet. He held the door for Elaine to pass. Stan spoke from his chair, "We enjoyed your music, Elaine. An easy chair, that music, and a companion like Ivan makes life worth while."

"Happy, father?" She took the chair Ivan brought for her. He sat back in the shadow.

"Yes, my child, I wish I could be sure you were as happy. I would ask no more of life. It is three years since you were married. Three years that I have been in this chair. But it doesn't seem that long in many ways although many changes have come.



We were fortunate Ivan took us in hand. We could never have weathered the storm. We are wasters, my dear, reckless of life as well as money."

Elaine's voice was smooth, "It has truly taken a wizard to handle this situation. What are Northup acres doing, Ivan?"

"They are still paying their way. But there is little to go on the indebtedness. The milch herd and the chicken pens have saved us."

"Not a cattle ranch any more, is it, daughter? But it is a ranch of purebreds, and a name to be reckoned with. You keep me proud of Northup Ranch, Ivan. But why have you never added your name? Nowhere does it appear."

"My name has no place on it. This is the Northup Ranch."

"Oh, father, don't you know Ivan well enough, after all this time, to know he is entirely too modest to take the liberty of putting his humble name beside the name of royalty, however fallen? I hate being eternally on a pedestal." Suddenly she was on her feet, she whirled to the shadows where Ivan sat. "If you would swear at me, it would be such a relief. I know no one can be as perfect as you appear to be, nor as meek. It is just a mask to cover something else. Why don't you come out of your shell sometimes? Quit watching me, I can't stand your hungry eyes on me any longer. And that patient politeness of yours. Oh, what a mess I've made of everything." Her voice rose higher and higher.



She stood a moment quivering, fists clenched, then ran into the house, the door banging behind her. An uncomfortable silence followed her tumultuous words. Then a crash of thunder and a rush of wind brought Ivan to his feet.

"May I help you to your room, sir?"

"Thanks. You have been very kind to us. Three years is, after all, a long time to live in one of these chairs. A man learns patience when he must sit and watch the world go by."

"Patience is learned in many schools," Ivan answered as he wheeled him to his room. Ivan's thoughts kept pace with his feet. Kind, yes, I have been kind--there has been nothing else to do--but this house is an empty shell, a play-house where each person goes about with his mask. She need not accuse me of wearing one, hers is even more evident than mine--we all wait our cues, sometimes I forget mine. In the past three years I have sometimes thought a soul began to breathe here. But it was only atmosphere, for one of the greatest tragedies America knows, the life in an average home. I wish I were out of here, back in my shack--but I am bound--yes, I have been kind. I could laugh, scream--I don't know what I could do, what I will do, before it is over.

"Good night, Ivan."

"Good night, sir. I hope you rest well."

"And you, my son."

The door closed shutting them apart, those two men who



had come to mean so much to each other. For a moment Ivan stood staring at it. "My son! I am only Nicholas Smirnov's son. Even these walls echo, 'Why are you here? Why are you here?'"

Ivan hurried to his room. In spirit, he was in flight, flight from the shadows that haunted every nook. He dropped wearily into his chair. Fitful pictures came, vanished--a child, a boy, a youth, a man--questionings, strivings--Elaine bound with every thought, every action--slow agonizing hours, quick emotion flooded minutes--suspense, realization, defeat.

He lay his head back on the chair, and closed his eyes. Why had he always been persecuted, he had tried to be kind to everyone; why was someone always trying to take from him what he struggled to build up, what he felt was rightfully his? No one ever recognized him for himself, welcomed him. Over and over he fought his battle to victory, only to have the fruits snatched away from him by selfish hands. He was a suffering down-trodden hero. Everyone was willing for him to sacrifice but no one would give him his just returns.

Ivan did not know if he slept, but suddenly he faced a new world, a world lightened by understanding. There had been no persecution except what he had built up in his own conscious. Again and again he had been recognized but he scorned that recognition. Had not Elaine called many his friends, and found them good? He had been welcomed, but had scorned the welcome because he felt others had a warmer response than he. He had not recognized that others gave a warmer response than he. He fought imaginary battles that became real when there



was no cause for battle. He wanted things that he was not prepared to have, so they were taken from him. Suddenly he knew he had never tasted true sacrifice, he had done all things with anticipation of reward. He stood again with Elaine by her father's bed. He heard her father's voice say, "But what of you, my child? There are some sacrifices too great."

Elaine had made her sacrifice with no thought of reward. He had had his opportunity, and for one moment had been willing, but he had not been strong enough to give again and again. When Elaine offered herself, he had taken her. Now for three years he had worked untiringly trying to build for himself such a place that he might again bribe her; he was trying to rob her of the honor of sacrifice by making Northup Ranch hers. No act he ever did but was prompted by selfishness. He had been calling it sacrifice, had been crowning himself as a martyr.

He leaped to his feet, stared wildly about him, went quickly to the mirror, then hurried to her room. He knocked sharply.


"Come in."

He thrust open the door. Elaine lay on the lounge before the open window. The soft glow of shaded lamps softened and chastened the blue and gold of the room. The gold of the woman blended with the brocade of the lounge. His eyes fell before the cold steadiness of hers, but he did not retreat. He remained in the doorway.

"Elaine, listen to me with as much kindness as you can.



I must make you understand." Quickly he poured forth what she had meant to him in her girlhood; his grief at being parted from her when she went to high school; the surety that they would be reunited as soon as her school days were over; the final sense of loss when she had gone to college; his inability to keep her from being the center of his dreams.

"I grew bitter, I thought I had been a fool, that you had cheated me. You see, I had deadened myself with dreams, deluded myself with hopes. To me then life was a sham, a make-believe. Into every life comes an hour when one knows his sacrifices are useless, for all life is useless. All was grief and unhappiness and sorrow. There was laughter, yes, but it was soon forgotten in pain. The memory of happiness lived only its hour, then it was gone, swallowed up. The memory of pain lived forever. I decided to shut in my life so that it would be impregnable to the assaults of the world. I didn't know that I had already done that. I built ideals, and I built an ideal woman; she was a blending of you and my mother. I was sensitive to every contact; I waited for people to hurt me; I was sure everyone was trying to. I resented when people showed any interest in me, because they had not showed that interest before I had made money. I was sure it wasn't , but the money that attracted them, although I was always equally sure they could not help being interested when they really knew me.

"Then you came home from Europe. All my fine barrier



was thrown down. I was possessed by you. I was sure that you were a symbol of life, that you had been created for me, without you would be only nothingness, that I must live and have my being through you. The reason I had been withdrawn from life was to be fit for companionship with you; I had left my people; I had tried to free myself from the evils that were in me; I had taught myself all that had been taught you, because I must be ready for you. You were the master force within me. I could be nothing without you."

An expression of wonder and surprise contested in Elaine's face.

"That first day you came home, as I lay on the ditch bank looking at you in the water, you came to me on a band of light, your shadow lay before you just as it did that night in the shack. So when you came to me that night, I forgot everything; it was as though it had been prophesied. I forgot that your father had misunderstood what I meant when I said I loved you, and would destroy the mortgages for you. I forgot everything but my joy in you; my dreams had at last come true. I didn't understand what 'marriage for a mortgage' meant."

"What do you mean about father misunderstanding you?"

Her voice was smothered. He gave no heed.

"In the first days of our marriage all the rich passion of my life rushed out in my great love for you. I looked at the wild flower, and, in its face, I saw yours. I watched the great fields of grain, and, knowing its pulsing life, knew yours. I ~~had~~ heard the surg-



ing of the wind, and listened for your spirit. I felt the soft caress of the evening breezes, and dreamed of you. Before the purifying flame of it, I bowed my head and whispered, 'All is good with the world. Life is complete in love.'

"I waited for fulfillment. I waited for the time when your father would again be well, and you would be free. Then your father was well," Ivan's head bent lower; he was silent many minutes, "You took up life where you had dropped it. I was frightened as I had been when I was a child. Frightened at the things around me, the things inside of me. I went back to the dream world. I began going to the ditch, watching the pictures rise from the water. It was the picture that told the truth. Your eyes looked up at me, cold and steady. They reached into my heart, and crushed it."

His face was white; perspiration beaded his forehead; Elaine stirred; Ivan quickly glanced at her. Her eyes were wide, pain filled; her breath came quickly.

"Go on," she commanded.

"I went back to the water again and again, but the eyes were always the same. I began watching you, hoping some day they would change. Hope dies hard. You see, my whole life was centered around you. To your son I had planned to give all that you had given me, all that I had taken from America, all that the tradition of Russia had given me; for man is the product of the ages. Nothing is lost in us. A son would be the fulfillment of my life, and the vindication for my



rebellion from my father. Because you withheld yourself from me, I pitted myself. I never thought that it might be impossible for you to love me. I only thought of making myself indispensable to you, of becoming perfect. When I had cared enough to give up everything, the savings of years, for your happiness, I could not conceive that you would not respond.

"Believe me, Elaine, it is only tonight that I know I forfeited my right to a son; that, through my ignorance, I have not only sold my own birthright but stolen yours from you. I had not meant to be selfish, yet always I have been."

Suddenly, he was as a reed shaken in the wind, when he beheld, as if for the first time, her abundant life, her exquisite beauty, her rich womanhood bound as a hostage for her father's life on the altar of sacrifice. His love, enriched and deepened by this new experience, cried out for expression.

"Elaine, if I were a poet, I could make you immortal in poetry and song. If I was an artist I would paint you as I see you, give your beauty to the world, an eternal tribute to womankind. But I am only a Russian peasant, only Nicholas Smirnov's son. I've destroyed you in my bungling selfishness. I have robbed you of love, of the right to love; you will not live even in the face of a daughter."

Quickly he crossed the room and, kneeling beside her, took her hand, crushed it to his lips, "I cannot ask forgiveness, but please understand."



Her free hand rested a moment on his head, tears hung on her lashes. "What did father misunderstand about the mortgages?"

"He thought I wanted to trade them for you. I meant to destroy them, give the ranch to you that you might be happy."

"And my father does not know that?"

"Yes, I told him before we were married."

Her eyes were filled with pain as she whispered, "Fool, fool, not to have understood." Aloud she said, "Perhaps some day I shall be worthy to understand such love. It is I who should ask forgiveness. Please go, now."

He hurried from the room and from the house. The clouds had opened to let the silver moonlight through. His shadow crept before him. There was no place to go. Emotion spent and weary, he walked aimlessly ahead. Again he knelt on the bank of the irrigation ditch. Fatigue gripped him; his muscles quivered. His eyes were fixed on a gleam of moonlight that filtered through the trees and reflected on the water. His thoughts turned again and again to Elaine's tear filled eyes; he felt her hand upon his head; heard again her vibrant whisper, "Fool, not to understand." Then the clouds parted, on the moonlighted water lay her face, her lips slightly parted, her eyes clear and kind. His heart leaped, then was caught in a mighty grip. He cried aloud in pain; perspiration stood in drops on his forehead as he clawed his breast. Darkness covered him; he sank into black smothering emptiness. The moon rode high when, weak and miserable, he dragged himself to the



house.

One afternoon late in October Ivan, wearier than usual, came quietly into the kitchen. Since the night when he lost consciousness on the irrigation bank, his heart had fluttered and pained whenever he exerted himself. He was always tired; it seemed a burden to bring one foot ahead of the other. Sometimes pain caught and held him for a full minute. It always seemed hovering just at the edge of feeling. He sat staring at the closed door thinking of Elaine as he listened to the gay chatter that drifted to him. Then the door opened, and she came through. She hesitated when she saw him; then, crossing the room, came to the back of his chair. She laid a cool hand on his damp forehead.

"What is it, Ivan, are you ill?"

He lifted his head. She pressed it back on her bosom. She bent over him, her eyes, clear and kind, looked into his. But torturing pain tore through his heart wiping out consciousness. When he roused the doctor bent over him. Elaine stood at the foot of his bed, traces of tears on her cheeks.

"Take it easy, son. How long has that heart been acting that way?"

"This is only the second time it has been so bad."

Ivan's eyes could not leave Elaine's face, but she avoid-



ed his look.

"You will be all right now. Mrs. Smirnov, keep him quiet this evening. Tomorrow send him up, we will look him over."

In the days that followed, Ivan lived in a strange world. Dreams and reality had again become confused. He could not be sure if he looked into Elaine's eyes and found them clear and kind, or if it were the memory of the face in the water. He avoided her as much as possible. He knew he had grown weak; he feared to know the truth. He had been able to make the sacrifice, give her up; he did not want to hope again; he could not again face renunciation. He who so long had watched eagerly for every glance from her eyes, avoided them now fearing the message they might bring.

He wandered down to the irrigation ditch. The blue vault of the sky with its pin points of stars was remote, chill. The leaf and weed litter of the dry ditch whispered in the wind. Long grass fronds, dead and bleached, caught his feet, hissed as he passed. On a distant slope coyotes howled to the moon; an uneasy cow call echoed. Winter stillness hedged in the world. The house was hushed when he returned, but his bed lamp burned and his covers lay open as though to welcome him.

As he lay remembering the half memory of Elaine's hand pressing his head back to her, the eyes, the smiling lips, the open bed, he pressed his hands to his eyes to shut out pictures, visions of what might be. The pain in his heart chilled him, the doctor had



said malnutrition, labor, and exposure of childhood were taking their toll. Nicholas Smirnov's greed was to be paid for even to the sacrifice of human life. Ivan slept at last.

He awoke from a beautiful dream. A sweet peace filled the room. A broad band of moonlight lay across the floor. Ivan trembled; his pulse quickened. He waited with held-breath. A mounting elation made him tense. He closed his eyelids. That white band of moonlight that lay across his room, he had seen a band of moonlight lie across a floor before, and on it had lain a black shadow silhouette. It had brought happiness with it. Then he opened his eyes. He must know. The moonlight was caught and held in a long golden veil, a veil that fell around a silver woman, its radiance drifting through the silkenness that wrapped her, caressed the curves of her slender body.

Quickly Ivan got to his feet. A black shadow silhouette lay before him, touching his toes. He feared to move, so many times he had dreamed visions only to have them melt into nothingness. The woman came closer, her hands lifted, reached out to him. He held them in his. A timid half-fearful voice whispered, "Ivan."

"Elaine!"

She was in his arms, her lips touched his cheek, then met his.

"The princess has come for her prince," she was crying.

"Has it been long?"







The Northup house rang with subdued laughter and happy voices. As Ivan and Elaine came through the door into the patio, one cried, "Here comes the bride and groom."

Everywhere glasses were lifted and shouts rang out, "Who will toast the bride?"

Answered in turn by, "Smirnov, Smirnov."

Ivan drew Elaine a little closer; as he looked at her, she flushed beneath the ardor of his gaze. He lifted his glass high and cried, "To the Northups, may the men never be poorer, and may their women always be as beautiful."

"Bravo! Bravo!" cried the guests.

"Play for us, Elaine. Please play."

Ivan turned to question her, "Will you?"

"Do you want me to?"

"Please, I want to feel the beauty of 'The Old Refrain' when it sings of love instead of lost hopes as it did when you played it a year ago."

Her lips quivered and her eyes misted, but a brave smile drove away the tears. He went for her violin. She was quickly the center of the circle. They questioned as she tuned her instrument.

"You are more beautiful every day, Elaine."



"What have you done to that husband of yours? He is a new creature. The melancholy of his eyes has changed. I cannot read it, but I always want to cross myself."

"Four years,--and you are perfect lovers. You must be happy."

"Such an ideal family, really I believe your father and mother have fallen in love all over again."

"Could they help it with such a glorious example before them? Ralph and I have renewed our flame from their candle. It is contagious."

"You have stood this terrible depression so successfully."

As they talked on and on, Elaine smiled, but her eyes eagerly watched for Ivan, always her breath caught when his eyes met hers, the flare in their black depths stilled her.

With the first note the faces around them were gone, there were only they two, and in both their throats low sobs struggled, so near had they come to losing the beauty of life, so akin is such poignant happiness to sorrow. A hush was in the patio after the last notes died away; each guest felt the touch of the sublime. She played again and again until at last she shook her head, and laid the instrument aside.

She went to her father's chair. His eyes were moist, "We have enjoyed your music, my child. An easy chair, that music and



friends make life complete."

"Happy, father?" she was radiant.

"Yes, and you? I need not ask how it is with you."

As he spoke he took Nell Northup's hand. "There have been many changes in this year. Northup acres have indeed found happiness and peace. It is indeed in the spirit that happiness and fulfillment lie."

Elaine whispered, "Life is complete." Ivan stood by her side.

A laughing voice cried, "This family party must break up."

They were drawn among their guests who were soon dancing. Ivan and Elaine danced some of the Russian dances he had taught her in her childhood. As they stood panting from their exertion, Ivan whispered, "The Great Spirit is kind to man; he has given him many, many ways to express himself. Perhaps he has made the ultimate aim of life 'expression'."

"Yes, God is good, better than we in our narrow way understand."

"Elaine, why did you say God?"

"Why did you say Great Spirit?"

"I do not know. It is only a name for the nameless. I recognize it when I see it in the dreams and aspirations of men, when I feel the sweetness of our love, when I hear not the violin strings but the harmony of life, the rhythm that rings from them when I watch the fields of grain, the flowers in the spring. I know it when there



is the spirit of great sacrifice, when man gives unselfishly of himself without thought of reward. Love is another name, but it is not great enough. This spirit is greater than love, it is greater than life itself, for it gives life. It is the imminent cause of all things."

Then she answered, "In my language, it is God."

"But Mrs. O'Flynn's God was circumscribed."

"Not her God, Ivan, but her conception of God. Man can never really know God, he can only have his conception, so the idea of God is ever enlarging. Your conception of a Great Spirit is only another name for God. Mrs. O'Flynn's God was anthropomorphized. Yours is not. Hers has been circumscribed by creed and dogma, yours is striving to meet your personal need."

"God--it is attempting to define the undefinable, when we give a name, is it not?"

"But it is well that man attempts."

Time truly sped on golden wings for the Northup household. Another short madly happy year was gone. Ivan and Elaine turned more and more from the past to the future. Ivan's vision of life grew; life was a sacred gift which he believed was held for a brief span, and is to be passed on better than it is received, until in the beauty of perfection it is a suitable gift to the universe. He no



longer selfishly held himself aloof. He went forth to meet every experience. Together Elaine and he gave of their time and ability to every cause. They mingled with the Russo-German people, discussing with them their problems, and their problems were many. The first generation were old men and women, the second were mature, the third were in the heyday of young womanhood and manhood. The America into which the first generation had come was not the America which the third generation was facing. The first generation lamented over the third, and the third protested against the stolidity of the first.

Ivan discussed with them the duty of citizenship, the obligation a man owes to his family, the right of children to a free and happy youth. He fought child labor. He encouraged them in their worship and attended their churches. Together they rejoiced with those whose sons made their mark in trades and professions; they found joy in letters from a doctor, a lawyer, a dentist, a civil engineer, a minister. All these had gone out from north of the river. They consoled the families of a petty thief, a forger, a confidence man; for these, too, had gone out from north of the river.

In their home, they entertained the third generation, and both Ivan and Elaine rejoiced that this third generation were as one with the American families they mingled with. The next generation would not remember whether they were Russo-German or American, nor would it be remembered. They were retaining the sturdy honesty and the thriftiness of their ancestors, but they were acquiring the grace and freedom,



the love of the beautiful, the respect for womankind, of their more gifted American brothers. Those who watched this amalgamation prayed and hoped that only the virtues of both peoples might survive. If the destiny of the individual is to be fulfilled, if nations are to survive and serve, there cannot be Germans, Russians, Japs. There must be men, brothers, with their 'wagons hitched to the stars.'

Sometimes Elaine gasped, "I would not have believed so many things could be packed in one year, and yet the work on Northup ranch seems always to go on."

And Ivan, a caress in his voice, answered, "You have put wings on the feet of time."

All their hours were not spent in plans for others. They had their own to make and they were eager plans.

"Ivan, it will be a son. It's eyes will be dark like yours. He will be like you in every way."

"There will be a son, yes, for through him I live and will carry on; in him I will know that I have been forgiven, that life has not been in vain. And he may be like me if you wish, but this first will be a daughter, and she will be like you. She shall be my picture of you, my poem. She shall preserve you for the future, and her daughter after her, and on and on as long as the human race shall last."

"Daughters may come any time. But first borns should be sons, since they must carry on traditions and family names."



"Perhaps that is true in most cases, but not in this case. You forget, my dear, that I have only begun to learn, only begun to be worthy of life. While you, Elaine, if your daughter were born tomorrow, and we were taken from her, would grow to a splendid womanhood; for her heritage from you and Northup ranch would keep her safe and beautiful until she was ready to take her place in this world."

"Don't, Ivan. When you talk that way, you reproach me for my stubborn pride and willful misunderstanding. Beginning life? My dear, have you not always led me? Oh, the precious years I wasted for us."

"It is only the more beautiful for waiting. Ours is as marriage should be, perfect understanding. Even in this, the crown of man's and woman's life, marriage and parenthood, there must be sacrifice. Such understanding as ours only can come through sacrifice; nothing is ever bought without it. We must not begrudge ours. Only be thankful that it is vouchsafed to us to know how to appreciate the great gift when it is ours."







The resurrection story was being retold in every valley. Re-creation was enacted wherever there was life. Joy and sorrow, peace and tragedy, walked hand in hand. The first suns of April warmed the earth when Ivan squatted at Elaine's bedside. The gold hair lay like a great fan on the pillow; the beautiful face was pinched and blue; the lips white and dry. Only the eyes glowed, great blue wells of pity.

"Ivan, your picture of me," she whispered.

His eyes left her face as the nurse stooped beside him. In her arms, a tiny face with a crown of golden fuzz showed from the blanketed bundle. As he watched, the eyelids quivered and opened; startingly blue eyes looked up, then closed.

"She will look like me--but, the son--it is too late--we can't carry on." It seemed more the movement of her lips than her voice that carried her words to him. "I didn't understand. You see --you're," the voice was lower and lower, stopped, then she gasped, "different."

She was still. Ivan tried to rise, to move. There was something he must get away from, but he was of stone. The doctor touched his shoulder. Comprehension came slowly; the mind had refused to take the blow; he was powerless, held in the grip of emotion too great for utterance or for action. He heard the low insistent voice



above him; he felt the persistent tug at his arms; he struggled, but he could not free himself from the deadening weight that was crushing him.

The doctor meant to be kind in the days that followed. But everything was lost to Ivan as he lay almost as still and white as the figure in the room down the hall from him.

He heard from a great distance a voice repeating, "The heart will not stand more shocks. You must rest, and you must pull yourself together. Pull yourself out of this slough of despondency you are in. You know you have to carry on. There is a daughter up there that is going to have a hard time being as fine a woman as her mother."

But it was only a voice.

Days passed and Ivan still lay motionless. Again and again, as a dirge, he heard the admonition, "You must carry on." Each day Nell Northup brought the child to him. He saw it turn from red to pink, to white. He saw the wizened look leave its face, the wrinkles smooth, and the baby plumpness take its place. But he lay wrapped in thick layers of ice, undisturbed by what passed on around him, yet observing it all.

Then one day when the child was brought to him, he better understood what had welled up against him in his father's heart, hatred because his life had been bought at the price of Tamzie's. But in his own heart, there was no hate, only infinite sadness and remoteness. Elaine had been preserved, but the prophecy of his brother was



true. "You will be destroyed. No sons shall live after you."

He was up again, directing the Northup Ranch, but the weariness was always upon him. He was like a spent runner who has reached his goal yet is not permitted to stop. Everything had centered in Elaine, without her the incentive for life was gone. He had builded with a definite goal, happiness for her, and that goal was reached. Through him she had known peace and beauty and the final fulfillment of woman's life, motherhood.

There was always the cry, "Carry on as she would have you, carry on for the child." But no one understood. Time had been too brief to plan for the hour when they would not be together. Had not she said it was too late to carry on, and she had known. He had failed his Maker, he had not proved fit to carry on to that perfection which grants return to the universe from which his spark of divinity had <sup>come</sup> ~~flown~~.

To him the child was Elaine's. "The child does not need me. Elaine gave her everything, she belongs to the Northups. I want her to be a Northup."

He haunted the irrigation ditch where Elaine and he had spent happy hours together. He rode the trails they had made. He stood at the arch of the patio listening, waiting for her footsteps. Sometimes, in the stillness of the night, he called her name. Only the



echoes answered him.

He mumbled as he walked the prairie, "Nothing is earned without sacrifice. I had my freedom from the bondage of my fathers but, in return, I reap death. I will be destroyed, nothing of me lives after me. That is the price."

Then one day he left the south side of the river and returned to the north. He turned again to his family. He stood where the old shack had stood, and saw on the rise to the west of him, and on the rise to the east of him, and in the valley to the south of him, three comparatively new houses, bright with paint, backed by three roomy garages covering three glistening cars.

As he went from one of those houses to the other, he was welcomed. The second generation had met and been awed by this uncle and his beautiful wife, but their fathers had never approved of him. But today the brothers stood in awe before the gray, drawn face of the youngest. Ivan heard the tales of their successes and their failures, of their woes at the condition of the country, and, while he listened with bent head and dull eyes, they looked at him and shook their heads in sympathy. From one back door to another, fled messengers.

When Ivan was alone in his room, he looked about him. There was simplicity in this room, there was tawdry gawdiness in others, but in all there was an effort to beautify. It was all so superior to the shack of their boyhood. If Nicholas had given them beds to sleep in, tables to eat from, chairs to sit in, would he, Ivan, have fled from them?



Still messengers went from one Smirnov house to the other. Then one night when Ivan had been there about a week, they all met together at Karl's house; for he was the eldest and head of the family in the absence of the father.

When they had all come together, they sat solemnly in a circle, the elders in the center, then each age in a circle back of them until the small ones lay or crawled at the outer rim. Karl cleared his throat and spoke for them. "Ivan, we are glad to have you with us. We hope you have come to stay, that you have come back to us, and we hope you can begin life anew. In your face, we can see the sadness that lived in the face of our father when the woman, our mother, had left him. Lonely is the life of a man who dwells without a wife, and since the golden woman left you no man child, it is right that you should take another, a woman of our people, who can give you strong men children. Among the Americans you have built your fortune, now take it to our people and build up the strength of the Smirnovs. Today we have approached the widow Weber. She has already sons that can help you, land that can be added to yours. She is willing that you court her. You have come back to your own people in time, you are still a young man. She is also young."

Ivan stared at him, at the group gathered around him. Was it of him and to him, they had been talking? He rose slowly, dazedly, to his feet. What was he doing here in this house of strangers? Was it to him they talked of another woman? Without a word he walked



from their midst and returned to the Northup house.

He worked with the men in the fields, from before the first break of day until the stars were long in the sky. Through the long nights he paced back and forth in his room or in the patio, or sat in the room that had been Elaine's. Then one night he heard the walls whispering her name; he listened; he heard her call from the stairs; he went in answer, but she was not there. From the patio he heard whispering, laughing. When he stood in the door, he saw her shadow in the moonlight; he heard the swish of her garments as she fled before his advance. She beckoned him to follow.

Stan Northup's sad eyes followed Ivan as he moved restlessly about the house. Ivan never spoke, but always he was listening, waiting her call. It came at unexpected moments and from unexpected places, sometimes from the stairs, sometimes from the patio, sometimes from her room.

Stan stopped him as he hurried to the stair. "Ivan, I'm her father, but you cannot help her by eating your heart out like you are doing. It would be better if you could forget. Doesn't the child mean anything to you?"

Ivan was impatient. Elaine would be waiting. "Yes, she is the picture of Elaine. Some day she will come to life. But she doesn't need me now. She is a Northup. Elaine has taken care of her. She will be Elaine some day, just as I am Tamzie. There is nothing I can do without Elaine. My work is ended. I don't know why I



must keep waiting. Why doesn't she come?"

He walked quickly away. Once more he squatted on the ditch bank. Day after day he had come there and squatted on the bank staring into the water, trying to bring back the image of her. But there was only rippling blackness. One refrain beat in his tired brain. "If I could only recall her, if I could only recall her."

Tonight he was breathlessly expectant. He bent eagerly forward. Then he saw her face reflected in the water. Wondering joy wiped the grayness from his face. He reached down to lay his hand on her cheek. But there was only water. He lifted his dripping hand, dumbly stared at it. Dry sobs shook him.

The sun sank into the horizon; the turquoise of the mountains lay against the warm rose shell of the heavens, rose that dimmed to pink as it spread higher and higher, dimmed to a warm flush, to silver and back to blue. A golden moon globe slid from behind the horizon, and rose a lustrous ball. Shadows fell, twilight faded, night spread her blanket of lulling quiet.

Ivan still stared into the water; it suddenly became a film, unwinding, unwinding. He heard the swish as it slipped by. On it he saw pictured the incidents of his life. The child, the boy, the youth, the beautiful face of the child Elaine, the girl Elaine, the maiden Elaine, the dancing golden woman Elaine, the wife Elaine.

Ivan bent lower but his eyes never lifted from that unwinding band flowing before him. Pain hovered close; a sickening flut-



ter filled him. The face on the film dimmed, thought dimmed, then the face floated near, dimmed, vanished. The moon topped the trees, rode high and white. A band of silver flowed across the water. Slowly Ivan swayed from side to side, in his throat were muted sobbing.

Suddenly on the silver band of moonlight stretching before him lay a black silhouette. He struggled to his feet, clutching his breast. Elaine was coming. She was there. The water lay like a misty blanket dimming her features, keeping her from him. She lifted her arms to him; his hands went out to meet hers. His straining ears heard her voice; faint but clear like the ripple of water, it sounded.

"Ivan."

"Elaine!"

"Come."

He stepped forward, cried, "I'm coming."

Then he wavered, pain, stabbing, tearing, wrenched from him a cry. A mist rose. A startled bird cried in the tree top. Then <sup>there</sup> was silence.

The white moon sinking to the horizon touched lightly the lifeless form on the old ditch bank.