One of the nightly occupations in Chippewa was to sit in the taproom of the Cliff Dwellers Hotel and wait for the ~~arrival~~ arrival of the midnight train from Chicago. ~~It seemed to make~~ It made no difference whether or not one was actually meeting anyone on the train; in fact, the ~~enterprise~~ enterprise seemed to contain more fun and mystery if

The Cliff Dwellers Inn stood at the foot of Strawberry Hill in Chippewa, just a block away from the depot and across the street from the miner's union hall, Local 278. The propinquity of the hotel to the union hall contained overtones of irony, for the hotel was the social center of the mining officials and their wives ~~as was~~ while ~~and~~ the union hall served as a sort of recreation center for the miners and their wives. Few miners had ever visited the hotel and no mining officials but known to visit had ever ~~visited~~ the union hall.

The first iron ore in Michigan was found about two miles east of Chippewa about fifteen years before the Civil War. A few years later the mining promoters and surveyors descended upon the valley which later became the town of Chippewa, and found that ~~the town was~~ virtually the entire underburden of the town was solid iron ore. Various

"Telephone, Mr. Bigler," Miss Lahti said as I walked from the library to my office. "It's Mr. Carson of the land department," she added, smiling.

"Yes, Mr. Carson," I said, "what can I do for you?"

"Is it true Mr. Holbrook's out of town?" Carson asked.

"Yes, he left for Wilmington

~~It's a good thing~~

Maida and I both suffred from the same bug of not wanting to be seen unless we were at our best, so we occupied separate bedrooms. We even had separate bathrooms -- I used a little cubicle and shower-stall off my bedroom. I was hurrying into my

---

It was nearly five when I got home and remembered I had forgotten to continue the drunk driving case set for the next day. I called Judge Williams from the upstairs phone.

~~The~~ Carson of the land department of the Iron Cliff Ore Company ~~was~~ called me at 4:30 and wanted me to pass on a lease that very afternoon.

"Yes, ~~Mr~~, Mr. ~~Gross~~ Carson," I said. "Can you come right down?"

"Right," ~~Gross~~ Carson said, banging down the receiver.

That was a favorite trick of Carson's, to phone the office just before closing time with a hot deal that just couldn't wait. He could have told me ~~to know~~ more about the law of leases than I ever learned in law schools, but Carson was one of ~~those~~ careful corporate moles who look for no more out of life than holding their jobs, who seek no advancement or change, and try to hedge in every move that calls faintly for a ~~decc~~ decision

It was payday at the iron mines and all I had to do was look out the office window at Louie's or Als' or the Casino and see the miners coming in and out from cashing their checks. Most of them were dressing dressed in the outfit that is as standard in Chippewa as a conservative Brooks Brothers business suit is on Wall Street: a blue Norwegian ski cap, a red and black plaid woolen jumper, heavy dark woolen trousers or breeches, and rubber soled boots with leather uppers. For some obscure reason these boots were locally known as "Goldseals," and an added torch with some of the miners was to the leather tops of the boots partially unlaced, and thus leave the strings with the rawhide laces flopping and dragging in the snow behind them...

It was a good thing that my father Elmer Walter Holbrook, was at the iron mines in Wilmington on business... It always got his cork

AN AFTERNOON IN COURT

It was mid-afternoon in August, 1944. I sat in the courtroom keeping a dull eye on my briefcase, idly watching the proceedings. I was watching my briefcase not because of its value, or the value of the papers in it, but because it held a pint of good whiskey. I was awaiting my turn to rid my client of the chafing bonds of ~~xi~~ matrimony. Her name was Mrs. Rose Lahti (a Finnish surname which more nearly rhymes with naughty). She had married a Finnish miner and had rapidly regretted it. He had not contested the case. As I sat there it ~~It~~ occurred to me that regret was becoming the universal grounds for divorce, although most ~~conservative~~ lawyers still preferred to call it bad names like cruelty or drunkenness or even desertion or adultery or non-support ~~or some such~~--everything, that is, ~~in fact,~~ but the dominant truth that one or both of the parties had changed his mind...

Emmett Joselyn was putting in his male client's proof in an uncontested divorce case. I saw that he was also rapidly putting old Judge Baldwin to sleep with his interminable questions. Even from where I sat I could see the old Judge's eyes growing glazed and heavy with boredom. There was no jury. There never is in divorce cases... Joselyn, a dandruffy lawyer in his forties, had one of those mournful, hollow voices; the kind you frequently hear over the radio quoting sad poetry ~~over the radio~~ at midnight to the accompaniment of ~~accompanied by~~ a tremulous organ. I averted my sighed and eyes, staring up at the glass dome over the ceiling of the courtroom. ~~I observed that~~ One of the smaller stained glasses had dropped from its leads and The sun was shining through the hole made by the missing glass ~~and I wished I was out fishing~~. The remaining glass in the dome was pretty well streaked with soot and pigeon droppings, which reminded me that it hadn't rained in weeks and that the trout streams were getting dangerously low.

I glanced back at my client. She was sitting there like a brood hen among her little knot of witnesses. Seeing me looking she quickly nodded her head and flashed her ~~twelve-karat~~ smile at me as though to encourage me to stick it out. We had made the mutual mistake of allowing her to pay for her divorce in full in advance, forgetting that it takes a pretty earnest lawyer to keep up his interest in a case after he had gotten his entire fee. And I was ~~certainly~~ not that kind of a ~~xx~~ lawyer. I smiled and nodded ~~to~~ extravagantly at her so that she might not think that I would ~~sell~~ flee before she was single again. Once again I was irresistibly drawn back to the droning hum of Emmett Joselyn's voice.

Emmett was squinting keenly at his client. "Hm," ~~he~~ mused. At length he asked another involved question. Then he removed his tortoise-shell ~~xxxxx~~ glasses. "Hm." He held the glasses poised, awaiting the answer, and then posed another long question. He then carefully replaced his glasses. "Hm." He had evidently seen this maneuver in a movie. He appeared to be trying to prove by his client that the client's wife was a common drunk. ~~One~~ He was doing such a grand job that one could almost smell the whiskey flowing in the courtroom, ~~he was doing such a grand job.~~ I was even developing a mild case of sympathetic hiccoughs... It seemed that his client didn't want custody of his children; he'd be charitable and leave them with the drunken wife; all he wanted was his freedom. "Would you say that your wife, Helen, would become intoxicated whenever the occasion presented itself?" Joselyn keenly shot at his client, again removing his glasses. "Yes," answered the client, I thought a little wearily, and so abruptly that he did not allow his lawyer's glasses much time off for air. And so it went...

Outside a long double-header ore-drag puffed and spat its way up on the steel trestle leading to the long ore dock reaching out into Lake Superior, ~~there to dump its dripping red carloads of iron ore into a~~ I would see the train, the dock and waiting ore boat, ~~the dock~~ ~~I could see it~~ all in miniature by merely turning my head. The sunlight glittered on the still lake. The din from the locomotives necessarily suspended all activity in the courtroom, even Joselyn's, and all present looked around at each other with that curiously vacant, waiting-room sort of expression that people wear under such circumstances. Judge Baldwin glanced over at me ~~and smiled~~ with a wan smile and I shrugged my condolences that he should have got stuck so long with Joselyn. For Joselyn was the kind of lawyer ~~that~~ who ultimately won his cases by boring the judge into a state of surrender.

There are few trades followed by men in which one's ineptitudes become more readily apparent to one's fellow tradesmen than that of the practice of law. An inept lawyer is something like a deceived husband--he is often the last to suspect the true state of affairs. Joselyn was an inept lawyer. In fact his ineptitude amounted to a low form of genius, ~~and~~ He was a pleasant enough fellow; gracious and easy to deal with; and his mind seemed crammed with all manner of plausible propositions of law. But when it came to the hurly-burly of a contentious law-suit he invariably flew into a panic and his dominant feeling seemed largely one of dismay. He appeared happiest when he had an uncontested case, like the dreary divorce case he was now trying. He would spin the ~~damn~~ thing out interminably, drowning the case in words, as though reluctant to abandon the luxurious feeling of being unopposed.

Joselyn was a failure in his work; a nice guy and a failure. I felt sorry for him--at once sorry and unaccountably irked. He should have been

a monk. I suspect there are a number of monks who should be practicing law. I longed to dance over lightly behind him and give him a big surprise: a driving kick in the coccyx, and thus try to infuse a little life into him; for once to make him angry, to forget his goddam glasses, and to bring him out swinging and swearing and lunging and railing. Instead I sat there dully watching the macabre scene, lost in the hypnotic hum of his words, waiting for my case to be called so that I could get my restless client her freedom--and get her restless lawyer out fishing.

"What do you have today, Mr. Biegler?"

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"Where shall I sit?" Mrs. Lahti asked. She glanced about her in a pretty state of confusion. "Poor little me," she seemed to say. There was only one chair where she could possibly have sat and yet--it's a funny thing--half of them will invariably ask where they should sit. The judge and I had both remarked this phenomenon on previous occasions and we glanced at each other and exchanged faint smiles.

"There," I said, pointing at the gaping and empty mahogany chair beside the judge's bench. Even the movies should have taught her where the goddam witness chair was. I occasionally speculated that these "where-shall-I-sit" witnesses were really a sly folk, craftily bent upon impressing the judge with their pristine innocence and their pitiable need of his watchful protection from the pitfalls of the law.

"Whew!" Mrs. Lahti said, as she slid her severely girdled buttocks back against the rear of the witness chair. ~~She~~ It was a warm day and she was perspiring a little and her backward slide was accompanied by a squealing sort of whistle that made me shiver. ~~It was a warm day.~~ And this was her big moment--her first divorce. She cocked her head coquettishly and bathed the judge in her golden smile. This was evidently the full treatment. "Miss Personality--1928" I thought. The judge met this exposure splendidly, but I shuddered a trifle and leaned against the court reporter's desk. The reporter pursed his lips and ~~and He pursed his lips.~~ glance from over his glasses. The ~~reporter,~~ a fat bachelor who drank gin and moderately lecherous from a bottle during recesses, ~~was~~ He was a master of the appraising glance. He was also

I rattled my papers a little to attract her attention. On with the dreary task. "What is your name?" I asked... With luck I would be fishing up on the Yellow Dog by sundown. ~~My tackle was~~ and a change of clothes and a case of beer waiting outside in the car. My fishing clothes and tackle were

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* * *

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I rattled my papers a little to attract her attention. On with the task. "What is your name?" I asked. With luck I would be fishing up on the Yellow Dog by sundown. My tackle was waiting outside in the car.

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REFLECTIONS ON THE WATER

I stood on the Yellow Dog bridge and threaded my line through the guides of my flyrod. High overhead and still in the sunlight an eagle soared, majestically wheeling and tacking towards Lake Superior. From my earthbound view the August sun had disappeared, and the western sky was kindled and rapidly coming aflame with the after glow: tonight it was akin to the sullen glow that might have been made had an angry forest fire raged in the hills near the headwaters of the Yellow Dog river, to the west of me. I watched the eagle and then I watched the sunset, and for a timeless moment I forgot the trout that were feeding above the riffle just above the bridge where I stood. There was a quiet "Plup!" as another one rose, and my fingers shook with divine eagerness as I threaded the line through the last guide. And all the while there was the musical gravelly tinkle of the Yellow Dog, the sweetest and most devilish trout stream I have ever known, as it pitches and brawled and searched its way down to Lake Superior, the earth's mightiest inland sea.

I was elated to find that I had the river to myself, but for two reasons I was not surprised: so many fishermen were away in the war, and gas rationing kept most of the rest of them far from the distant Yellow Dog. I chuckled unpleasantly to think that Hitler and Hirohito had conspired to make better trout fishing for Paul Biegler in the remote upper peninsula of Michigan; and I chuckled again with even less glee, when I thought of how Paul Biegler, 4-F, had conspired with his gas station man to make this fishing trip available.

* * *

AsI stood there I reflected that war tended to make a swine out of any able-bodied man that wasn't in it up to his armpits: that this swinishness was merely a matter of degree: that even many of the littler bearers sweating under battle fire must experience a certain feeling of guilt that they weren't bearing arms; and that the farther one worked to the rear, away from the fighting, the greater must be this curious sense of guilt, until finally oceans were leapt, a continent was traversed, and one found oneself thrust down at nightfall upon a lonely wooden bridge in northern Michigan, a solitary fisherman, contemplating his dubious status as a 4-F; a non-warrior who, while khm other men screamed and died, was ridden to his sport on contraband tires he had bought from an eager felon, and propelled there by gasolene he should never have burned. Ah, yes, this was a splendid sort of guilt, the kind that made one wish to snap his best flyrod across his knee; this was the sort of x swinish guilt that made one simply an accessory to the enemy. But what of the complacent? The complacent! What of these sodden swine? Alas, we were all swine, but surely if it was a matter of ddgree, they were the worst swine of all. I felt a little better. I looked up at the sky but the eagle had disappeared from view...

My reverie was broken by the roar and rush of a logging truck approaching from the north. It was swirling down upon me like an evil genie surrounded by its own magic cloud of dust. I pressed back against the railing of the bridge, foolishly holding my precious fly rod out over the water to protect it. The truck driver slowed down for the bridge, then rumbled across the loose planking, grinning at me, the groaning load of green hardwood logs swaying precariously. I shrunk against the railing. The truck lurched to a stop on the other side and the driver stiffly got out and proceeded to urinate against a front tire. I pretended to be absorbed with my leader.

"How's fishin'?" the driver called to me.

"I dunno," I called back. "I haven't started yet."

"You better get goin', Bub. It'll be dark soon."

"I know," I said, lying easily. "I had a flat on the way up."

The truck driver walked up to where I stood on the bridge. He was a Finn, about my own age, I concluded, about twenty-eight or thirty. By his bee-sting lower lip I could see that he was chewing snuff. A little of the juice had dribbled down his chin. He silently watched me while I selected a fly and tied it to the leander.

"You got a nice bunch of flies there," he said.

"Yes," I said. "But they're getting sort of hard to get. They tell me it's the hooks--since the war--it's the hooks that are hard to get." I was making talk so that he wouldn't hear the steady plash of the trout rising above the bridge. He did not seem to hear the trout rising, but I whistled a little and made some false casts downstream to further detract him, working out line.

"Say, you're Polly Biegler--the new lawyer down in Chippewa, ain't you?"

"Why, yes," I said brightly, both pleased and nettled that he should have recognized me. "What's yours?"

"Arvo Lampinen," he said. "Shake."

We stood there on the bridge while I shook his moist hand. All the while the mosquitoes whined around us. He glanced quickly at my car parked off the road, and then back at me. A crafty look had come into his eyes. He had spotted my A gas sticker pasted on the windshield.

"Say," he said. "I'm dumpin' this load of pig-iron in Chippewa tonight an' layin' over till mornin'."

"Oh?" I said.

He glanced upstream and downstream and lowered his voice. "I was figurin' to buy a little bottle tonight when I get to town--that is if I could raise the price."

"Yes?" I said politely.

"I was wonderin'--ah--I was figurin' that if I could sell a few of these here gas coupons--ah--I could raise the price of a bottle." He held a wad of gas coupons in his hand. I could see that there were a lot of fishing trips in those coupons.

I patriotically eyed my fellow swine as sternly as possible. "No thank you," I said.

"Okay, okay, okay," he said smiling. "No hard feelings."

"None at all," I said.

"Well, I gotta be goin'," he said. "Gotta get rid of my load of bundles for Berlin. See you later." He jerked his thumb toward the river. "Don't take 'em all," he said.

"Not tonight," I said. "So-long, Lampinin."

"So-long, Biegler. Be seein' you."

I stood on the bridge and watched him while he walked to his truck, expertly cupped the snuff from his lip with his index finger and flung it away, and then got in and roared the motor. I watched the truck while it rolled through its series of grinding gear shifts, slowly gathering speed like a great retreating beast. I watched it until it swirled around a far curve in a cloud of dust. "Bundles for Berlin." I stood there, listening to its fitful, diminishing roar. And all the while the greedy trout were plashing at my feet. Then, when I could no longer hear the truck, I slowly took down my rod and leaned heavily against the railing of the bridge. Silently I watched the faint afterglow in the west. I was shivering. It was nearly dark. It seemed that it had suddenly grown cold and that I no longer wanted to fish.

Paul gradually came to be shocked at the preoccupation of most people over the dreary business of making a living. It filled so much of their lives, their talk, their recreation. It was not that he regarded earning one's living as a matter for jest. He had seen too much of its earnestness about him. He suppoxed it was just as brutally necessary as breathing or going to the bathroom. Yet people did not constantly talk and think about those bodily functions. It was a matter of proportions...

He was always to be suspicious and, at times, a trifle envious of the ambitious, the successful; of those who wanted to "get ahead" or those who got ahead. Most of his playmates had their eyes "on the main chance." Paul often wondered what the main chance was. Was one's destiny on earth confined to earning a living, buying a house or a dozen houses, accumulating a bank balance and a lot of stocks and bonds? And then dying? Paul could not believe it. He was afraid to believe it. If he believed he felt he would be lost.

By this time he had read a number of cleverly cynical and satiric books and articles by men who derided this American preoccupation with money and worldly goods. Their distribes were usually associated with gibes at Rotarians and other uplift organizations. Mencken was their chief apostle. And they made out a plausible case. But Paul did not share with them their apparent feeling of rancour or glee over this sorry state of affairs. His feeling was one of abiding dismay and sadness. He ~~a~~ felt sorry for them. He was appalled at the waste of living. There was no fun, no joy...

That was it! It was the joylessness of their existence--the dull, groping, splintered lives they led. There was no hilarity, no spontaneity, no

zest, no giving out... Their occasional fits of laughter had one eye on the clock or the cash box. There was, God dammitt, no honest joy.

It was the one great characteristic of Oliver's that Paul applauded and envied--the thing that made Paul forgive him so much else--the man's Gargantuan capacity for enjoyment. There was a wild goat-like joy in his eating, joy in his drinking, undoubtedly there was joy in his sexual encounters, in his fishing and hunting--even in his epic rages. The man lived...

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Paul came gradually to sense that the essence of people's lives was secret and unseen, locked far below the surface in dreams and memories as deep as Hell itself: that the day-to-day bawling, working, eating, bragging, drinking fellow was but a fragment of the whole man, like the lapped frozen peak to the great submerged iceberg, the quiet cone to the festering volcano, the slender projecting spire to the engulfed cathedral. People simply did not know each other. He did not know his parents, his brothers, his friends: they knew him not at all. And there was no help for it.

For he was haunted, too, by the slow realization that the human modes of communicating this seething buried life, one to the other, were still but little removed from a series of grunts or the caveman's crude scrawls and drawings on his ancient, smoke-grimed wall.

Must there only be occasional, fugitive, fleeting gleams? How to tell? How to say? How shall I articulate my beautiful, ghastly dream? Who will tell me his? There was slow, quiet terror in the thought: Was not all this the key to the essential loneliness of man? How to tell? how to say? An unhappy Irishman called Joyce had torn out his vitals trying to tell... Was this, then, the reason for the terrible compulsion--why men strive, sweat, blunder, lurch and stumble, blindly fall, yet rise and strive again--to mould, fashion, carve, build, to <u>create</u>? They must try to say, they must try to tell...

Thoughts like these made Paul despair of ever becoming a writer. Christ, what was the use! Laggard words, the ordinary resources of language, seemed but faint tinklings and little bells, lost and helpless to convey this vast deep realm of dream and shadow. It seemed to him, sometimes, that entire new symbols, even new modes, of human communication were imperative.

Men did not tell because they could not tell.

"But there is music," he mused, "yes, music--it is the closest we have yet come..." At times, in his monstrous longing towards release, towards utterance, he thought he would try to become a composer.

Ah, that was it! A composer of music.

The thunderous applause subsided. The audience lights of Carnegie Hall gradually dimmed. Only a waiting, rustling hush prevailed. Paul Biegler raised his baton. He was slightly stooped and somewhat gray about the temples, inwardly ravaged by his secret, searing visions, yet still slender and handsome in his evening clothes. Two hundred--count them, two hundred!--trained musicians watched for his signal. Then slowly his arms descended and rose as the string section--or perhaps just the muted first violins--whispered and sighed the haunting, aching opening bars of his latest composition, the tone poem "The Burning Earth." No, no, no--that was going to be his book! How about "A Walk on the Ocean Floor"? Yes, that would make a shambling bum out of Debussy... This was its electrifying world premiere...

Strong men broke down and sobbed. Beautiful women tore at their heaving bodices or quietly swooned. For tonight they were made to understand many locked and hidden places of the heart, and shame had dropped away...

Ever since then Professor Joachim's words had played with me, sometimes coming back at the old man ~~played with me~~ at most unaccountable moments. Perhaps he was right; perhaps it was better to face one's problems and fears: to face them squarely and unafraid. I had tried ~~to debate~~ debating with my "personal devil," and while it didn't make me a better man, it ~~undoubtedly~~ may perhaps have made me a clearer-thinking one. Being a pre-law and having always been rather attached to the historical figure of Henry Clay,

REFLECTIONS ON THE WATER

I stood on the Yellow Dog bridge and threaded my line through the guides of my flyrod. High overhead and still bathed in the fading sunlight an eagle soared, majestically wheeling and tacking its way towards Lake Superior. From my earthbound view the August sun had disappeared, and the western sky was kindled and rapidly coming aflame with the afterglow. In seconds it was akin to the sullen glow that might have been made had an angry forest fire raged in the hills near the headwaters of the Yellow Dog river. I watched the eagle and then I watched the sunset, and for a timeless moment I forgot the trout that were feeding above the riffle just above the bridge where I stood. There was a quiet "plup!" as another trout rose and my fingers shook with divine eagerness as I threaded the line through the last guide. And all the while there was the musical, gravelly tinkle of the Yellow Dog, the sweetest and most devilish trout stream I have ever known, as it pitched and brawled and searched its way down to Lake Superior, the earth's mightiest inland sea.

I was elated to find that I had the river to myself, but for two reasons I was not surprised: so many fishermen were away in the war, and gas rationing kept most of the rest of them far from the distant Yellow Dog. I chuckled unpleasantly to think that Hitler and Hirohito had conspired to make better trout fishing for Paul Biegler in the remote upper peninsula of Michigan; and I chuckled again, with even less glee, when I thought of how Paul Biegler, 4-F, had conspired with his gas station man to make this fishing trip possible.

* * *

As I stood there I reflected that war tended to make a swine out of any able-bodied man that wasn't in it up to his armpits: that this swinishness was merely a matter of degree: that even living soldiers, viewing their dead comrades, must possess some odd sense of guilt; that the ~~litter~~ LITTER bearers sweating under the whine of battle fire must in turn experience a certain feeling of guilt that they weren't bearing arms; and that the farther one worked to the rear, away from the actual fighting, the greater must be this curious sense of guilt, until finally oceans were leapt, half a continent was traveresed, and suddenly one found ~~one~~ oneself thrust down at nightfall upon a lonely wooden bridge in northern Michigan; a solitary fisherman contemplating his dubious status as a 4-F; a non-warrior who, while other young men screamed and died, was ridden to his sport on contraband tires he had bought from an eager felon, propelled there by gasoline he should never have burned. Ah, yes, this was a splendid sort of guilt, the kind that made one wish to snap his best flyrod across his knee; this was the sort of swinish guilt that made one purely an accessory to the enemy. But what of the complacent? The complacent! What of these sodden swine? Alas, we were all swine, but surely, if it ~~was~~ were a matter of degree, they were the worst swine of all. I felt a little better. I looked up at the sky but the eagle had disappeared from view...

My reverie was broken by the roar and rush of a logging truck approaching from the north. It was swirling down upon me like an evil genie surrounded by its own magic cloud of dust. I pressed back against the railing of the bridge, foolishly holding my precious fly rod out over the ~~waters~~ water to protect it. The truck driver slowed down for the bridge, then rumbled across the loose planking, grinning at me, the groaning load of green hardwood logs

swaying precariously. I shrunk against the railing. The truck lurched to a stop on the other side and the driver stiffly got out and proceeded to urinate against a front tire. I pretended to be absorbed with my leader.

"How's fishin'?" the driver called to me.

"I dunno," I called back. "I haven't started yet."

"You better get goin', Bub. It'll be dark soon."

"I know," I said, lying easily. "I had a flat on the way up."

The truck driver walked up to where I stood on the bridge. He was a Finn, about my own age, I concluded, about twenty-eight or thirty. By his bee-stung lower lip I could see that he was chewing snuff. A little of the juice had dribbled down his chin. He silently watched me while I selected a fly and tied it to the leader.

"You got a nice bunch of flies there," he said.

"Yes," I said. "But they're getting sort of hard to get. They tell me it's the hooks--since the war--it's the hooks that are hard to get." I was making talk so that he wouldn't hear the steady plash of the trout rising above the bridge. He did not seem to hear the trout rising, but I whistled a little and made some false casts downstream to further distract him, working out line.

"Say, you're Polly Biegler--the new lawyer down in Chippewa, ain't you?--the one that's runnin' for prosecutin' attorney?"

"Why, yes," I said brightly, both pleased and nettled that he should have recognized me. "What's yours?"

"Arvo Lampinen," he said. "Shake."

We stood there on the bridge while I shook his moist hand. All the while the mosquitoes whined around us. He glanced quickly at my car parked off the road, and then back at me. A crafty look had come into his eyes. He had spotted my A gas sticker pasted on the windshield.

"Say," he said. "I'm dumpin' this load of pig-iron in Chippewa tonight an' layin' over till mornin'."

"Oh?" I said.

He glanced upstream and downstream and lowered his voice. He was making a conspirator out of me. "I was figurin' to buy a little bottle tonight when I get to town--that is if I could raise the price."

"Yes?" I said politely.

"I was wonderin'--ah--I was figurin' that if I could sell a few of these here gas coupons--ah--I could raise the price of a bottle." He held a wad of gas coupons in his hand. It was plain that there were a lot of fishing trips in those coupons.

I eyed my fellow swine as patriotically as possible. "No thank you," I said. I felt like Patrick Henry with his pants down.

"Okay, okay, okay," he said smiling. "No hard feelings."

"None at all," I said.

"Well, I gotta be goin'," he said. "Gotta get rid of my load of bundles for Berlin. See you later." He jerked his thumb toward the river. "Don't take 'em all," he said.

"Not tonight," I said. "So-long, Lampinen."

He was walking away. "So-long, Biegler. Be seein' you. Good luck in the election!"

"Thanks," I said.

I stood on the bridge and watched him while he paused at his truck, expertly cupped out the snuff from his lip with his index finger, and then climbed in the truck and roared the motor. I watched the truck while it slowly rolled through its series of grinding gear shifts, gathering speed like a great retreating beast. I watched it until it swayed around a far curve in a cloud of dust. "Bundles for Berlin." I stood there, listening to its fitful, diminishing roar. And all the while the greedy trout were splashing at my feet. Then, when I could no longer hear the truck, I slowly took down my rod and leaned heavily against the railing of the bridge. Silently I watched the faint afterglow in the west. I was shivering. It was nearly dark. I remembered my bottle of whiskey. I discovered that it had suddenly grown cold and that I no longer wanted to fish.

A DEBATE WITH HENRY CLAY

The night was warm and as soon as I got rolling the breeze blew the hum of ~~the~~ mosquitoes ~~died~~ away. Steering with my knee I opened a bottle of beer and then fumbled for my brief case and took a drink of whiskey. I quickly gulped a drink of beer for a chaser and put the whiskey in the glove compartment. I lit a cigar and settled back and held the car at thirty-five. That was the nation-wide speed limit, designed to save tires, and I was determined to be a burning patriot the rest of that day even if it meant that I wouldn't eat till midnight.

This was a sort of an obscene luxury: slouching back against the cushion and driving down the darkened road, listening to the eager bite of the tires on the gravel, my face fanned by the night air, aware of but not seeing the rushing black wall of trees on either side of the road. I balanced the bottle of beer on the seat cushion, between my legs, occasionally flicking the ashes off of one of the Italian cigars Luigi had taught me to smoke. Each time I would flick the ashes into the tray I would see a little spot of red reflected in the windshield. I flipped on the radio and felt like a big shot...

I heard the low hum of the radio warming up. Maybe I could get the Benny Goodman trio. Maybe--

"now nearing daylight in Paris," the radio suddenly blared. "The city is still seething with the excitement and turmoil of its liberation yesterday by French and American troops. The celebration still goes on... Yes, America, this ancient capitol has survived to once again be called gay Paree... We now take you--"

I nearly spilled my beer as I lunged forward to shut off the radio. Paris had fallen. The European war would soon be over. I fumbled for the whiskey bottle in the glove compartment. "Here's to Paul Biegler, 4-F," I said, taking a big drink. I discovered that I was trembling. "Take it easy, Biegler," I said aloud. I'd have to get hold of myself. What was eating me? What was it that gloomy old professor of philosophy had told us at Ann Arbor that time? That was before the War - it seemed years ago... It was his last lecture. Yes... It was old Professor Joachim--I'd recently read of his death. I remembered now; I'd leanred it by heart. And I had never forgotten the look of somber disillusion on his face as he had spoken to us callow students.

"Every man carries in his heart the rebuttal to his own wrong-doing," Professor Joachim had said. "There are many names for it: conscience, awareness of evil, a sense of guilt; these are just a few. And it cannot be denied that some men appear quite successful in growing a callous over the heart so that this feeling might not escape to haunt them. These men think they are too crafty or too proud to debate with Evil; they try to bury it. But they delude themselves. Always they delude themselves... For evil locked in the heart lies festering, spreading and expanding until one day lo! the heart must burst--drenching and corroding and consuming its wretched ~~owner~~ victim in the accumulated pus of his Evil. "Yes, my young friends," he had concluded, "never fear to debate with your personal devil. It is better that way." He had smiled a little. "You may not always defeat him but--if you are lucky--he may not ~~break~~ shatter your heart... Good day."

Ever since then, with a ~~nice~~ delightful touch of whimsey, I had called my conscience Henry Clay. Henry hadn't given me much trouble lately. But tonight it looked like we'd better have a little meeting. Leave us face it. On with the debate...

Paul Biegler: Look, Henry, don't keep giving me a bad time because I'm not in this goddam war. You know yourself I have every legitimate reason in the world for not wearing a uniform. Now for Christ's sake, lay off, will you? What's more, I'm hungry and I want to eat.

Henry Clay: Young man, I'm not giving you a "bad time" as you so vulgarly choose to call it. And may I remind you that you also chose to start this distasteful discussion. Eat and be damned! However, if your "reason" is as legitmate as you say it is, I shall be most happy to listen to it, and, if I deem it adequate, to henceforth "lay off." You may proceed.

Paul Biegler(airily): "Reason", hell! There's lots of reasons.

H. C. "Indeed? Then please go on. It's getting late.

P. B. Well, now, let's see... Oh, yes... Reason number one. You remember that time I cracked a rib playing football in high school? ~~Well,~~ You may also ~~remember~~ recall that I got pleurisy out of that deal... Well, ~~and~~ we now discover it's left a nice big scar on my left lung. I've even seen it myself in the X-ray... Doc showed it to me. I'm not physically fit, see?

H. C. Hm... My, my... I would never have guessed it from watching you ~~shoulder~~ wading a rocky troutstream all day or shouldering hundred pound packs up to deer camp each fall. Most remarkable...

P. B. Please do not interrupt! Reason number two: You also know that my mother, Belle, is a widow, and that she's got a bad heart, and that I'm her sole means of support... In this war we call that a draft deferment for dependency, see!

H. C. "Hm... I would have thought that the service man's allotment ~~took~~ take care of her. ~~that~~. And it seems to me I recall that she sent you through law school and has virtually supported you until recently from the property your father left her when he died. But perhaps I am mistaken."

P. B. "Then--er--now let's see, what's my next reason? Oh yes. J. Henry Ballentine ~~Harry Gray~~ is on the draft board and he's also ~~one of the~~ an official of the Iron Cliffs Ore Company. Do you get it?"

H. C. "I'm afraid I don't quite follow you. Will you please eludidate?"

P. B. "Well--ah--that is... You see, ~~Harry~~ J. Henry likes my boss, Walter Holbrook--they golf together and go deerhunting each fall, then to Florida in the winter. They're buddies, see?... Well, Walter Holbrook is also local counsel for ~~Harry's~~ J. Henry's mining company -- and I work in Walter's law office, see?"

H. C. "It's a trifle clearer, I must confess, but I'm still not convinced that your're not omitting something important from this gloomy recital."

P. B. "Well--er--oh, yes... Walter likes me--I've been dating his daughter, Maida, a lot lately, see?--and what's more, Walter was the one that got me to run for prosecutor of the county against a guy the mining ~~crowd~~ company says is entirely too friendly with the C.I.O. ~~crowd~~ people. (Defiantly) Now do you see?"

H. C. "It's gradually coming to me. Hm... But, pray, what do they call that in the War?"

P.B. (gloomily): "They call that being engaged in essential employment."

H.C. (archly): "You have an apt name for everything nowadays, haven't you... Hm... Are there any more reasons?"

P.B. (glumly) "Yes... The fourth reason is that I've played poker and gotten drunk with the doctor for the local draft board. Not once but many times. He's the guy that examined me, see? But there's even more to it than that. One night he went out on a party with a young nurse. They ran off the road. The police found them in the ditch, both drunk and without any clothes on. In December month, too."

H.C.: "How very droll..."

P.B.: "Anyway, I got them out of it, see?"

H. C.: "Out of the ditch, you mean?"

P. B. "No, out of the goddam case. And don't try to be funny. I quashed everything--even Doc's wife has never heard about it."

H.C. (drily) "Young man, you appear to have all of the attributes of a most successful attorney. But what do you people label this in this War?--perhaps a kind of extra vision that enables your doctor friend to see scar tissue where none had existed before? Do not be offended--I'm merely curious."

P.B. "I think in some quarters they call it gratitude... People don't talk about it much in connection with the draft."

H.C. "Hm... Perhaps I shouldn't have mentioned it. Are there any more reasons? It's getting quite late and 'way past my bed time."

P.B. (nervously): "Yes, there's one more. I've put it last, but perhaps it really belongs first. I--"

H.C.(quickly): "Are you sure you want to tell it?"

P.B. "Yes, goddamit, I've got to tell. I've got to! It--it's because I don't want to go to War.

H.C. (suavely): "Oh! Now at last we're getting somewhere... And why don't you want to go to War?"

P.B. "Because--oh Christ--it's because I'm afraid! Why did you make me tell, it damn you! I'm afraid--I'm afraid! How do you like those apples? Paul Biegler's afraid of his goddam skin!"

H.C. (with dignity) "I think your last statement is the most honest assertion you've made tonight. Now, if you will excuse me. I'll ~~shall~~ take my departure. It's growing chilly."

P.B. (anxiously) "But aren't you going to give me your verdict? Haven't you any rebuttal to offer?"

H.C.(quietly) "I'm afraid not, young man. I have just this to say: in our day we had a Latin maxim that may not be inappropriate to your case. It ran: "res ipsa loquitur." It is my only comment."

P.B.(hopefully): "What does that mean?"

H.C.(softly): "Forgive me, I forget how poorly you modern lawyers are equipped to practice your professions. It means: "The thing speaks for itself." Goodnight. I must leave."

P.B.(crushed): "Goodnight, Mr. Clay. Thank you, Sir."

I reached for the whiskey bottle and held it to my lips. I grabbed for the wheel as the car nearly ran off the road. It was as bad as that...

Near Hairpin Bend I surprised three deer: a doe and two fawns, the doe about to cross the road. The fawns stood there with glowing eyes, frozen, and ~~a game poucher~~ a poacher could have had them easily, but the doe slanted off shadow-like to the right, her graceful neck bobbing as she flashed back into cover.

Occasionally I would rush into a mist-filled dip in the road, and driving through these pockets of mist was like piercing a cool veil of gauze, which I did to the shrill accompaniment of the frogs--surely one of the most ancient night ~~sounds~~ noises made anywhere on earth.

When I got to the Boise river I stopped on the bridge and looked downstream. I shut off the motor and had another boilermaker. "Ahh..." I flipped my cigar into the river. "Psst," it went. There were no fishermen by the bridge, but farther downstream, almost to the Big Dead River, I could see the glowing fires of night fishermen. I could faintly smell the smoke. "Haloo!" one of them shouted. "Vere dat you, Incher?" I remained silent--since I wasn't Incher and furthermore the breeze was against me. These would be bait-fishing Swedes, who dearly love to fish the Boise at night. They were mostly miners on the day shift who would hurry out directly from the mine, gather wood and make a huge fire, and then spend the night in dozing and pulling in big rainbow trout and passing the bottle or--if the trout weren't biting--merely in dozing and passing the bottle. I started the motor and drove away...

The Big Dead bridge; the Barnhardt bridge; then someone standing in a lighted doorway holding a pail at Korpi's farm, the first habitation; then two more deer on the side of the road; the Little Dead bridge; Deer Lake--and then the first lights of Chippewa, coming from the towering shafthouse of the Ludlow Mine; then the Chippewa cemetery--I could see the looming marble shaft of the Biegler monument from the corner of my eye--then the stop at U. S. 41; down Second Street to Bank; over on Bank Street to the City square; ~~past~~ past the drinking fountain with its statue of the Chippewa Indian chief; and then to a stop at a red traffic light.

I looked up over the Miners' State Bank. My office was dark but there was a light on in Walter Holbrook's office. The venetian blinds were drawn. Walter must be working--or perhaps it was merely the cleaning lady... The light changed and I swung to the left and then turned into the alley behind Luigi's and locked the car. I could hear the juke box playing through the screen door. It was an old tune, "As Time Goes By," resurrected and made famous by Bergman and Bogart in a movie called "Casablanca." It was an old record. Rudy Valee was singing the chorus--tonight it appeared he was singing through the left nostril...

I stood in the alley and listened. Ol' Massa Rudy

* * *

AN AFTERNOON IN COURT

It was mid-afternoon in August, 1944. I sat in the courtroom keeping a dull eye on my briefcase, idly watching the proceedings. I was watching my briefcase not because of its value, or the value of the papers in it, but because it held a pint of good whiskey. I was awaiting my turn to rid my client of the chafing bonds of ~~xk~~ matrimony. Her name was Mrs. Rose Lahti (a Finnish ~~surname~~ name which more nearly rhymes with naughty). She had married a Finnish miner and had rapidly regretted it. He had not contested the case. It occurred to me that regret was becoming the universal grounds for divorce, although most conservative lawyers still preferred to call it cruelty or desertion or adultery or non-support or some such--everything, in fact, but the dominant truth that one or both of the parties had changed his mind...

Emmett Joselyn was putting in his male client's proof in an uncontested divorce case. I saw that he was also rapidly putting old Judge Baldwin to sleep with his interminable questions. Even from where I sat I could see the old Judge's eyes growing glazed with boredom. There was no jury. Joselyn, a dandruffy lawyer in his forties, had one of those mournful, hollow voices; the kind you frequently hear quoting sad poetry over the radio at midnight accompanied by a tremulous organ. I averted my eyes, staring up at the glass dome over the ceiling of the courtroom. ~~I observed that~~ One of the smaller stained glasses had dropped from its leads and the sun was shining through the hole made by the missing glass ~~, and I wished I was out fishing.~~ The remaining glass in the dome was pretty well streaked with soot and pigeon droppings, which reminded me that it hadn't rained in weeks and that the trout streams were getting dangerously low.

I glanced back at my client. She was sitting there like a brood hen among her little knot of witnesses. Seeing me looking she quickly nodded her head and flashed her smile at me as though to encourage me to stick it out. We had made the mutual mistake of allowing her to pay for her divorce in full in advance, forgetting that it takes a pretty earnest lawyer to keep up his interest in a case after he had gotten his entire fee. And I was certainly not that kind of a lawyer. I smiled and nodded to her so that she might not think that I would flee the courtroom. Once again I was irresistibly drawn to the droning voice of Emmett Joselyn.

Emmett was squinting keenly at his client. "Hm," he mused. At length he asked another involved question. Then he removed his tortoise-shell glasses. "Hm." He held the glasses poised, awaiting the answer, and then posed another long question. He then carefully replaced his glasses. "Hm." He had evidently seen this maneuver in a movie. He appeared to be trying to prove by his client that the client's wife was a common drunk. He was doing such a grand job of it that one could almost smell the whiskey flowing in the courtroom. I was even developing a mild case of sympathetic hiccoughs. It seemed that his client didn't want custody of his children; he'd be charitable and leave them with the drunken wife; all he wanted was his freedom. "Would you say that your wife, Helen, would become intoxicated whenever the occasion presented itself?" Joselyn keenly shot at his client, again removing his glasses. "Yes," answered the client, I thought a little wearily, and so abruptly that he did not allow his lawyer's glasses much time off for air. And so it went...

"And what was your wife's conduct when she was drunk -- good or bad?" Joselyn shot at him. Derrick, "the client replied.

Outside a long double-header ore-drag puffed and spat its way up on the steel trestle leading to the long ore dock reaching out into Lake Superior, there to dump its dripping red carloads of iron ore into a waiting ore boat. I could see it all in miniature by merely turning my head. The sunlight glittered on the still lake. The din from the locomotives necessarily suspended all activity in the courtroom, even Joselyn's, and all present looked around at each other with that curiously vacant, waiting-room sort of expression that people wear under such circumstances. Judge Baldwin glanced over at me and smiled and I shrugged my condolences that he should have got stuck so long with Joselyn. For Joselyn was the kind of lawyer that won his cases by boring the judge into a state of surrender.

There are few trades followed by men in which one's ineptitudes become more readily apparent to one's fellow tradesmen than that of the practice of law. An inept lawyer is something like a deceived husband--he is often the last to suspect the true state of affairs. Joselyn was an inept lawyer. In fact his ineptitude amounted to a low form of genius, ~~and~~ He was a pleasant enough fellow; gracious and easy to deal with; and his mind seemed crammed with all manner of plausible propositions of law. But when it came to the hurly-burly of a contentious law-suit he invariably flew into a panic and his dominant feeling seemed largely one of dismay. He appeared happiest when he had an uncontested case, like the dreary divorce case he was now trying. He would spin the damn thing out, drowning the case in words, as though reluctant to abandon the luxurious feeling of being unopposed.

Joselyn was a failure in his work; a nice guy and a failure. I felt sorry for him--at once sorry and unaccountably irked. He should have been

a monk. I suspect there are a number of monks who should be practicing law. I longed to dance over lightly behind him and give him a big surprise: a driving kick in the coccyx, and thus try to infuse a little life into him; for once to make him angry, to forget his goddam glasses, and to bring him out swinging and swearing and lunging and railing. Instead I sat there dully watching the macabre scene, lost in the hypnotic hum of his words, waiting for my case to be called so that I could get my restless client her freedom--and get her restless lawyer out fishing.

"What do you have today, Mr. Biegler?"

It was Judge Baldwin, smiling his kindly bearded smile at me. Lo, Joselyn was finally through and done and was stuffing sheaves of papers into his briefcase, all the time smiling proudly at his client. I was tempted to go over and congratulate him on his splendid victory in his uncontested case, but I concluded that this would be too gratuituous an insult to the poor fellow. He was bedevilled enough merely to have to continue in the practice of law...

"What do you have today?" Judge Baldwin repeated.

"I have a lady, your Honor," I said, grabbing up my briefcase and leaping forward. It was our little joke: the judge followed that radio program. I handed the file cover to the court reporter--"Thanks, Polly," he said--and the pleadings up to Judge Baldwin. I turned and beckoned my client from the back of the courtroom. She came up like a sprinter, with her muscular, energetic, circus-performer prance, lugging an enormous leather purse. The Judge halted her forward rush with his upraised hand and swore her to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. "I do!" she said. I am always touched by this quaint ritual: this archaic prelude to perjury.

"Where shall I sit?" Mrs. Lahti asked. She glanced about her in a pretty state of confusion. "Poor little me," she seemed to say. There was only one chair where she could possibly have sat and yet--it's a funny thing--half of them will invariably ask where they should sit. The judge and I had both remarked this phenomenon on previous occasions and we glanced at each other and exchanged faint smiles.

"There," I said, pointing at the gaping and empty mahogany chair beside the judge's bench. Even the movies should have taught her where the goddam witness chair was. I occasionally speculated that these "where-shall-I-sit" witnesses were really a sly folk, craftily bent upon impressing the judge with their pristine innocence and their pitiable need of his watchful protection from the pitfalls of the law.

"Whew!" Mrs. Lahti said, as she slid her severely girdled buttocks back against the rear of the witness chair. She was perspiring a little and her backward slide was accompanied by a squealing sort of whistle that made me shiver. It was a warm day. And this was her big moment--her first divorce. She cocked her head coquettishly and bathed the judge in her golden smile. This was evidently the full treatment. "Miss Personality--1928" I thought. The judge met this exposure splendidly, but I shuddered a trifle and leaned against the court reporter's desk. The reporter shot Mrs. Lahti an appraising glance from over his glasses. The reporter, a fat bachelor who drank gin from a bottle during recesses, was a master of the appraising glance.

I rattled my papers a little to attract her attention. On with the task. "What is your name?" I asked. With luck I would be fishing up on the Yellow Dog by sundown. My tackle was waiting outside in the car.

REFLECTIONS ON THE WATER

I stood on the Yellow Dog bridge and threaded my line through the guides of my flyrod. High overhead and still bathed in the fading sunlight an eagle soared, majestically wheeling and tacking its way towards Lake Superior. From my earthbound view the August sun had disappeared, and the western sky was kindled and rapidly coming afame with the afterglow. In seconds it was akin to the sullen glow that might have been made had an angry forest fire raged in the hills near the headwaters of the Yellow Dog river. I watched the eagle and then I watched the sunset, and for a timeless moment I forgot the trout that were feeding above the riffle just above the bridge where I stood. There was a quiet "plup!" as another trout rose and my fingers shook with divine eagerness as I threaded the line through the last guide. And all the while there was the musical, gravelly tinkle of the Yellow Dog, the sweetest and most devilish trout stream I have ever known, as it pitched and brawled and searched its way down to Lake Superior, the earth's mightiest inland sea.

I was elated to find that I had the river to myself, but for two reasons I was not surprised: so many fishermen were away in the war, and gas rationing kept most of the rest of them far from the distant Yellow Dog. I chuckled unpleasantly to think that Hitler and Hirohito had conspired to make better trout fishing for Paul Biegler in the remote upper peninsula of Michigan; and I chuckled again, with even less glee, when I thought of how Paul Biegler, 4-F, had conspired with his gas station man to make this fishing trip possible.

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As I stood there I reflected that war tended to make a swine out of any able-bodied man that wasn't in it up to his armpits: that this swinishness was merely a matter of degree: that even living soldiers, viewing their dead comrades, must possess some odd sense of guilt; that the ~~littler~~ LITTER bearers sweating under the whine of battle fire must in turn experience a certain feeling of guilt that they weren't bearing arms; and that the farther one worked to the rear, away from the actual fighting, the greater must be this curious sense of guilt, until finally oceans were leapt, a continent was traveresed, and one found oneself thrust down at nightfall upon a lonely wooden bridge in northern Michigan; a solitary fisherman contemplating his dubious status as a 4-F; a non-warrior who, while other young men screamed and died, was ridden to his sport on contraband tires he had bought from an eager felon, propelled there by gasoline he should never have burned. Ah, yes, this was a splendid sort of guilt, the kind that made one wish to snap his best flyrod across his knee; this was the sort of x swinish guilt that made one purely an accessory to the enemy. But what of the complacent? The complacent: What of these sodden swine? Alas, we were all swine, but surely, if it ~~was~~ were a matter of degree, they were the worst swine of all. I felt a little better. I looked up at the sky but the eagle had disappeared from view...

My reverie was broken by the roar and rush of a logging truck approaching from the north. It was swirling down upon me like an evil genie surrounded by its own magic cloud of dust. I pressed back against the railing of the bridge, foolishly holding my precious fly rod out over the ~~xxxxxx~~x water to protect it. The truck driver slowed down for the bridge, then rumbled across the loose planking, grinning at me, the groaning load of green hardwood logs

swaying precariously. I shrunk against the railing. The truck lurched to a stop on the other side and the driver stiffly got out and proceeded to urinate against a front tire. I pretended to be absorbed with my leader.

"How's fishin'?" the driver called to me.

"I dunno," I called back. "I haven't started yet."

"You better get goin', Bub. It'll be dark soon."

"I know," I said, lying easily. "I had a flat on the way up."

The truck driver walked up to where I stood on the bridge. He was a Finn, about my own age, I concluded, about twenty-eight or thirty. By his bee-stung lower lip I could see that he was chewing snuff. A little of the juice had dribbled down his chin. He silently watched me while I selected a fly and tied it to the leader.

"You got a nice bunch of flies there," he said.

"Yes," I said. "But they're getting sort of hard to get. They tell me it's the hooks--since the war--it's the hooks that are hard to get." I was making talk so ~~xxx~~ that he wouldn't hear the steady plash of the trout rising above the bridge. He did not seem to hear the trout rising, but I whistled a little and madd some false casts downstream to further distract him, working out line.

"Say, you're Polly Biegler--the ~~xxx~~ lawyer down in Chippewa, ain't you?--the one that's runnin' for prosecutin' attorney?"

"Why, yes," I said brightly, both pleased and nettled that he should have recognized me. "What's yours?"

"Arvo Lampinen," he said. "Shake."

We stood there on the bridge while I shook his moist hand. All the while the mosquitoes whined around us. He glanced quickly at my car parked off the road, and then back at me. A crafty look had come into his eyes. He had spotted my A gas sticker pasted on the windshield.

"Say," he said. "I'm dumpin' this load of pig-iron in Chippewa tonight an' layin' over till mornin'."

"Oh?" I said.

He glanced upstream and downstream and lowered his voice. He was making a conspirator out of me. "I was figurin' to buy a little bottle tonight when I get to town--that is if I could raise the price."

"Yes?" I said politely.

"I was wonderin'--ah--I was figurin' that if I could sell a few of these here gas coupons--ah--I could raise the price of a bottle." He held a wad of gas coupons in his hand. It was plain that there were a lot of fishing trips in those coupons.

I eyed my fellow swine as patriotically as possible. "No thank you," I said. I felt like Patrick Henry with his pants down.

"Okay, okay, okay," he said smiling. "No hard feelings."

"None at all," I said.

"Well, I gotta be goin'," he said. "Gotta get rid of my load of bundles for Berlin. See you later." He jerked his thumb toward the river. "Don't take 'em all," he said.

"Not tonight," I said. "So-long, Lampinen."

He was walking away. "So-long, Biegler. Be seein' you. Good luck in the election!"

"Thanks," I said.

I stood on the bridge and watched him while he paused at his truck, expertly cupped out the snuff from his lip with his index finger, and then climbed in the truck and roared the motor. I watched the truck while it slowly rolled through its series of grinding gear shifts, gathering speed like a great retreating beast. I watched it until it swayed around a far curve in a cloud of dust. "Bundles for Berlin." I stood there, listening to its fitful, diminishing roar. And all the while the greedy trout were splashing at my feet. Then, when I could no longer hear the truck, I slowly took down my rod and leaned heavily against the railing of the bridge. Silently I watched the faint afterglow in the west. I was shivering. It was nearly dark. I remembered my bottle of whiskey. I discovered that it had suddenly grown cold and that I no longer wanted to fish.

A DEBATE WITH HENRY CLAY

The night was warm and as soon as I got rolling the hum of the mosquitoes died away. Steering with my knee I opened a bottle of beer and then fumbled for my brief case and took a drink of whiskey. I quickly gulped a drink of beer for a chaser and put the whiskey in the glove compartment. I lit a cigar and settled back and held the car at thirty-five. That was the nation-wide speed limit, designed to save tires, and I was determined to be a burning patriot the rest of that day even if it meant that I wouldn't eat till midnight.

This was a sort of an obscene luxury: slouching back against the cushion and driving down the darkened road, listening to the eager bite of the tires on the gravel, my face fanned by the night air, aware of but not seeing the rushing black wall of trees on either side of the road. I balanced the bottle of beer on the seat cushion, between my legs, occasionally flicking the ashes off of one of the Italian cigars Luigi had taught me to smoke. Each time I would flick the ashes into the tray I would see a little spot of red reflected in the windshield. I flipped on the radio and felt like a big shot...

I heard the low hum of the radio warming up. Maybe I could get the Benny Goodman trio. Maybe--

"now nearing daylight in Paris," the radio suddenly blared. "The city is still seething with the excitement and turmoil of its liberation yesterday by French and American troops. The celebration still goes on... Yes, America, this ancient capitol has survived to once again be called gay Paree... We now take you--"

I nearly spilled my beer as I lunged forward to shut off the radio. Paris had fallen. The European war would soon be over. I fumbled for the whiskey bottle in the glove compartment. "Here's to Paul Biegler, 4-F," I said, taking a big drink. I discovered that I was trembling. "Take it easy, Biegler," I said aloud. I'd have to get hold of myself. What was eating me? What was it that gloomy old professor of philosophy had told us at Ann Arbor that time? That was before the War. It was his last lecture. Yes... It was old Professor Joachim--I'd recently read of his death. I remembered now; I'd leanred it by heart. And I had never forgotten the look of somber disillusion on his face as he had spoken to us callow students.

"Every man carries in his heart the rebuttal to his own wrong-doing," Professor Joachim had said. "There are many names for it: conscience, awareness of evil, a sense of guilt; these are just a few. And it cannot be denied that some men appear quite successful in growing a callous over the heart so that this feeling might not escape to haunt them. These men think they are too crafty or too proud to debate with Evil; they try to bury it. But they delude themselves. Always they delude themselves... For evil locked in the heart lies festering, spreading and expanding until one day lo! the heart must burst--drenching and corroding and consuming its wretched ~~owner~~ victim in the accumulated pus of his Evil. Yes, my young friends," "Never fear to debate with your personal devil. It is better that way." He had smiled a little. "You may not always defeat him but--if you are lucky--he may not ~~break~~ shatter your heart... Good day."

Ever since then, with a ~~nice~~ delightful touch of whimsey, I had called my conscience Henry Clay. Henry hadn't given me much trouble lately. But tonight it looked like we'd better have a little meeting. Leave us face it. On with the debate...

These infrequent sessions ran something like this:

Paul Biegler: Look, Henry, don't keep giving me a bad time because I'm not in this goddam war. You know yourself I have every legitimate reason in the world for not wearing a uniform. Now for Christ's sake, lay off, will you? What's more, I'm hungry and I want to eat.

Henry Clay: Young man, I'm not giving you a "bad time," as you vulgarly choose to call it. And may I remind you that you also chose to start this distasteful discussion. Eat and be damned! However, if your "reason" is as legitmate as you say it is, I shall be most happy to listen to it, and, if I deem it adequate, to henceforth "lay off." You may proceed.

Paul Biegler(airily): "Reason", hell! There's lots of reasons.

H. C. "Indeed? Then please go on. It's getting late.

P. B. Well, now, let's see... Oh, yes... Reason number one. You remember that time I cracked a rib playing football in highschool? Well, you may also remember that I got plurisy out of that deal, and we now discover it's left a nice big scar on my left lung. I've even seen it myself in the X-ray... Doc showed it to me. I'm not physically fit, see?

H. C. Hm... My, my... I would never have guessed it from watching you shoulder hundred pound packs up to deer camp each fall. Most remarkable...

P. B. Reason number two: You also know my mother, Belle, is a widow, and that she's got a bad heart, and that I'm her sole means of support... In this war we call that a draft deferment for dependency, see!

H. C. "Hm... I thought the service man's allotment took care of that. And it seems to me I recall that she sent you through law school and has virtually supported you until recently from the property your father left her when he died. But perhaps I am mistaken."

P. B. "Then--er--now let's see, what's my next reason. Oh yes. Harry Gray is on the draft board and he's also one of the officials of the Iron Cliffs Ore Company. Do you get it?"

H. C. "I'm afraid I don't quite follow you. Will you please eludidate?"

P. B. "Well--ah--that is... You see, Harry likes my boss, Walter Holbrook--they golf together and go deerhunting each fall, then Florida in the winter. They're buddies, see?... Well, Walter Holbrook is also local counsel for Harry's mining company, and I work in Walter's law office, see?"

H. C. "It's a trifle clearer, I must confess, but I'm still not convinced your're not omitting something from this gloomy recital."

P. B. "Well--er--oh, yes... Walter likes me--I've been dating his daughter, Maida, a lot lately, see?--and what's more, Walter was the one that got me to run for prosecutor of the county against a guy the mining crowd says is entirely too friendly with the C.I.O. crowd. (Defiantly) Now do you see?"

H. C. "It's gradually coming to me. But, pray, what do they call that in the War?"

P.B. (gloomily): "They call that being engaged in essential employment."

H.C. (archly): "You have an apt name for everything nowadays, haven't you... Hm. Are there any more reasons?"

P.B. (glxxxumly) "Yes... The fourth reason is that I've played poker and gotten drunk with the doctor for the local draft board. Not once but many times. He's the guy that examined me, see? But there's even more to it than that. One night he went out on a party with a young nurse. They ran off the road. The police found them in the ditch, both drunk and without any clothes on. In December month, too."

H.C.: "How very droll..."

P.B.: "Anyway, I got them out of it, see?"

H. C.: "Out of the ditch, you mean?"

P. B. "No, out of the goddam case. And don't try to be funny. I quashed everything--even Doc's wife has never heard about it."

H.C. (drily) "Young man, you appear to have all of the attributes of a most successful attorney. But what do you people call this in this War?--perhaps a kind of extra vision that enables your doctor friend to see scar tissue where none had existed before? Do not be offended--I'm merely curious."

P.B. "I think in some quarters they call it gratitude... People don't talk about it much in connection with the draft."

H.C. "Hm... Perhaps it shouldn't have mentioned it. Are there any more reasons? It's getting quite late and past my bed time."

P.B. "Yes, There's one more. I've put it last, but perhaps it really belongs first. I--"

H.C.(quickly): "Are you sure you want to tell it?"

P.B. "Yes, goddamit, I've got to tell. <u>I've got to</u>! It--it's because I don't want to go to War.

H.C. (suavely): "Oh! Now at last we're getting somewhere... And why don't you want to go to War?"

P.B. "Because--oh Christ--it's because I'm afraid! Why did you make me tell, it damn you! I'm afraid--I'm afraid! How do you like those apples? Paul Biegler's afraid of his goddam skin!"

H.C. (with dignity) "I think your last statement is the most honest assertion you've made tonight. Now, if you will excuse me. I shall take my departure. It's growing chilly."

P.B. (anxiously) "But aren't you going to give me your verdict? Haven't you any rebuttal to offer?"

H.C.(quietly) "I'm afraid not, young man. I have just this to say: in our day we had a Latin maxim that may not be inappropriate to your case. It ran: "res ipsa loquitur." It is my only comment."

P.B.(hopefully): "What does that mean?"

H.C.(softly): "Forgive me, I forget how poorly you modern lawyers are equipped to practice your professions. It means: "The thing speaks for itself." Goodnight. I must leave."

P.B.(crushed): "Goodnight, Mr. Clay. Thank you, Sir."

I reached for the whiskey bottle and held it to my lips. I grabbed for the wheel as the car nearly ran off the road. It was as bad as that.

Near Hairpin Bend I surprised three deer: a doe and two fawns, the doe about to cross the road. The fawns stood there with glowing eyes, frozen, and a game poucher could have had them easily, but the doe slanted off shadow-like to the right, her graceful neck bobbing as she flashed back into cover.

Occasionally I would rush into a mist-filled dip in the road, and driving through these pockets of mist was like piercing a cool veil of gauze, which I did to the accompaniment of the frogs--surely one of the most ancient night sounds made anywhere on earth.

When I got to the Boise river I stopped on the bridge and looked downstream. I shut off the motor and had another boilermaker. I flipped my cigar into the river. "Psst," it went. There were no fishermen by the bridge, but farther downstream, almost to the Big Dead River, I could see the glowing fires of night fishermen. "Haloo!" one of them shouted. "Vere dat you, Incher?" I remained silent--since I wasn't Incher and furthermore the breeze was against me. These would be bait-fishing Swedes, who dearly love to fish the Boise at night. They were mostly miners on the day shift who would hurry out directly from the mine, gather wood and make a huge fire, and then spend the night in dozing and pulling in big rainbow trout and passing the bottle or--if the trout weren't biting--merely in dozing and passing the bottle. I started the motor and drove away...

The Big Dead bridge; the Barnhardt bridge; then someone standing in a lighted doorway holding a pail at Korpi's farm, the first habitation; then two more deer on the side of the road; the Little Dead bridge; Deer Lake--and then the first lights of Chippewa, coming from the towering shafthouse of the Ludlow Mine; then the Chippewa cemetery--I could see the looming marble shaft of the Biegler monument from the corner of my eye--then the stop at U. S. 41; down Second Street to Bank; over on Bank Street to the City square; past drinking fountain with its statue of the Chippewa Indian chief; and then to a stop at a red traffic light.

I looked up over the Miners' State Bank. My office was dark but there was a light on in Walter Holbrook's office. The venetian blinds were drawn. Walter must be working--or perhaps it was merely the cleaning lady... The light changed and I swung to the left and then turned into the alley behind Luigi's and locked the car. I could hear the juke box playing through the screen door. It was an old tune, "As Time Goes By," resurrected and made famous by Bergman and Bogart in a movie called "Casablanca." It was an old record. Rudy Valee was singing the chorus--lo!tonight it appeared he was singing it through the left nostril...

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