

----- EXCERPTS -----

Georgian Bay, September 1, 1939

The children were playing on the lawn in the dark. Red and yellow northern lights spread like wings above them twenty miles wide over Georgian Bay.

Inside Stone Cottage, a red-haired woman in a black Chinese silk evening gown, embroidered with a dragon in red and gold on the back, was seated at an upright piano playing the rondo of the *Waldstein Sonata*, while her son Grant turned pages. Eleanor Giovanelli's right hand repeated the five-note theme while her left pounded heavy bass counterpoint. 'It's like boots stomping ants,' Grant thought. The boots trudged on, ants running up the bare leg, and he smiled. His mother looked up at his dark-haired head, glad that they were close.

Through the open French doors the shouts of the children came, "Look, it's a bird." Eleanor Giovanelli finished the rondo and they ran out the door. "It looks like the German imperial eagle," said her husband Ferdie. As he said this, his hand rubbed the thick scar on his neck where the German shrapnel had entered, almost killing him at Ypres.

Around ten in the morning of the following day, the big red McLaren drew to a halt under the *porte cochere* of Stone Cottage. Standing to the

right of the dusty car to welcome Sir Dudley and Lady Treloar were Cameron Bannatyne and his wife, Sarah, their three children with their spouses, and five of their grandchildren.

Sir Dudley straightened up with his joints popping, one foot on the running board and gazed over the car at the shining white head of his friend Cameron. He said in a gentle voice, "Ah, there you are," as if he had been searching for Cameron for the three hours since Toronto. He took Cameron's hand and smiled with his eyes averted downwards. "I'm so glad to see you my dear chap."

Sir Dudley had forgotten his wife Flavia who was trying to get out of the right rear door, while managing her wide-brimmed hat which she had just tied on with a lilac bow beneath her chin. Her hand went forth for Sir Dudley's, whose tweed back was turned towards her, so Dudley's manservant O'Shea took her hand to help her to descend.

Poised on the running board, flustered at the lack of attention, which seemed to her a lack of welcome, she smiled a vague, generalized, queen's smile over the heads of the Bannatynes, then stepped down and said to Sarah Bannatyne, "You must be Sarah."

Sarah said, "I am glad to see you again, Flavia," reminding her that they had met in London two years before.

Dudley's daughter the Honourable Victoria Catherine Treloar followed her mother out of the car, straightened her grey silk travelling dress round her hips with a gesture that her watching mother thought verged on the seductive.

Victoria's travel ennui disappeared when she saw a tall dark-haired young man in blue blazer and white shirt open at the neck, gazing up past the trees. She stopped thinking about her purpose in life, which had

silenced her all the way from Toronto, and thought, 'Handsome.' Her resentment against her mother for dragging her onto this trip vanished.

She liked the dark brown hair curled by his tanned temple, how he stood tall and straight, but she was piqued that he was not interested when his mother introduced her as "The Honourable Victoria."

She said to Grant, "My friends call me Cat."

"I'm glad to meet the Honourable Victoria and her Cat." The unfamiliar pronunciation of her name shocked her and made her heart beat faster.

Alone in her room, Cat unpacked the tight two-piece pink bathing suit she had bought without telling her mother, on board the *Empress of Canada*. She laid it on top of the navy-blue skirted bathing dress her mother had made her buy last week in Harrods. She shivered when she saw how small the pink suit was, and then hid it in the bottom drawer by the sachet of fresh lavender.

She hurried back downstairs so she could talk to Grant although on board ship she had already shrunk from the goose-honk Canadian accent with its swallowed 'Ayundeh' for 'And,' and 'Owetawa' for 'Ottawa.'

Sir Dudley left his unpacking to O'Shea, and came down in a few minutes to talk with Cameron Bannatyne and his son-in-law, Ferdie Giovanelli. "Any news?" he said to Cameron as he came in, ignoring the women.

"It'll be another two hours to the BBC news," Cameron said, holding his hand amiably on his friend's back. "Shall we take a turn about, so you can see the place?"

His son-in-law Ferdie Giovanelli, a short, busy man handsome in

blazer and white flannels, began discussing the European crisis as Bannatyne toured Dudley through the buildings and harbour. Dudley could not discuss the crisis without fear, for his elder brother had died five feet from his trench leading his company towards the German lines at the Somme in The Great War. That had made Dudley the scion of the family, heir to a fortune, with an entree into the middle ranks of the Conservative Party. Now, in late middle life, having failed to prosper, or rise to significance, he felt bewildered. Narrow-headed, beaky, long-legged, like a moulting stork, he seemed even to his supporters an unlikely candidate for high office. Sometimes he thought that he had taken a wrong turn long before, and lost his way, so that everything since seemed a mistake. He feared that his few successes were due to fortune, or to his family name, or to the help of others who took an inexplicable interest in him. Voters like honesty and a man not impressed by himself always seems honest.

Party leaders trusted him and kept moving him up the ranks because he was not stupid, yet not offensively intelligent. They did not care at first that he was decent and honourable although these qualities came in handy later on, during hard campaigns against Labour, who liked to pose as the party of virtue.

"How long has this been in your family," he asked. His family had lived on their thousand acres at Ridderly in Sussex since the 14th century.

"It's forty years this month," said Cameron He was walking very erect, his silky white hair lilted in the breeze, his blue eyes checking details all round him--the missing wooden shingles on the laundry-house roof, the maple sap bucket left out rusting. He was six feet tall, lean and straight,

his jaw massive, his mouth a thin determined line, his head flat-sided. Men and women thought him hard and distinguished, and he was known for his ruthless honesty.

"Good lord, as new as that? It seems so...finished."

Cameron looked at him. "It was just bush."

Sir Dudley had built nothing comparable to this estate. He saw himself as a vine that clings to an old building, climbing high and spreading wide, unable to support himself. Cameron was like the forest protecting them now, treetops hissing in the wind while here below the air was still. He felt sheltered beside this great oak of a man.

He said, "I am glad to be here with you. Sometimes, even with Max, I was so gloomy about the way things are developing, I couldn't see my way ahead."

"That's not like you. What's gone wrong?" CO looked sharply at his friend, thinking he looked old, though he was a year younger.

"The young men don't want to fight, we have so little equipment, and we rely on the French, who are hopeless, without any will to resist." His skinny long hands drooped in despair.

"The Maginot Line is a farce," said Ferdie quickly. "I was in France and Switzerland last year, collecting our son Jack from school, and many Frenchmen said Hitler can sweep round it, split our armies and feast on us." His aggressive manner was at odds with his fastidious dress.

Dudley sighed. "After all we went through in the last show, here it is again. It's what Max has been fighting all these years."

They went into Cameron's library and sat down. Cameron fizzed some soda into brandy, and Ferdie offered a cedar box of Cuban Panatelas to Sir Dudley.

The Giovanellis were ebullient, cheerful, handsome people, hard-drinking, intelligent, with a streak of poetry to them in strong contrast to the Bannatynes, who were dour, well-organized, hard-working, austere. The Bannatyne wit was dry, they smiled, made observations and appreciated, where the Giovanellis joked and laughed out loud. They enjoyed, the Bannatynes succeeded. Cameron liked his son-in-law because of his cheerful nature and ability to size up people. After the war, he had set Ferdie up in a stock-broking firm which invested most the profits of his companies and Beaverbrook's. In 1934, after some observations Ferdie had made about Hitler during a trip to Germany to assess investment opportunities, he had also appointed him publisher of his newspaper, the *Times-Loyalist*.

Raised in genteel poverty in Montreal, Ferdie had been sucked into the army in 1914, promoted, wounded and discharged in 1918. Hospitalized in Toronto by clerical error, he lay in his bed in torpid pessimism. He was returned to life by Cameron's energetic daughter Eleanor, who had come among the beds in Christie Street Hospital bearing fruit, cigarettes, flowers and books. She had been struck right away by the captain with the friendly smile, sad eyes and charming humour.

At first he had felt out of place among Toronto gentry, most of whom claimed friends or relatives among the nobility of England. The men who ran the city aped British manners to such a degree that they dressed for dinner at their fishing camps. Ferdie followed their fashion with a correctness so extreme that the Torontonians thought, not that he was showing that he had *gravitas*, but rather, that because he needed to show it, he did not have it. Nevertheless, he was unobjectionable in

every other respect, and married to one of the great families of society, so he was eligible for Toronto's boardrooms and clubs.

He had many friends and considerable success by 1929, when all was gaiety and profit. They had coasted, still wealthy, through the Great Depression.

Cameron rolled his cigar round as he lit it, then let a long blue puff drift up in the still air of the library. He said, "You know, we would be in no danger at all without Neville's damn stupid guarantee to Poland. "It means that we shall be allies of the Russians against Hitler."

Sir Dudley straightened up leaning backwards defensively. "But how could we be? Hitler has signed an alliance with the Russians against us," said Dudley.

Ferdie, who knew this argument of Cameron's, added, "He also signed an agreement with Neville in Munich, didn't he, and now where are we?"

Sir Dudley said, "But does it follow that....?" and trailed off.

Cameron said, "That man has said all along that the *lebensraum* for Germany is in the east. Poland and Russia. First he takes Poland, with Russia's help. When Poland is gone, he falls on Russia."

"What do you suggest we must do?" said Dudley mildly.

Cameron loved being asked for his opinion, which he gave definitely, holding up his cigar like an index finger. "Let him take Poland, then let nature take its course. The bears will be tied back to back, ha ha. One will be destroyed, perhaps both. All we have to do is sit and watch. " He sat back and made an arabesque with his cigar smoke.

Dudley sighed. "Perhaps Neville made a mistake, but there it is, we

must make the best of it. We're all in this together."

Cameron said, "You know that this was what Max predicted. A full scale European commitment without the least consultation with us."

Sir Dudley was silent, aware of a gulf between them, yet not able to cope with it. What he needed was unswerving loyalty in the crisis.

In their attachment to the British Empire, both Cameron and Ferdie were at odds with their family histories. During the *risorgimento*, Ferdie's father Cesare had emigrated from Italy to Edinburgh, taken an engineering degree, then come to Montreal to build railways. Cameron's grandfather had emigrated from Scotland after the English had pillaged his country in the eighteenth century. Yet in this young country old enmities were worn away, new loyalties grew up within the British tradition. Cameron admired the Empire, which he believed was the greatest force for civilization in the world, but he was determined that Canada should live independently. On his mantelpiece was a plaque saying *Alter Caelum, Alter Mores* in porcupine quills worked into birchbark .

He could not understand the roots of Dudley's pessimism because of the fundamental difference between the self-made man and the nobleman born. Sir Dudley had inherited his money, as his generation had inherited their Empire. He did not know how to spend money because he did not know how to earn it, and therefore saw every penny spent as capital lost. He often said gently to Flavia as he wrote out cheques for her enormous expenses, "A penny saved is a penny earned." But Cameron had made his money himself, just as his generation had built Canada. He spent as he liked, thinking, 'there's more where that came from,' because it came from him.

They had met in a convalescent hospital on the estate of Lady Astor in 1917. Sir Dudley, bewildered by the new responsibilities of his estates after the death of his brother, had been told he needed overseas investments in a country proof against Bolshevism, which he feared more than anything else. Cameron, wounded at Vimy Ridge, having already made a fortune in mining and manufacturing in Canada, lay in his hospital bed writing plans for new capital ventures. He and the financier from New Brunswick, Max Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook, joined their capital in a holding company which prospered so they trusted each other, depended on each other and viewed the world in much the same way.

At noon they all gathered in the living room to listen to the BBC news from London. The upper class voice of the announcer rose and fell like a ship on the waves of the ionosphere. If the single black upright telephone rang at such a solemn time, it was ignored. They heard of the various manoeuvrings, demarches, predictions, announcements, explanations, proposals, denials and so on, all inconclusive.

As the news ended, everyone waited in case Cameron or Sir Dudley spoke. Dudley said, "By the bye, I spoke to Max last night, and he said that Neville has gone to Scotland for the grouse, so it seems there's not much to this, let's hope."

"I don't trust that man for a moment," said Cameron.

"Oh I don't know, his heart's in the right place, even if he is an old woman."

"Not Neville, *Hitler*," Cameron said and smiled as he realized they were near to saying that Hitler was an old woman with her heart in the right place.

Near Breslau, Germany, August 31-September 1, 1939

At midnight on August 31, 1939, Colonel-General Johannes Blaskowitz lay on his bed in full uniform, opened the Bible his mother had given him and read the New Testament, as he always did before retiring. Tonight, he read Matthew, Chapter 24,

"And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Take heed that no man deceive you, For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom and there shall be famines, and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places. All these things are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

He closed the book and closed his eyes, resting the back of his neck on the round bolster, lying stiff and straight. He looked as if he had just ordered himself to sleep. The vision of nations rising against nations, of disease, famine and sorrow, was real to him, because he had seen it

during the Great War. He remembered the starving crowds silent in city squares, the burning buildings, corpses in ditches. And he foresaw that if Germany lost this war, she would become the hated of all nations, and love would run cold. 'Let this be a victorious battle, and a correct one,' he prayed. 'And let the chains of Versailles be struck off.'

He was soon asleep despite the frightening vision, because he was in excellent health and prime physical condition, having recently climbed the Grossglockner mountain in the Alps to prepare for this campaign.

His aide de camp knocked on his door at 3AM, just as the Bannatynes and their guests were rising from dinner, and Blaskowitz swung his knock-kneed legs over the side of the bed, shaking his head. He yawned, stretched, then got up and strode out the door to the waiting staff car.

In the cobbled courtyard of his headquarters in a house near the Polish border, the ground mist spread thick in front of him. He could see the bushes by the front door only when he was close enough almost to touch them. When the front door opened, yellow lamplight glazed the mist. From overhead came the sound of bombers dulled by fog. He sniffed the air: wet grass, ripe wheat from the fields nearby, roses in the courtyard still bent down with the heavy dew. Footsteps of hurrying officers sounded on the gravel, then their dark shapes appeared. The bitter stink of diesel fumes burned in his nose.

His chief of staff, a pudgy burnt-out case named Lothar Stumpf who had been captured at Gumbinnen in 1914 and starved in a Russian prison camp, and who fed himself all day as if to prepare for a second captivity, was trying to bend his round shape over the map table. He straightened up as well as he could when Blaskowitz strode in, spine straight,

shoulders back, belly flat. His mouth was turned down, in disapproval of everything. He glanced near Stumpf because he could not bear to look straight at the fat sweating man. The potbelly offended his idea of what was correct for a German staff officer. Stumpf feared the look that Blaskowitz always wore, because it was aimed at him. Without a word of greeting for the ever-hopeful Stumpf, Blaskowitz said, "What do the meteorologists say?"

"Ground mist until 5AM, then clear and sunny all day."

Blaskowitz thought, 'Of course it will be sunny if it is clear, idiot.'

"Perfect weather, Colonel General," Stumpf explained. The perennial hope in his voice expressed his wish that Blaskowitz would look at him with approval. This kept him working hard, which was the reason Blaskowitz kept him on. "Fuehrer weather," Stumpf added.

Blaskowitz grunted at the detested word Fuehrer. Like the other generals, he despised the Austrian upstart who had humiliated General von Fritsch with false charges of homosexual behaviour. Unlike the other generals, however, Blaskowitz had no fear of Hitler. He spoke his mind as he saw fit without regard for opinion. "Do you think that that vulgar tramp makes weather?" he muttered as he leaned over the maps.

"No, of course not," said Stumpf. "It was just a pleasantry. I apologize."

"This is no time for pleasantries, you fat fool."

Stumpf coloured, turned round several times trying to think of something to do, and was about to go outside to check the invisible sky for the fourth time when Blaskowitz returned from the radio room and said, by way of apology, as if nothing had happened between them, "Latest Luftwaffe situation report, please, with your usual dispatch."

The grateful Stumpf, at last having a modicum of approval from the boss, trotted off like a little dog to the Enigma room. Blaskowitz read the situation reports that Stumpf had categorized with child's red crayon in order of importance. Stumpf loved to work on these categories because they pleased Blaskowitz. He was almost as skilled as the general at determining priorities. First was the command of the originating officer, then the relation of the message to previous orders, and the content in relation to the latest situation as determined by other reports. Using this system, reinforced by frequent visits to the front, which he had practiced to perfection in war games, the general was able to understand quickly the developments in a changing fighting front.

Blaskowitz commanded the Eighth army, in the center of the German drive to the east. His was the weakest of all the German armies—four infantry divisions and some small motorized units. He was to threaten Warsaw, more than a hundred kilometers away and defended by strong Polish forces under General Kutrzeba. The Poles in front of him outnumbered his men by about three to one. Blaskowitz had to form a protective shield between Kutrzeba and von Reichenau's large army advancing towards Warsaw from the southwest.

This assignment was dangerous and difficult. Blaskowitz wondered if the Fuehrer, who mistrusted him, had given it to him in the hope that he would fail. "We'll see about that," he said aloud as he bent over the map table, at the same time reading the latest Luftwaffe reports of the position of Kutrzeba's army.

He looked at his wristwatch. The time was 4:40 AM. He went to the door, looked at the sky to the east. The plane engines no longer sounded, but birds were murmuring in the trees. Green light was rising in the

eastern sky. He walked back into the room, waited two minutes, and then said, "Confirm the orders to Adolf Hitler Leibstandarte to attack the Prosna bridge. Request acknowledgement." Stumpf hurried into the radio room and gave the order for which everyone had been waiting. Then he sat down himself at the teletype machine and confirmed the order on paper.

"God help Germany if this attack fails," said Stumpf.

"You're a defeatist Stumpf," Blaskowitz said. "It will go as planned. I shall be in Warsaw in two weeks."

"Pray God it is so," said Stumpf.

Georgian Bay, September 1, 1939

The Bannatynes, Giovanellis and their guests sat down to dinner in the outer dining room, a screened verandah opening on lawns, grass tennis court and lake, which was lying calm now, as if the wild winds of the day had never occurred. The sunset light undulated round the black reef like an orange scarf.

"In my opinion, Britain will not act," said Sir Dudley. He spoke with the uncertainty born of the conviction that when in danger one should hesitate.

Lady Flavia, her voice charred by tobacco, cheeks rouged too much over the wrinkles which she did not know were caused by her constant smoking, broke in excitedly, "Dudley, tell them what Alex Cadogan said we should do after Munich."

"What was that my dear?"

She switched towards Cameron, saying "You remember, Alex is in the Foreign Office, and when Max asked him about what our policy should be after Munich, poor Alex said, 'We should go on being cowards up to our limit, but not beyond.'" Thinking they would all be exasperated, she was astonished that they all laughed. She said, "Hitler was right, he's a worm."

"Not poor Alex, dear, surely he meant Neville," said Sir Dudley.

"Then poor Neville, they're both weaklings," she said with her chin up.

"Anyway, Hitler's in a cuddle-sack now," said Bob McKay.

Ferdie, who loved Uncle Bob's inanities, spluttered with laughter. The others looked at Bob in puzzlement as they often did after he spoke, never sure if he knew what he was saying. "Oh you mean *cul-de-*

sac," said Sarah, who protected McKay because she pitied her daughter Lily for having married a man so simple. He was known in the family and in the military-business world of Toronto, as Froggy for a daring trench raid one night in 1916, when he had captured a French officer by mistake.

Everyone at the table was laughing at the idea of Hitler in a cuddle-sack with someone, but Flavia thought they were being frivolous. Assuming the haughty manner suitable for addressing these colonial Canadians, she said, "Britain must act."

She noticed with excitement that Dudley raised his eyebrows at her strong tone. "After the shame of Munich, she must, there is nothing else to do. Britain must save us." Saying 'us' she meant her mother and father in Frankfurt. Her father had refused to abandon his store to the Nazis, despite the government's anti-semitism, hoping that the Allies would humiliate Hitler so he would be forced to resign.

"My dear, we all deserve one chance," Sir Dudley said.

He had been Imperial Postmaster in the Chamberlain cabinet, and had stayed on in cabinet after Munich because he believed in the chance of a peaceful settlement. Alone, he had resigned in protest because Chamberlain had guaranteed the borders of Poland in spring, 1939.

"Yes," she said, "what you mean is, one *more* chance. Whenever will we tell that man he has run out of chances?" She gazed at him as if to say, 'There, you see, I don't fear him if you do.'

Sir Dudley was distressed because he was sitting here in the empire's greatest dominion dining on first-class beef and a *premier cru* '29, with a view of shimmering water and forested hills embowered in a

green and orange sunset, powerless, while his mind was concentrated on the events he had once helped to decide, far away in London. Stiff and tall against that splendid view, the white wooden flagpole carried aloft the mixed red, white and blue crosses of the empire's banner that was also floating over Hong Kong, Bombay and the hedged fields of Kent.

"We should all just..." he began, but an angel had just walked through the room. He wished to say 'We should cease quarreling and love this beautiful world for the short time we have aboard it,' but it seemed simple-minded. His smile faded into a sad look. When Flavia grew assertive, he shrank into himself. She sat rigid, which was her signal to him that he was in danger. Rigidity was what she used to discourage him in bed at night, but when he was aloof, she worried, because that was his shelter from her power.

"Well," he said coming out of his trance, "Duff said just before Munich that 'the honour and soul of England are at stake.' But why? I can't for the life of me see it. He appears to think that because we made a mistake in 1919, we should make the same mistake again in 1939."

"What mistake," said Cameron

"Setting up Czechoslovakia."

"Not just Czechoslovakia," said Cameron. "The whole system is coming down."

That night, Victoria dreamed she was alone in the woods at the edge of the south lawn. Grant was under the *porte cochere* wearing a sword. She wanted to leave the woods but could not venture across the hot lawn because if she did, she must curtsy to him. She awoke near dawn feeling she had received good news without remembering what it was.

She yawned and stirred her legs, feeling warm and smooth, then looked at herself in the bureau mirror which she had tilted to see how she looked in bed. At times, she thought her hazel eyes, pale cheeks and abundant curling dark brown hair made her splendid, but she knew that the pale, willowy form was the most approved, and although she was tall enough, she was strong rather than willowy. She turned on her side and looked out the window, where sunrise was glistening in the tops of the huge maples while the rest of the forest was damp and shadowy below, and bird calls she did not recognize were echoing among the trees.

In her bath, with her bushy brown hair tied back, the window open looking into the bright sky, the pleasing smell of the woods drifting in, she thought about Rosey, Marquess of Roseneath, after the Oxford, Cambridge Boat Race dance. Chubby, laughing Rosey had been tipsy sitting beside her in the gazebo, she in an elegant Chanel gown, feeling queenly. He had partly undressed her and then tried to mount her, to her shock and wild laughter, butting away at her crotch several times having forgotten to remove her knickers. A few days later she heard that he had said he was very disappointed in sex, he and Cat had tried it once, and he could not understand why it was recommended.

She laughed and swirled the water round her legs. 'After all, what harm can come from it, he's very innocent, he won't get his hooks into me.' As those words formed in her mind, she realized that she had just decided to let herself be as forward with Grant as she liked. 'In any case, I'll be on *Athenia* in a week, so nothing can come of it.'

She came downstairs for breakfast as he was standing in the front hall sorting the mail.

"Good morning," he said, "Here's one for you." He handed her an

envelope with Rosey's handwriting on it.

"Oh thanks," she said and went in to breakfast with him.

After breakfast, Cat sauntered out through the door to the *porte cochere*, her head bent reading Rosey's letter. As she finished, she glanced up and there was the bright lawn ahead of her as in the dream, except that now she could feel the heat reflecting into her face.

Rosey wrote, in his usual disconnected fashion,

"...things terribly jolly here, if only one could avoid reading about Herr Hitler. We were all at Annette's last weekend, dancing on the terrace to the victrola. American swing, very gay. How are things where you are? Where are you? I can't find Tonto on the map. You said it's in America but I don't see it.

"Here the talk is one day all war and people rushing about with gas masks and shovels, then it is all peace again, until we don't understand anything. I expect it is the same at the top, I mean Herr Hitler and the rest. What does it all mean? I suppose they don't know themselves. And then suddenly we shall have to rush off and fight for the same sort of jolly butchers we had last time. And you will stay at home to count the corpses coming back. I do hope you will be back in time for the rest of the silly season. Now I think I'll leave you to stagger along to the club."

Grant followed her to the door, where he paused for a moment looking at her with her head down reading, by the hydrangea blossoms that were shaking with burrowing bees.

'What are you waiting for man,' he heard a voice say, 'go after her.'

He followed her across the hot hard lawn. Ahead of her the sandy road led into the spotted light of the woods beyond the rose garden.

She walked into the cool gloom of the woods, Grant after her, not worrying if he were welcome. She stopped by the stone wall at the end of the rose garden where white butterflies settling on the petals folded their wings like tiny dancers.

She was looking down as if she had seen something on the road.

"What is it? Is it bad news?"

She said nothing. Her heart was beating quickly and she felt short of breath. The Chinese gong boomed through the still air.

"We have to go back," he said, "there's the picnic gong."

As they rounded the turn by the rose garden entrance, he saw Miss Ball, the housekeeper, leading her uniformed maids in caps towing wagons tinkling with china, cutlery, bottles, glasses, food, ice. Soon the families emerged into the bright sunlight, his Grandfather Cameron in a tweed cap, white flannels and blazer, his father in yachting cap, blazer and white flannels, his youngest brother Greg, whom he called Stinky, in blue blazer and white shorts, the two younger McKay boys in blue and white sailor suits. Cameron Bannatyne's face, on which there was now a pleasant relaxed look, changed as his son George Edward appeared in a chartreuse silk shirt and pink Bermuda shorts. The shorts emphasized his unhealthy paunch and thick white legs. Bannatyne almost spoke to 'the boy,' as he saw him, to order him to change, then was swept along with the rest of the family towards the path in the woods to the dock.

The young girls, dressed in middies, skipped on the path, the boys cavorted, the mothers in conversation and broad straw hats called out to

the children as they lost all order and twirled and skipped and sang in the freedom of the woods, boys and girls wild with the delight of picnic, out onto the bright hot dock.

Spindrift awaited them, forty-five feet of gleaming white paint, shining mahogany, glittering brass and chromed steel, her engines idling. Keightley, who was boatman as well as chauffeur, handed aboard the ladies in their sun-dresses or yellow or pink slacks from Nassau, then they cast off.

Spindrift thrust smoothly through calm blue water that swelled into rolls then broke into foam tossed from her nickeled steel prow under three boys' faces. After much jostling for position, they now lay side by side, staring down into the transparent water, where sometimes a basking pike rolled and dove.

Behind them the three girls sat with their backs to the cabin window facing ahead, talking, reading and holding their fluttering hats to their heads. The adults sat in wicker chairs on the open after deck.

Keightley brought *Spindrift* alongside the natural stone dock on the south face of Sunset Island, fifteen miles north of Stone Cottage. The boys leaped ashore, Grant among them, carrying the lines which they clove-hitched to pine trees. Young Stinky Giovanelli said, "Do you want to swim out to the old wreck?" which the three Giovanelli brothers always did on these picnics.

Today, their middle brother Jack was away on a canoe trip up north, so there would be the two of them, which Stinky regarded as a privilege. Grant, whom he adored and followed as much as he was allowed, said, "Yes," while looking round for Cat.

Keightley, Ferdie, and Ducky McKay set up deck chairs under the pine trees facing west, and the adults sat in the shade with drinks and cigarettes. The girls wound up the Victrola and played new favourites, *Siboney*, *Amapola*, *Begin The Beguine* plus some old favourites, including *A Wandering Minstrel I*, from *The Mikado*.

Janet Bruce McKay danced a hula with a towel wrapped round her waist, shaking her bright blonde curls, distributing wild roses and water lilies.

Cat emerged from *Spindrift*, wrapped in a thick towel that covered her from armpits to thighs, smiling a little at Grant who was looking at her from shore holding out his hand towards her. She came down the gangplank holding the towel close round her chest. He said, in a husky strained voice, "Would you like to go for a swim," his tone implying something momentous. "There's a nice beach round the far side." He did not add, 'Where we can be alone.'

He led her along a path between open pine woods and rocky ledges suspended over clear green pools in which dark fish were sculling.

Soon Lady Flavia grew nervous about her daughter. She rose from her deck chair, which she called a "*transatlantique*" in the French manner, an effect which thrilled Eleanor, who looked to her as a mentor of the latest fashion, and went back along the path to *Spindrift*, searching for Cat.

In the hot silent cabin, she found the tell-tale tissue and bill for the new bathing suit, and guessed that Cat had bought something *risque* in which she wished to appear before Grant but not before her own mother. To fear and disapproval were added stabs of jealousy.

"Now can you tell me?" Grant asked as they reached the beach at the end of the island. She sat on her towel in the shade facing the water horizon, and he lay on his side looking across her.

"What would you like to ask?" she asked.

"In the woods, you were thinking something, then the gong rang."

She remembered feeling breathless at his nearness. She had wanted to break through his reserve, and then dance away. Now she had broken through, but instead of feeling triumphant, she felt private with him.

She enacted a despairing tone, "It's just the bloody war." This was a lie, but she had developed a devious turn of mind, to cope with her mother. "It's so stupid. All one's friends will have to go."

"But perhaps not. After all, they compromised at Munich."

She waved her hand. "How old are you?" she asked.

"Twenty."

"Then you'll go."

"If it lasts."

"It will," she said. "Aren't you going to ask how old I am?"

"Yes. How old are you?" She said nothing because he was mocking her.

"Please? Oh, please?"

"Guess."

"If I guess high, you'll think I am trying to flatter you by imputing a preternatural maturity. If I guess low, you'll think I'm obtuse."

"But what if you guess right?"

"Ah, then you would not tell me."

"Why not?"

"Because I would have discovered something you are keeping secret."

"I promise."

"You're just the right age," he said.

"For what?" she said.

"To be happy of course. So happy birthday," he said and tore off a wild rose from the bush by his side.

"Careful, you'll prick yourself."

"Never fear, Faint heart ne'er won fair lady."

"Do you write poetry?"

"How did you guess?"

"I thought you might. You have that look."

"What look is that?"

"The look of someone who writes poetry, of course."

"You mean Byronic, of course."

"Perhaps more Ionic. You're tall, and you look quite capital."

"Oh, very good," he said.

"Would you let me read it?"

"I've been working on one."

Lying on his side on the sand, his head propped up on his hand, looking up at her, he recited,

Despair or hope may change the state

That present circumstance decrees

But I prefer the season's rate

To progress as I please.

Moods by moods are cancelled out

Faith's bright star undoes my doubt
Doubt in darkness hides the prize
From faith's ever-searching eyes.

In such conflict all things grow
Urged by sun and rain
Every summer-ending snow
Feeds the earth again.

"That's...", Cat said, and stopped.

He waited.

"Packed."

He was relieved that she was not laughing at him but looking at him with interest. She said, "Can you make them up on the spur of the moment?"

"They're all spur of the moment except that of course one revises."

"I meant, right now."

Grant thought, 'She'll think you're a fraud if you can't,' and felt panic. He lay for a moment looking out over the water, and suddenly had it,

The young women dream of husbands

The young men dream of wives

And all of them love each other

And all of them love their lives."

She smiled. "I like that," she said.

"It's just a beginning, but I don't see any way to finish it."

"Perhaps it doesn't matter," she said.

"Maybe. I wouldn't say this place is finished, would you?"

She looked around at the pine trees, the braided light of the ripples sliding underwater over the sand bottom before her. Something thickened the water horizon, then disappeared, and came back again. She watched it thinking about the war on her horizon, Rosey, the house parties she was invited to when she returned to England, what she might do with herself now that she had graduated from Roedean. She had been accepted into Girton at Cambridge, to study moderns, but she was not sure that she wanted to do that. Grant was still lying on his side on the beach looking up at her, her face shaded under a broad straw hat, thinking she was fun. He sifted sand through his fingers and then said, "Who are you?"

She treated it as a game. "Let's see, I'm the Honourable Victoria...no, that won't do, I'm good at languages....my ancestors have been at Ridderly since the time of good Queen Bess, they were all C. of E., then there were recusants in the family and now there is a Jew. I don't know, I'm the someone you see before you, wondering what to do with her life,..I'm oh dear, I don't know, don't you know. Perhaps you can help me. Who am I?"

"Well, to begin with you're charming."

"That sounds not charming. But why do you ask?"

He took the warning not to be serious, so instead of saying what he

wished to say, 'I might be falling in love with you,' he said with a lump in his throat, "I don't know."

"Now it's my turn," she said. "Who are you?"

He turned and looked out as definite smoke now rose from a small smudge which was turning into a passenger liner. "Ah," he said. "I am becoming," he said. "Like that ship. Traveling towards you. Trying to find out more about you." She thought, 'You will, you handsome man,' and lay back, feeling a yielding lethargy. She looked at him and waited.

"What about your family?" she asked.

He said, "Well, you've met them all now except my brother Jack."

"Where is he?"

"He's the adventurous one. On a canoe trip up north. He's always trying to prove himself. He has red hair and freckles so he resists authority, including mine. First team hockey, first team cricket, champion boxer."

"Maybe he's trying to keep up with his big brother." She bit her lip, as she narrowly averted saying, "handsome big brother."

"Or excel him. It's kind of ridiculous sometimes, because I don't care about any of those things. But at least he's funny. Come on, let's swim out to meet her, maybe they'll throw some coins to dive for." He got up with his back to her, embarrassed by the erection bulging his suit, brushed the sand from his thighs, then swam on his back out from the beach, and Cat abandoning her hat and towel swam after him with a good Australian crawl.

The others were finishing a song when Cat emerged from the water, and her father, looking pleased, said, "She rose like a Naiad from the seas," to which Grant, dripping wet, added, "Poseidon next her looking

pleased."

Gleaming with water and blazing with the sunlight, Cat walked straight towards the adults on their deck chairs in the shade under the pine trees, asserting herself, as if to say to her mother, 'See, I am a woman.' Flavia with a moue threw her a towel as if to say, 'Cover yourself, you huzzy.' But her face was more resigned than displeased.

Ferdie watched his son emerge dripping from the water, smiling, his back straight, muscles like a washboard on his flat belly, and touched the roll of flab round his own belly, once as flat as that, and coughed as he drew on his cigarette, which he smoked despite the damage to his lungs from the gas at Ypres. He decided that Grant would join up soon.

Bob McKay said, "It would take a lot of this to kill a man," then, as he usually did after this well-worn remark, he looked around with the expressionless expression of the unthinking man. The girls wound up the Victrola again, more drinks were passed, the big white CPR boat charged towards them, pressing a white bow wave before her, decorative flags flying from her masts, and a cloud of white herring gulls circling the red ensign at her stern as passengers threw up bread for them.

Reichs Chancellery, Berlin, September 3, 1939

Paul Schmidt, a balding pudgy man radiating the stink of the quenched pipe in the pocket of his tweed jacket, hurried through the crowd in the long Marble Gallery leading to Hitler's study in the Reichs Chancellery on Sunday morning, September 3, carrying his briefcase. Everyone

stopped talking.

The dozens of ministers, generals, party officials, were of one mind about the crisis. If the British note in his briefcase were an ultimatum, war was inevitable. If it was conciliatory, Germany would conquer Poland without war in the west. Everyone in the gallery felt the weight of the British and French Empires pressing on himself alone. Every face turned towards Schmidt was anxious as if each person must now make grave decisions, although all contingencies had been studied and the response decided.

They pushed towards Schmidt, knowing he could not tell them anything, hoping to read the news in his expression, and careless of their rudeness in blocking his path toward Hitler's door. Schmidt edged his thick body towards the door. His genial face was frozen stiff.

"What's the news?" said several of the men.

"Class dismissed," he said. He tapped the briefcase. "Urgent for the Fuehrer," knocked and then walked into Hitler's office.

Hitler in army uniform with the German eagle clutching the swastika emblazoned on his left sleeve, was seated behind his enormous desk in whose front were carved drawn swords. The Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, a narrow, foppish man, was standing by the French doors to the garden.

"Ambassador Henderson handed me this a few minutes ago," said Schmidt. "Then he asked for his passports." He offered the ultimatum to Ribbentrop. "It's in English."

Ribbentrop, who spoke English, nodded to him to translate. Hitler's nose twitched as he detected the smell of tobacco which he detested.

Schmidt stood at attention and translated in a steady voice: "More

than twenty four hours have elapsed since an immediate reply was requested to the warning of September first, and since then the attacks on Poland have been intensified. If His Majesty's Government has not received satisfactory assurances of the cessation of all aggressive action against Poland, and the withdrawal of German troops from that country, by 11 o'clock British Summer Time, from that time a state of war will exist between Great Britain and Germany."

Hitler stared ahead while Schmidt remained at attention, feeling his legs tingle. Hitler glared at Ribbentrop and said savagely, "Now what?"

Ribbentrop, conscious of his role in an historic event, was posing by the window, one hand on his hip, his back straight, as if waiting for the photographer to come in. He replied, "I expect the French will give us a similar ultimatum within the hour."

"It is a two front war," Hitler said. "All your doing."

He gave Ribbentrop a look of contempt and hatred. There was a long silence. Hitler made a weary gesture, moving his hand across the desk as if he would like to sweep it all away.

"Leave me," he said. The deep lines from his mouth and nose ran down to his jaw, his skin was pale and puffy. He was angry with Ribbentrop and astounded by the British ultimatum, but he could think of nothing except how to cope with the two-front war. His stomach bubbled, and he felt in his pocket for the pills which Dr. Morell had given him, to calm his anxieties.

Ribbentrop accosted Schmidt in the gallery. The officers and ministers nearby hearing their urgent tones, stopped talking and listened, so Ribbentrop took Schmidt by the arm and led him further down. He said, "You were translating when Bonnet and I talked in Paris in

December. Why did you not tell the Fuehrer what Bonnet said about Poland?"

"What did he say?"

"For God's sake, he said France had no interest in Poland."

"Excuse me Herr Reichsminister, but I translated nothing of the sort."

Exasperated, Ribbentrop hissed, "Bonnet told me to my face that France was interested only in her colonies and had no interest in eastern Europe." He stared at Schmidt as if daring him to defy his superior.

"Bonnet said France *had had* no interest in eastern Europe, but he was referring to the past. He said that in future, France would take a keen interest in affairs in eastern Europe."

Ribbentrop stared at him aghast. "Why did you not tell me this? This is of the greatest importance."

"With the greatest respect, Herr Reichsminister, he told you that himself, in French, which of course you speak so well."

"But you translated," said Ribbentrop, who had forgotten most of the meeting which he now said was crucial.

"I was surprised when you told me to translate for you, but I thought that perhaps you did not want Bonnet to know how much you understood. In any case, that is what I did translate. Perhaps the mistake came because you were listening to Bonnet in French, not my translation in German."

Ribbentrop stared at him with a sick look.

"Now, if you will permit me." Schmidt said, turning with an attempt at military stiffness which his pudgy body could not execute. He went back to the dozen uniformed men waiting at the far end of the vast gallery and said, "The English have handed us an ultimatum. In two hours, a state of

war will exist between England and Germany."

Ribbentrop, his face rigid, strode away without saying a word. Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, chief of Military Intelligence, said with tears in his eyes to his close confidant, Hans Bernd Gisevius, "This means the end of Germany." Gisevius shuddered.

Schmidt, seeing Goebbel's ferrety face turn aside in aversion as Ribbentrop walked by felt shivers of fear. 'How could Ribbentrop have misunderstood? The British have warned us over and over. Surely the Fuehrer realized. But it seems that he did not.' He heard Hitler's snarl, 'Now what?' and saw Ribbentrop by the window, disaster with his hand on his hip.

'This is how we are governed,' Schmidt thought in amazement. 'By accident. We are governed by criminals and fools.' He took a pace after Ribbentrop to explain things to him, then turned back towards Hitler's closed door, and stopped. It was too late. The Fuehrer would not back down now. He felt sick, he laughed, and when he said "*Auf wiedersehen*," to Hess, Goebbels, and the rest, his voice choked with despair.

Hitler rose from his desk, crossed the marble floor to the map table and looked down on Europe. He rested his left hand in the Atlantic, right hand beyond the Ural mountains. His armies were rolling deep into Poland; Britain and France were mobilizing, Doenitz's U-boats were already patrolling the sea off Ireland. He felt with a shiver the danger to the Rhineland on his left side, and to Prussia on his right. There was no way out. Ribbentrop had misjudged everything, so Germany must fight on two fronts. The generals now milling outside the door, who had

warned him of this, crowded into his head, repeating, 'We are lost.'

Thinking of the burdens that he had to bear, he began to feel lonely as well as angry, and paced around the room, trying to imagine some way out.

He disliked being alone. Only before an audience did he feel perfect. In public, he was eloquent, he could persuade, bully, animate another human being, or millions, but when he was alone, he felt frightened. His writing was grandiose and confused. He was bored to read it through.

He rammed his right fist into his left palm, thinking, 'I must smash Poland in days, in hours, I must have twenty divisions in case the French attack. I will do it.' The mere determination cheered him up, and he repeated aloud, "I will do it," without having decided what he would do. He hammered the table.

As he leaned forward, his uniform jacket as usual hung a little loose on him because of his curved spine, and his bowl hair-cut, like a child's, made him appear like a boy playing soldier. He knew that he sometimes gave the effect of a boy wearing a uniform too big for him, so he stood extra-straight on parade, affected rigid military gestures, spoke loud and harsh, used threats, and maintained a grim, determined look. He straightened up and crossed his arms. 'The Rhineland is ours because of me, Austria is ours because of me, the Sudetenland is ours because of me. It is by my will that all these things were done. My will be done.'

He started for the door to call in General von Brauchitsch, then stopped, remembering the voices of his cowardly generals, and trembled for his fate if the will of the German people weakened. Radical action was required. He would go beyond the generals, he would appeal over their heads direct to the German people in a dramatic radio address that

would rally their spirits to fanatical house-to-house resistance should the French invade the Ruhr.

He called for von Below, his Luftwaffe adjutant, and walked into the winter garden through the French doors. The day was warm and mellow, people were strolling arm in arm along the Wilhelmstrasse, but he was indifferent to the weather except as a factor in military operations.

He paced up and down on the stone paths among the herbs and evergreens dictating to von Below. "Party members, our Jewish-democratic world-enemy has..." he began, but von Below interrupted him right away, asking if the appeal was to be directed to the party. Hitler stared at him for a moment waking from the reverie of composition, and said, "Write, 'To the German people.'" He began to speak of how the British for centuries had sought domination of the continent by fighting the French, the Spanish, the Dutch and now the Germans. Then he noticed that von Below was having trouble keeping up since he had no shorthand, so he slowed down.

The British, he said, had lied during the Great War, saying the German nation was not their enemy, only Prussian militarism and the House of Hohenzollern. The British had said they had no designs on German colonies or merchant fleet, also a lie. Then the Treaty of Versailles imposed an unjust peace, threatening the death by starvation of 20 million Germans, as Clemenceau had said.

"I undertook to mobilize resistance against all this and in a unique and peaceful effort, to secure once again work and bread for the German people. Time and again I offered England and the English people understanding and the friendship of the German people. I was rejected time and time again. We know that the English people as a whole cannot

be held responsible for all this. Rather it is the aforesaid Jewish-plutocratic and democratic upper-class minority who want to enslave the world, and who hate our new Reich because we are a pioneer of reform which they fear might infect their countries as well."

He dismissed von Below, sat at his desk, and corrected by hand a public exhortation to members of the Nazi party, and orders to the army, Luftwaffe and navy. In the east, he ordered the army to move with the utmost speed and violence; against the French they were to do nothing unless attacked. The navy and Luftwaffe were ordered to attack the British. Finally, he wrote a long telegram to Benito Mussolini, the Duce of Italy, saying that after two days of fighting, the Polish northern Army was already surrounded and that in every area, the German advance had been far faster than predicted. He thanked Mussolini for his support, predicted an all-out war in the west, and asked Mussolini to continue in support.

All this destructive power moved and stopped at his command alone. In the afternoon of August 25, all the airplane and tank engines had started because he commanded it, the troops had begun to march, and parachutists had seized the Jablonka Pass. In the evening, he ordered them stopped, and they stopped, while he reconsidered. As he pondered, diplomats made their last pirouettes in the burning theatre of Europe.

When he had finished writing to Mussolini, he buckled his Walther P38 pistol to his leather belt, went out to his bomb-proof Mercedes and was driven to his armoured train, *Amerika*. The train pulled away, drawn by a diesel locomotive wearing the sign *Raeder Rollen fuer den Sieg*.

The people who two days before had heard the Fuehrer's confident voice over loudspeakers in the streets throughout Germany were

shocked. They had been told over and over that the Fuehrer had averted war by his great diplomacy. They had heard this after the re-occupation of the Rhineland, again after the triumphal entry into Austria, after the reunion with the Sudetenland, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the alliance with Russia. Until this moment, most Germans had been in awe of Hitler's successes. Now the worst was happening and they were stunned.

On this warm evening of September 3, 1939, the millions who had died during the Great War arose in everyone's mind's like ghosts. Most of them thought that this new war would finish Germany. And here their thoughts hesitated, for the men responsible for the catastrophe were the government.

From the days when he had starved on the streets of Vienna, Hitler had wanted power. He drew plans as grandiose as Wagner operas. Having seen the path to glory for himself, he proclaimed to Germany that they were together on the path to glory. He would create a vast empire for them in eastern Europe.

He sacrificed married life to gratify his ambition to power, presenting this as a sacrifice to Germany. Germany must then be ready to sacrifice itself to him.

"My work is the destiny of the Reich," Hitler told Germany.

"He is lonely. So is God. Hitler is like God," said his supporters in the party.

"Without him we are nothing, we are plunged into darkness, said Marshal Goering. "For Germany is Adolf Hitler."

Georgian Bay, September 3, 1939

As Flavia was wriggling into her girdle at Stone Cottage on Saturday night, she said, "Dudley, have you noticed how Cat is whenever Grant is about?"

"He is goodlooking isn't he? I rely on you in that department, of course."

"That's the problem, Dudley."

"It is? How so?"

"Must I spell it out for you?" She sighed, thinking, 'Men are so dense.'

"My dear, please do." He smiled at her. "You are so expert at it."

"He is not suitable." She emphasized the English pronunciation, *syootable*, in contrast to the Canadian '*sootable*. She clipped on a pearl dinner ear-ring. "Mind you I've nothing against Canadians but he is a Canadian."

"Yes, I had noticed. So was Bonar Law, our former Prime Minister, then there's Beaverbrook, and what's his name, Bennett, Sir Sam Cunard, Edward Blake, Beverly Baxter, that new young feller, Vincent Massey, his brother, the actor feller, Raymond Massey. Rather a lot of them knocking about, come to think of it."

Someone tapped at the door. An embarrassed young maid thrust out a silver tray covered with flowers. "Ah, the *jardiniere*, thank you." He stepped aside to let her enter, and she approached Lady Flavia with her eyes cast down to the flowers, from which Flavia took a white rose to set in her dark hair, and a gardenia for Sir Dudley. After the maid had gone out, forgetting to close the door, Sir Dudley cast a yearning glance after her, wishing he could escape down the hallway.

"Cameron is not even a university man. Not to speak of her."

"But neither am I, my dear."

"But you had the war to cope with."

"And so did he. That's how we met, you remember, in hospital."

"Dudley, you force me to say it." He shrugged into his dinner jacket with a slithery sound of cool silk lining passing over fine Indian cotton.

She fastened the other pearl ear-ring on with a clip, then turned and looked over her bare freckled shoulder set off by her black *crepe de chine* dinner gown and said, "Dudley, he is common."

He said, knowing his opponent: "Of course, they are wealthy."

"Dudley, I am surprised at you. It's so common to be wealthy."

"Rather uncommon these days, I should think," he said. He strode to the mirror, his hands fumbling with his black tie. "Yes, yes," he muttered, wondering how to begin, and sure he must.

"Don't mumble," she said.

"You must understand," he said, "Cameron and I were both wounded in the same battle, he introduced me to Max who has preserved our fortune, and now I am here, as his guest, needing his help. I'd say he's a damned uncommon man." She turned and stared, unused to hearing him speak with feeling.

He hesitated, shocked at his tone.

She seized her chance. "And if anything were to come of it," she went on, anxious to head him off and excited by having provoked him, "he would want her to live here."

"Well what's the matter with here," he said, looking about at their huge room with a view over the bay, their private bathroom, adjoining sitting room with a view into the woods, and good furniture everywhere,

including an Edward Seago on the wall. "Seems a damned fine place to me, you could play a chukker or two on the verandah, I dare say. I think she would be very happy, as far as the amenities go."

He looked down at his *boutonniere* as she fastened it to his lapel. "Would this have something to do with our own trouble, hmm?"

He had come down from Oxford with a double first in Mods and a rowing blue--'In a losing year' as he said--and met her at a garden party in June. A mild, observant man, Dudley had not at first approached her, but watched her flamboyant, amusing behaviour attracting a crowd of blazered young men around her. She had noticed him because he hung back, so she went to him, her high heels dimpling the duke's lawn, flaring the skirt of her white dress, holding a champagne flute in her other hand, and said, "What...", here she paused, as he gazed at her, "is so amyoozing?"

Flavia believed that because of her strong bony features, she had only a very few years of attractiveness--her mother had said, "You will be briefly pretty"--so she decided to marry, and settled on Dudley. She knew she could make a harmonious marriage with him, since he was courteous and kind, had done well in the Oxford Union and was already being talked about in the Tory Party. She imagined herself controlling a powerful salon in London, advancing careers, dispensing favour. Soon she had his proposal. But when he tried to persuade his father, Sir Charles would have none of it. "Too Jewish," he said.

"But her mother's Christian. She's only half Jewish."

"And that's too Jewish by half," said Sir Charles. Flavia's father Max Frankfurter, member of a famous European banking family of Jews, operated a department store in Frankfurt, where Flavia had been born

and raised. Her mother was a De La Morandiere, baptized Cecile in Notre Dame Cathedral by an archbishop.

Dudley went ahead, with his mother's advice and permission, and married Flavia, in Grace Church in the Fields, near their estate in Essex. In a few years, his father had grown accustomed to Flavia and then fond of her. But her parents in Frankfurt had disowned her. In the twenty years since the wedding, Max and Cecile had never written a letter, or sent any kind of message. It was as if she had died.

And now Dudley gave her the same fond smile his father had come to bestow upon her, as he said, "There's nothing to be done about such things my dear, we must resign ourselves to the inevitable."

She rose taking her train in her hand, adjusting her diamond shoulder clasp with the other, checking herself in the pier glass, and said, "Never."

"Never is rather lengthy," he said escorting her to the door, "say, for quite a while."

"How do I look?" she said, twirling before the mirror.

"Mm, I should say imperial. Almost tiara."

On the way downstairs, seeing herself reflected in the staircase window, she mouthed the word 'never' at her reflection.

At noon on Sunday, family and guests gathered round the radio in the living room. "This is London calling. Here is the news. The Prime Minister has announced that His Majesty's government's ultimatum to the German Chancellor having expired without response from Herr Hitler, Britain considers itself to be in a state of war with Germany."

They listened for more details and for Canadian reaction, but the

significance was all in the first words.

Everyone was silent. Several people glanced at Cameron, but he was stunned. The young men were thinking about joining up; the women, about their men at war; the older men how to direct it all, and Cat about the U-boats threatening them on *Athenia*, and if this might mean that they would stay in Canada for a long time? She glanced at Grant, wondering what he was thinking.

"At last," said Flavia with satisfaction, into a hubbub of voices, "We have at last done the right thing."

"Cameron, I must have a word," said Sir Dudley. He got up, but Cameron was too shocked to move. He stared at his friend, remembering the horror of the Great War, thinking, 'Are we going to go through all that again?'

Now everyone began speaking with an opinion, though all were of the same mind--they must do all they could to win. All former differences were forgotten, and all were eager to assure each other that if 'we all pull together, we are bound to win.' From gloom, the atmosphere became relief, almost happiness, and everyone felt a surge of energy, wanting to do something, which for the moment they could only gratify by excited talk.

Sir Dudley led his host into the library where few others were admitted. Sir Dudley asked him to lock the doors, and then remembered he had forgotten his briefcase, so they unlocked them again, and sent for O'Shea. As they waited, Cameron rested in his green leather wingback chair looking over the lawn to the whitecaps roaring in from the open, exploding like depth charges on the reef that appeared and disappeared in the surge.

He had quit school at fourteen to support his mother and sister. His mother would ride on the streetcar beside him, en route to church while he jogged beside to save the nickel. 'The royalty riding beside you does not know you have a hole in your boot,' he thought with a smile, wondering now what Sir Dudley needed from him. 'Whatever it is, I will be generous,' he decided, as his mother had often admonished him. She always said 'Yes' even when it was impossible.

Sarah was walking up and down the living room glancing in through the glass doors at them. She was worried about Cameron. From the moment Sir Dudley's telegram had arrived last week announcing his arrival, Cameron had been on the long-distance phone to his friends in Ottawa and Washington, or reading economic reports on Germany, Canada and the UK, or meeting manufacturers for anxious lunches in the Toronto Club, negotiating by cable through his agent in Switzerland for new Koenig-Bauer presses from Germany before the inevitable export restrictions were imposed.

For weeks now, Cameron had lived in a state of euphoric tension which Sarah was sure worsened his angina. He was also wakeful, rising before dawn to write editorials on international politics or summaries of Canada's manufacturing capacity. 'He is 65,' Sarah thought, 'never takes enough exercise, never ceases to think ahead, never rests.'

She had persuaded him to cut his cigars to one a day, after dinner, and the scotch to one before and one after dinner. She had put him on a restricted diet and made him walk every Sunday after church. On these walks, they both felt again the camaraderie they had had before the Great War. In those days, when the *Times-Loyalist* was struggling, she had typed letters, named herself Ceres to write a gardening column,

become Janet March for a cooking column and ennobled herself as The Duchess of Muddy York for a gossip column. The wildly-popular column boosted circulation so much that the *Times-Loyalist* turned the financial corner in 1908.

So she had been his friend, then his partner, lover and wife. Now she was in training to be his nurse. She wandered up and down the living room, occasionally glancing in through the closed glass doors, afraid Sir Dudley was going to light a cigar though it was before noon. She did not know what she would do if he did light up--perhaps go into the room coughing and open a window. The main thing she wanted from life now was to go into old age with Cameron healthy beside her.

"For heaven's sake, Sarah, stop pacing about, will you," said Flavia. Sarah perched on the fender before the fireplace, then got up again.

"He's killing himself with this pace," she said, "and it hasn't even started "

"We must get used to it, there's nothing else for it," said Flavia, and lit a cigarette. "Is the sun over the yardarm yet?"

It was a sign of the emergency that Sarah went to fetch the sherry herself, though Ball would soon be offering a tray of drinks.

Sir Dudley paced, glancing through the glass for O'Shea, who arrived with his briefcase. He opened the door, took the briefcase with a nod, closed the door and brought it over to the green baize table which stood in the centre of the room. Cameron watched all this with affable curiosity, twirling his unlit Havana in the silver ashtray made from ore from his mine near Timmins. He had avoided lighting it because he had noticed Sarah fidgeting about the living room, and he did not want her coming in fanning herself and opening windows. His friend fumbled

with the lock, sorted through various papers, found the envelope, and withdrew it.

Feeling embarrassed by all this ceremony, Sir Dudley handed the envelope to his friend with a shy smile, saying "Max and Winston asked me to give this to you." He had been told to say "...give this to you in the event of war," but that seemed melodramatic, and he could not do it.

The brief note asked Cameron in the warmest terms first to become the Canadian Co-chairman of the British Armaments Purchasing Commission of which Dudley Treloar was the British Co-chairman, and second, it pointed out that his work would be easier if the full weight of his newspaper were thrown behind the production campaign. The letter was signed simply, "Max," and "Winston."

Bannatyne said, "On House letterhead, but from 'Max' and 'Winston.' So it is by no means official?"

"In view of today's events I am authorized to tell you that it was decided in August that Winston must be brought in on the first day. This is private, but Neville agreed before I left that Winston is to be First Lord." He sat back. "So it has become official."

Cameron's mind was working quickly, starting with the word Yes. 'Yes,' he thought, 'definitely yes,' excited by the prospect and looking over the one tall black telephone silhouetted against the shining water.

"What will we do first? Build aeroplanes?" Then he remembered that he should check this with Ottawa.

"Max has taken care of that already," said Dudley, "let's call him."

They talked to operators first in Mindemoya, the village nearby, then in Toronto, then in London, and finally, after half an hour, Dudley was connected to Beaverbrook at his house, Cherkley, near London. He

ran with a very springy step from the tennis court to talk to Treloar.

"Dudley, how are you, where are you?" said Beaverbrook, his voice emerging intermittently in the uproar of what seemed to be Atlantic waves pounding the undersea cable. He told Treloar that "Neville has asked me to sound out the President. Will you meet me there in a week's time?" He sounded exhilarated by the prospect of action.

"Yes, of course. Do you want any Canadian representation? I mean, from Canada, besides yourself?"

"Yes, of course. Have you got Bannatyne yet?"

"He's right here. Wait a moment." Holding the black upright receiver in his left hand, he whispered across it, "Washington, to see Roosevelt with Max, next week?" Bannatyne nodded.

"Then you'd better check with Mackenzie King," said Beaverbrook. "No. On second thought, leave that to me, I'll square it with him. Put Bannatyne on please."

"Hello Max," said Cameron bending down to the upright speaker, and holding the separate receiver to his ear.

"Are you there, Cameron?"

Bannatyne raised his voice. "Bannatyne here, Max."

"Good, glad you're one of us," Beaverbrook shouted. "By the way, Winston has just told me that it is official that he is back at the Admiralty. There's headline news for the *Times-Loyalist*."

"There'll be U-boats out there looking for you, Max, so beware."

"Now don't print this yet, because I have not had it confirmed, but our man in Derry just telephoned the *Daily Mail* to say that the *Athenia* was sunk an hour ago off the west coast of Ireland."

"The *Athenia*. My God, isn't that the ship you're going back on

Dudley?"

"Yes, what, is it sunk?"

Cameron nodded as Beaverbrook started speaking again, "Wait a minute Cameron, the *Daily Express* is ringing now on the other line, hold on. Yes?" His voice faded a little as Cameron held on, but he could hear the questions, which turned on the fact that *Athenia* had been sunk two hours before at around 7PM Greenwich Mean Time by an unknown U-boat presumed German.

Beaverbrook added that Berlin radio was disclaiming all knowledge of it so far. Many lives had been lost, but many people had been saved.

"Now you can print it ahead of the *Globe*. You see there are perks to this."

"Max, I'd expect nothing less from you."

"Now, I'm taking no pay for my work for the government, and I suggest you do the same. It will make it that much easier for you."

"How is that Max?"

"You'll have no Exchequer snoops looking over your shoulder telling you what you can and cannot do."

"Jolly good, I'll think about it. I wouldn't mind having a government auditor though. No awkward questions afterwards."

"Good point, Cameron, I'll look into that. Well cheerio for now, I've got to get back to the *Express* and write a leader about this. If my editors will let me. Cheerio."

"Cheeroh, Max." He hung up.

"How many dead?"

"Not sure yet, but quite a few, hundreds probably. A lot of Canadians."

Cameron immediately telephoned his editor at the *Times-Loyalist* in Toronto, reported what he knew and gave him Max's private number in London to call for further details. As he did so he laughed and winked at Dudley, saying, "Max will hate that. If he complains to you, tell him that it's one of my perks."

He gave his friend a brandy and splash from the crystal decanter on the sterling silver tray on the side table, then lifted the glass. "To Max," he said, "mainstay of Empire, on whom the sun never sets."

"To Max," said Dudley, and then smiled. "Did you know Max has bought his own armoured car? Can't you see him arriving in front of Number Ten in an armoured car driven by a chauffeur." They both roared with laughter.

That night, Grant scratched into the paintwork of his bedroom door, War! Down With Hitler. His grandfather noticed it, and ordered that it be left "until that man is dead."

Camp Wanagami, September 3, 1939

Jack Giovanelli lay on his bunk staring out through the netting at the moonlight rippling towards shore. What would he do once he had graduated from university? He could take a graduate course, which was appealing, since it would do no harm and would postpone the day when he would have to enter the business world of downtown Toronto.

The thought of a life in business made him feel sick. He would have to do the same thing over and over at set times in set ways until he was

dead. The first day would be like the last. He wanted to become a writer, but his brother Grant was already doing that, so he tried to imagine the life of a classical pianist, and practiced fitfully.

"You thinking about next year?" he said to his friend A.G. Douglas, in the next bunk. A.G. was staring at the moonlit lake without loving it, thinking about his father who wanted him to join his insurance company. He too wanted to write, but he was afraid of readers. "No," said A.G., who never revealed anything intimate about himself.

Next day at sunrise, the few boys who were awake saw, far down the steep-walled lake, in the dark shadow floating out from Dreamer's Rock Cliff, a few flashes like fireflies against the dark water. These were the girls from Camp Onawong in their white canoes, emerging from the cliff-shade, their paddles dripping sunlight. Their yodels rebounded from the dark cliff over the flat water. A loon yodelled, then scuttered across the lake with a noise like an outboard motor, wingtips slapping the surface as it took off.

In the log house along the beach reserved for guests and parents, Alison De Pencier rose early and alone, and walked down to the shore. Her bare feet were cold in the soaking grass dotted with white dewdrops in the shade of the big pines. When she reached the shore rock, she slid off her tatty old dressing-gown and stood with her toes in the water warming herself in the sun. She took a deep breath looking out over the calm water where a seagull floated high on the white pedestal of its reflection.

She swam the breast-stroke out to the deep water, turned and swam back in. As she walked back to the guest-house, she sank to her knees,

the skirt of her gown covering the wet grass, and snapped off a few goldenrod and Michaelmas daisies growing by the path.

Alison was certain in herself, but uncertain in the world. Her reserve made people think she was holding back something interesting. This made them curious, and this questing after her made her shy away, reinforcing the impression that she was interesting. So, without wanting it, she gained a reputation for being deep. This was reinforced by her success at school: wanting to please her parents, she studied hard and stood first. So she also gained a reputation as a brain, whereas she thought of herself as a drudge.

Coming downstairs carrying her flowers, she paused at the foot looking across the room to a dozen people including her parents round the table. Her hair was held by a grosgrain ribbon that suited her golden skin colour, blue eyes and blonde hair. She was wearing dark blue shorts over her tanned legs and a short-sleeved white shirt buttoned high because when she had been shopping with her mother to buy her first brassiere, the saleslady had said, "We're heavy for our age, aren't we," and Patience had said, "We're not proud of them."

'They're talking about me like two farmers round a cow,' she thought, 'I'll never shop for clothes with mother again.'

She made up her mind and stepped off the bottom step. Seated at the breakfast table with his back to the stairs, her father Raphael noticed everyone looking past him. He turned and saw a beautiful woman who turned into Alison when she stopped at the foot of the table. She laughed and bobbed a curtsy as she had been trained to do on meeting important people. She said, "Good morning," arranged the flowers in a water glass in the centre of the table, and bowed her head to the oatmeal porridge.

Her father, known to friends and family as Rafe, smiled at her, thinking, 'Bless your heart.' Her mother, seeing the approval round the table, was anxious. She had a vague feeling that whatever Alison had--beauty?--was dangerous, but Alison never gave occasion for her hovering anxieties to alight.

Rafe and Patience treated Alison with great kindness, to which she responded with utter loyalty. She was lackadaisical about herself, conscientious about others. In her family, in her society in those years, it was embarrassing to speak of such things aloud, but they knew that Alison was both ordinary and extraordinary: her smile was perfect, unhindered by regret, bitterness, fear or supplication, making her private happiness public. She was the natural happy hopeful spirit of humanity.

After breakfast, sixty boys from Wanagami and fifty girls from Onawong gathered at the grandstand, five benches high and fifty feet wide, with ten touring British students in blazers, grey shorts and oxfords. They were accompanied by two red-faced masters in straw boaters, blazers striped blue and white, white ducks and shirts with ties. There were also three dozen assorted parents of the campers, who had arrived the night before on the old steamer *Majestic*, from Wanagami Station fifty miles down the lake. They sat on the old benches in their white flannels, blue blazers, flowered print dresses, sun-shawls, straw hats, parasols and dark glasses fanning themselves, to watch their children in the annual regatta.

The camp director, Bernie Hodges, peered round the crowd looking for a tall redheaded boy, found Jack and bustled up to him, clipboard at the ready. "Giovanelli, I have you down for the two hundred yard alumni canoe race with Douglas," he said. He made a check-mark on his

clipboard, and hurried away. A.G. burst out laughing. "Isn't he enjoying his little brief," he said. "I have a great idea. You're in the bow, I stern it," Jack said. Each canoe, with a bow man and stern man was to paddle to a buoy 200 yards away, paddle around it and return. The canoes started with a great flailing of paddles and splashing of water. At the far end, the canoes jammed as they all tried to turn round in the conventional manner, paddling the whole canoe bow-first round the buoy, but Jack and A.G. avoided the jam by turning, not the canoe, but themselves within it, so bow man became stern and vice versa. Thus they slipped round the buoy very close on, and took the lead. They finished two lengths ahead. "I saw that," said Bernie irritably from the dock. Beside him, his friend Red Ed Burns was smiling, which irritated Bernie more, because these boys had embarrassed him.

"And admired it no doubt," said A.G.

"That's not allowed, you know." Hodges waggled his clipboard. Beads of water speckled his glasses.

Jack was bewildered. He looked up to Bernie, and had hoped he would be amused by their trick. "I'm sorry sir, I thought it was funny," he said. A.G. and Burns laughed.

Now Bernie was annoyed by having taken it seriously. "We'll refer it to the committee," said Hodges, "don't count on a ribbon." He bustled away.

Alison laughed, Jack heard her, and saw a girl with a smile on her face and casually noted that she was good-looking but too young. Alison watched him with feeling of interest buzzing inside her like a fly in a bottle

A.G. said, "Great wheeze, Jack." He was more pleased with Bernie's

offended pomposity, than with the win. Jack regretted that he had upset Bernie so much, because Bernie had helped him one day years before, on the portage from Hall's to Hawk. He was thirteen years old, lying on his side under a heavy canoe. His padding had slipped, the paddles were cutting into his bleeding shoulders, the canoe pressing him back into the earth whenever he tried to get up. A pair of boots cut into the curve of daylight beside his head, and he hoped two things, that whoever it was would help him, and that he would not help him. He heard Bernie say, "You'll make it Giovanelli, the landing's just ahead." Jack got the canoe up, and made it to the landing by himself. Ever after, he had heard that voice giving him strength whenever things looked bad, and he felt he owed that faith in himself to Bernie.

Just before sunset that evening, as usual, everyone in camp gathered round the flagpole. Bernie Hodges joined his hands palm to palm and lowered his head awaiting silence, then nodded to Charlie Krebs, who lifted his dented bugle and played *Taps*.

Hodges loved this moment every day. He dressed for it in a long white wool robe embroidered with Anglican symbols, mixed with symbols of the Ojibway people who lived on this lake. He lowered the flag, then held it to his chest, his eyes raised to heaven. He watched the black spruce spikes not moving on top of the black wall of the forest, he listened for the lake lying silent in its bed, he felt the air cool against his cheek.

He began to sing,

Abide with me

Fast falls the eventide

The darkness deepens

Lord with me abide.

When other helpers

Fail and fancies flee

Help of the helpless

Oh abide with me.

They stood still as the singing echoed away. Black spruce speared the yellow sunset, the dry grass squeaked with crickets, the grey flagpole stretched up empty, the water lay like paint. During *Abide With Me*, Ed Burns, balding head encased on a floppy raftsman's felt hat, was sitting on the dining room steps smoking a cigarette and singing, from the *Internationale*,

Arise, ye prisoners of starvation

Arise, ye toilers of the earth

For reason thunders new creation

'Tis a better world in birth

Then comrades, come rally

And the last fight let us face

The Internationale

Unites the human race.

A Trotskyist who taught English literature at the University of Toronto, he had had no idea, when Bernie invited him here, that he was going to encounter this mix of woodsy Christianity and colonial patriotism.

Hodges held his head still like a moose listening. Clear but faint came the sound of a train whistle through the bush. "There, can you all hear that. I must explain to our guests that we are the only habitation for twenty miles, and the train engineers know this. There is no road, and they know we are out of touch, so when there is a forest fire, they whistle to warn us. All trains in Canada whistle the letter Q, two long, one short, one long, approaching a crossing or station. But tonight they are blowing one short, two long, the Morse for W. I'm afraid it means war. War has broken out."

Everyone stood still in amazement, many people glancing at each other, even smiling, because it seemed impossible that the tremendous news of a general European war could be conveyed by a steam-whistle. The whistle now sounded a little louder, and to Jack it was no longer the romantic wild shriek of a lighted train rushing through the forest in the night, but the announcement of their fate.

People began asking each other questions that no-one could answer, and speculating on what might be happening, and doubting Bernie's news. They moved their hands as if searching for something they had lost, walked towards the dock, the dining hall, formed a small crowd around Bernie asking how to get more information.

The English guests were astounded. In three days, they were due to cross the Atlantic, where the U-boats might already be waiting for them. No-one wanted to believe the news, but the more they assured each other it could not be true, the more they feared it was true.

After about an hour, they heard an outboard coming up the still lake. Joe Killsbear from the Wanagami reserve down the lake cut the motor and stood up in the cedar strip boat he had built himself, gliding in to the dock. Bernie bent down to help as Joe said, "Evenin'. They're preaching war on the radio. Over to England."

Schenkenberg, Germany, September 3, 1939

Tatiana Miloslavsky turned in her seat and smiled at James beside her as the train slowed to a halt in the small red-brick station at Schenkenberg south of Stuttgart. Tatiana was the eldest and most sought-after of three Russian noblewomen who had settled in Berlin in 1920 with her mother and grand-parents, the Count Alexander Nikolai Miloslavsky and his wife, Countess Anna, after the Red Army had murdered her father, and seized the family estates. The Count, anticipating the revolution, had bought a big house in Charlottenburg in Berlin in 1912, and a film-processing company. The business survived under his fitful management during Germany's gigantic inflation, so the family scraped by on what the Countess could earn dressmaking and the pittance the Count brought in.

His grand-daughter Tatiana was high-spirited, even giddy at times, but in repose, her shining face had a look of gentle melancholy,

although some people saw thoughtfulness, and others, artistic reverie. Everyone saw much in her, and all thought she was wonderfully attractive. The young men, perhaps because they wished to have a reason other than young beauty, said that her dreamy reverie showed her poetic soul. That this was just the normal cast of features of her family did not occur to them. Young women admired her for her high spirits, and sighed when she danced elegantly past at a ball, feeling that life had passed them by.

Tatiana had now been working for two years as secretary for Helmuth James von Blucher, the man sitting beside her. He was Assistant Deputy Minister in the Foreign Ministry, and had introduced her to the man waiting on the station platform to see her, Klaus von Zollerndorf. Klaus was a "a serious soul in need of a lively mate," Helmuth James had told Tati. She had been invited for the weekend at Schenkenberg by Klaus' mother Countess Zollerndorf, who agreed with her godson James that her son was too serious and needed someone "gay and charming and decorative to bring him out of himself." By this she was euphemizing her determination that he would marry before it was too late.

The countess was so proud of her son's good looks that she had sent photographs of him to an artist in Berlin who had been commissioned by the Minister of Propaganda, Dr Joseph Goebbels, to do the portrait of a pioneer soldier of the Middle Ages, defending Magdeburg. The painter had accepted Klaus as his model, but changed his hair from light brown to blonde, and his eyes from hazel-brown to blue.

The portrait pleased Hitler, who said that the face represented "the perfect image of the unshakable Nordic warrior." So now Klaus in stone

stood six feet tall outside Magdeburg, resolute against the Wends, and also in a sibling sketch in the national museum in Berlin. Goebbels reproduced the portrait in magazines and recruiting posters, so that the ideal became the typical.

When the Countess heard that Klaus was interested in Tati, she was torn between a desire to reject the Slavic upstart, and her fading hopes for grandchildren. After years of effort and hope, she was no further ahead in marrying him off. Indeed, she was now wondering if her handsome son seemed shopworn in the eyes of the mothers of the suitable families. She consulted Klaus' best friend Peter von Metternich, and on his advice, with condescending bad grace invited Tati for the weekend. Tati and James travelled coach class in the train, she with a wicker weekend case and wearing a hat which she and her mother had constructed from a trunk of clothing discovered in the cellar at Charlottenburg, and from the same trunk, a dress, suitably shortened, which her mother had worn to a ball in St Petersburg in 1910. James was glad of a reason to travel in this class, since he was a rich socialist with no experience of how the lower classes lived, and he had always gone first class before.

She got down from the train feeling apprehensive, but Klaus was there, handing her down, taking her case from James, solicitous for her, so that she was at ease with him and looking forward to the weekend.

She sat beside Klaus in the front of the little green Maybach and James beside their friend Peter Maria von Metternich with their legs crimped in the tiny rear seat as Klaus drove the narrow road up the hill from the village with the top down, the wind tossing his hair about, and his bare brown elbow on the doorframe. "What are you so determined

about today?" she asked.

"Aren't I always?" he said.

"Yes but today you have that dreadnought look."

James in the rear seat laughed. "She's quite right, next you'll be on all the navy's recruiting posters."

Klaus glanced at her, smiling. She was holding her hat down with her hand, and looking at him under the brim, and he was charmed.

"I've been called up," he said, "In three days time."

"Poland?" she said into the wind.

"I shouldn't tell you," but he smiled, and hammered the wooden wheel with his fist. "It's just so damned exciting, Tati."

"Yes," she said, remembering the story her mother had told, of disguising herself as a babushka, and hiding her baby under straw in the back of a farm-cart to drive out past the trucks full of Red Army soldiers come to shoot them.

Klaus' wife would be chatelaine of estates large in Germany although only one-tenth the size of the Miloslavsky's lost lands in Russia, but money, land and title never entered her thoughts about Klaus. All she saw was a man with a strong-featured face and big jaw like a mediaeval knight, a brilliant mind, and something of the ascetic about him that reassured her.

Exile had taught her that what most people spent their precious lives for was not worth it. The family's estates had been confiscated, most of their money destroyed by inflation and their titles were worthless now in this land of National Socialist Revolution. But her work was interesting, she was popular, and she was enjoying life.

"Thank you dear James," she said.

He said, "What have I done now?"

"Oh nothing, just introduced me to hundreds of interesting people, including one right here."

James had told her a little about Klaus' devotion to the strange visionary poet Stefan George, so she understood that Klaus had already abandoned regard for rank, land and money by espousing something he valued more, the culture and moral values of Germany. Secret Germany, they called it in the circle of young men round Stefan George.

Klaus was a captain in the family regiment so he was eager to tell her of the cavalry training they had been undergoing, and the magnificent discipline, abilities and conditioning of his men. "We have achieved such a high pitch, they are taking away our mounts and turning us into tankers. Now that, dear lady, is a military secret, so mum's the word. You too James, don't go trading that to your Oxford friends for naval secrets."

"Oh Klaus, stop here, would you?" she exclaimed, "I want to bring your mother some wildflowers." He drew up on the hill overlooking the deep green valley of the Guldenbach and she walked down through the tall grasses that dropped from the road to the rough pasture along the hedgerow, picking asters, goldenrod, daisies and sweet peas.

Klaus lifted his leg over the low door of the car without opening it, then twirled his body out like a dancer and leaned against the fender with James and Peter, smoking a cigarette and watching her.

"I should not have trusted her with the information about the conversion to tanks," he said, and Peter laughed.

"Oh, Klaus, when will you start to enjoy life more?"

"She's Russian, after all," said Klaus, unperturbed.

"Yes, one of our new allies."

Klaus observed with excitement how her skirt swayed as she stooped and gathered flowers into her hat. Her hair lifted and ruffled in the wind. He confined the pleasure he was feeling at the sight of her, thinking, 'Where will this lead?' He had never had an impulse in his adult life which he had not subjugated to his will. He made himself consider: war was coming, if he were not married, he could have no heir. He was more attracted by her than he had ever been by any young woman. Now Klaus said, " I think it is my duty to marry her, so I can keep an eye on her."

"A wise move," said James. "If you don't, hundreds will."

When Tati turned, she was struck by the sight of the three young men, tall, shining with health, the breeze playing over them. Klaus frowned as he said something to elegant Peter, who was holding his cigarette with the tips of his fingers. He smiled and her heart went out to him, because he was Klaus' best friend, because he was so good-natured, but above all because he was easy-going, always in a good mood. Now James the intellectual, figuring things out, seeing far-reaching relationships, said something that made the others laugh. She thought, 'There they are, all three good, James because he is Christian, Klaus because he is German, Peter because he is noble.'

Warmed by the sunlight with the breeze on her neck, she felt so in love with life that she wanted to fly. She twirled around, then ran up the hill towards them. Klaus looked impassively at her. She turned around arms apart embracing the green valley and said, "Oh it's all so wonderful." As she whirled, the flowers in her hand slapped his chest and he smiled. It was this love of life that charmed people, making them think she was still just a girl.

That evening James, Peter and Klaus walked in the park while they smoked their after-dinner cigars, talking about the war situation. James stopped, flicking off ash and staring out over the calm shadowy valley where a rooster was calling near one of the village houses. From several, pale blue wood-smoke was still curling up from the stove that had cooked the evening meal.

"What do you think then?" said Peter to Helmuth James.

"We are doomed."

Klaus looked down. "I am going to resist this with all my heart and soul," he said. "After Order Number One, there is no going back for me any more. It is much simpler to run into a machine gun burst."

James shook his head, unwilling to hear these words but Klaus would not stop. "I beg you to remain after my death the friends who knew how things were with me and what induced me to do things which others will perhaps never understand. One may say that I am a traitor to my country but I am not that. I regard myself as a better German than all those who run after Hitler. It is my plan and my duty to free Germany and thereby the world of this plague." His head was bowed, because he felt torn by what he had just said, which he knew in his regiment would be regarded as treason, but in his Stefan George circle would be loyalty to a higher Germany.

"I am not sure things are so bad," Peter said. "There is always hope."

"You're always the cheerful optimist," said Klaus. Peter thought how odd Klaus was--one moment a fervent soldier-patriot, the next a poet-intellectual seeing far ahead into the nation's future. They had reached the terrace, where Klaus leaned against the stone balustrade, beyond his

head the dark line of the hills silhouetted against the pale dusk.

"Hitler is mad," said Klaus, "there's no doubt. What reason do we have to go to war? Think of what he has said. Point by point."

Here, James was in his element, rational discourse based on arcane knowledge which he accumulated. "The whole Versailles argument is based on a bad outcome of an unnecessary war. They betrayed us at Versailles, but he himself has already undone all that harm."

"Except Danzig."

"Yes and that is a matter of pride, not of our self-interest."

"You speak as if pride were of no importance," said Peter.

"But he uses this pride on us like a bridle on a horse," James said.

"Think of what he himself calls the root reasons. First, *Lebensraum*. It is the pride of empire. *Lebensraum* would be pure farce if it were not so deadly. The Foreign Office has been asked to provide names and addresses of all German farmers living abroad so that we can invite them home to take up the new lands. What new lands? The letters are already printed promising land to them and war has not even started. Worse," he said taking the pipe from his mouth and speaking rapidly, though normally he spoke in a slow and measured way, "is the talk of the stab in the back theory, on which he bases his hatred of the betrayers of Germany--the Jews, communists and so on, and from which he got his mad theories of Aryan purity. I was in Tübingen last month and I talked to Professor Maier there who told me that it was the Kaiser and the High Command who stabbed us in the back."

"Even mad Hitler could not believe that," said Peter.

"Hear me out," said James which made Klaus smile, since he had heard James utter the phrase so many times at university. James tapped

the dottle from his pipe onto the stone terrace near the balustrade where Klaus was seated swinging his long cavalryman's legs

Klaus had been attracted to National Socialism's theories of race, because they fitted with his picture of a proud Germany of Aryan descent and noble beliefs going back to pre-history. This also fitted with the notion which he hated to credit, that in 1918, the heroic Germans at the front had been betrayed by the mongrel-Germans in the rear--a rabble of communists, Jews, plutocrats. So he was skeptical of the meticulous, academical James, wagging his pipe as he undermined Hitler's stab in the back theory.

"There wasn't any backstabbing," said James. "What happened was the potato fungus, *phytophthora infestans*, which ruined our stored potatoes. In 1914 they were afraid of a food shortage, so they took the potatoes out of the clamps in the fields and stored them in schools all round the country. But the schools were too warm and the potatoes spoiled. The smell was so bad they had to close the schools, remember? Then the crops failed in 1915 and 1916, because the blight was transferred to the fields by contaminated seed potatoes. Now the High Command had to decide whether or not to manufacture copper sulphate."

"What in blazes does copper sulphate have to do with anything?" said Klaus, annoyed as people are when asked to think again about something they have believed all their lives. He jumped down from his perch and took a legs-apart stance, as if ready for physical argument.

"I'm sorry, I thought you knew--copper sulphate cures *phytophthora infestans*. So, they had a choice, use the copper for the potatoes, or shells. They chose guns instead of potatoes--now it's guns or butter, according to Hermann--and so 700,000 people starved to death. That

was the cause of the peace riots and the defeatism of 1917 and 1918."

"I never heard anything of this in cadet school," Klaus said. "It was the British blockade that destroyed our imports, and the communists that wrecked the war effort at home. That's what we were told."

"Nevertheless, this is the fact, according to Professor Maier who is by the way both an epidemiologist and an agronomist."

"Is he Jewish?" said Klaus.

"Why? He is still there, so I assume he is pure Aryan."

"He doesn't have an axe to grind, then."

"Anyway, now we are being fed the lie that we did not lose the war, we were betrayed, and therefore, if we stick together this time, with utter devotion to the Fuehrer--"

"Yes, like Ernst Roehm," Peter interjected. Like most aristocrats, he had despised Roehm, and deplored Hitler's way of dealing with him.

James insisted on finishing his thought, though both Klaus and Peter already understood the point, "They're saying that if we stick together, then this time, we are certain to conquer."

"A defeat for Germany would be a disaster, but a victory for Hitler will be a catastrophe," said Peter.

"I know," said Klaus, "and I know it is my duty to fight."

"And against which enemy?"

Klaus did not answer. As they went inside, James took him by the arm, pressed it and whispered, "Whatever you do, you can count on me to help."

Gathered round the radio in the library at Schenkenberg that night were the hosts, Count and Countess von Zollerndorf, parents of Klaus

and of his young sister Caroline. Their guests were General Wilhelm von Frick, Tati, along with James, and Peter von Metternich with his fiancée, Clara Dunsmuir, of New Brunswick and London, with her chaperone, Edith Dunsmuir of Toronto, spinster sister of Clara's father Sir James Dunsmuir. At five to nine, the announcer said that the Fuehrer would speak in five minutes. The radio played several minutes of *The Baden-Weiler Marsch*, the normal introductory music for Hitler as chancellor. Then the announcer said, "Here is the Fuehrer."

The Count said, "He is not the Fuehrer, he is the Chancellor, dammit."

Hitler read his speech in a level voice and when it was over, everyone waited for the old Count to pronounce. He said, "War. Now we must sink our differences and all pull together for Germany." With a great effort, stooping, knees hurting, hands pressing hard on his chair arms, he forced himself up. "To Germany," he said, his glass uplifted.

Klaus, his face a mask of heroic rigidity, leaped to his feet with his glass and said, "To Germany." Everyone stood up, feeling they were doing something necessary but at the same time excessive. The war was still unreal, therefore emotion about it was unreal. People avoided one another's eyes for a moment.

Klaus put down his glass and said, "How can it be that Germany finds its strongest defender in this Austrian guttersnipe?"

"There is of course no connection whatsoever between Austrian and guttersnipe," Peter said as he sat down. He laughed his gurgly deep chortle. Everyone thought this was tremendously funny, and they laughed aloud. He was leaning back languidly, and smiling, hands locked behind his head. Clara felt a rush of love for Peter as Hitler's

shadow fell over them.

Clara was wondering what they should do now. She and Peter had been engaged only six weeks, and she still felt strange in Germany. They had met when he was studying at Cambridge in 1937. She took him canoeing on the Cam in "a Canadian," as the English call a canoe. He was amused that she kneeled to paddle, while the languid Englishmen he knew sat in their white flannels on the floorboards, shoulders against the thwarts level with the gunwales, lily-dipping their paddles in the muddy Cam. He had never met anyone like this tall strong Canadian girl, blue-eyed, long-boned, freckled, with bouncy red-blond curls, pale eyelashes and an eager look to her face that amused him. He bought her an ice-cream cone from a passing barge, and they talked far into the night seated on the cold stone bench outside his stair, while the world of stars changed above the quad at Caius.

Early in life Peter had formed the idea that anything requiring strong conviction was probably false. Moderation was best, so he approached Clara cautiously, almost negligently, in the manner of the young Englishmen around him. She woke him up from his academic torpor with stories of canoeing through the bush, and the bear she had seen standing in the river-shallows below Tatamagouche Falls, scooping out fish. He wanted to go there with her. Her mind interested him: she flashed to conclusions that he took longer to reach, so she was already on her way to another while he was still pondering the last. By the end of the evening they were fast friends; in six weeks they were in love, though not lovers.

The romantic, bookish little girl in Clara, who had been nurtured on romances she had read on misty summer evenings on the verandah at the

fishing camp had for years fantasized that the man she would marry would be tall, handsome, brave, courteous, noble, probably French, a knight in a suit. Peter was a scholarship student in England, quiet, courteous, but seeming a little bit lost, in need of someone firm like herself. She began protecting him from the perplexities of being German in English society in 1937. But it did not satisfy her to dominate him: her need was more subtle and urgent. She wanted to submit to him, to lay down the burden of the love she felt for him, and feel him take it up. Sensing this, one day when they were lying on the grass after a winey lunch with friends on the lawn outside King's, he told her with a smile, "You can be sure I love you because I have submitted to your desire to submit to me." This made her feel so happy that her body convulsed and she spilled champagne on his chest. Feeling wildly erotic, she reached over him and kissed him heavily.

She decided to visit him in Germany in the summer of 1939, but she did not want to travel as a gaping tourist, nor as a rich playgirl. She was granted an interview by her father's friend Max Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook, owner of *The Daily Express* and the *Telegraph* in London, who accepted her offer to send home despatches about the youth of Germany. After several of these had been published, Helmuth James von Blucher hired her as a translator in the information department of the Foreign Ministry, where Tati worked as a supervising translator.

Clara's family was wealthier than the Metternichs, but not noble, and neither of them cared, although their parents were shocked. In August, having met Clara, the old Count allowed himself to say yes, provided the wedding did not occur until December, by which time he half-expected to be dead of his liver cancer. The date was set for December 20. On the

twelfth, there would be a great ball at the Metternich schloss near Idstein, then they would travel to Sir James' estate in Surrey and be married.

Clara, sitting beside Peter on the long Biedermeier sofa upholstered in a Jacobean cloth figured with books, took his hand during the speech, a thing she had never done in public before the war. When someone asked her, "And what will happen to you now, Clara?" she began, "Well, before the war..." and stopped with her mouth agape at the portent of the remark. Everyone in the room was still, as this phrase filled their future with tremendous mysterious menace.

"Everything has changed now," she said, then whispered in his ear, "Peter, I think we must get married right away." She squeezed his hand, and everyone saw in their open holding of hands, and the whispering, how much had already changed, and had already been accepted as changed. He whispered, "Right away."

In the dim hallway outside her bedroom, Clara spoke to her aunt Edith, who said, "If this is what you are sure you want, you must. But we must telegraph your mother." They had already tried to telephone and found all the international lines were blocked, "for the duration of hostilities."

Clara said, "And you must get to Switzerland right away."

"Yes." Edith stood for a moment, then hugged her niece and whispered, "I fear for you my dear, but I know you've got to do this. Now I must go."

"Are you leaving now? It's past midnight."

"Peter has arranged for a man from the village to drive me to Basle. He'll be here any minute. And Clara..." she hesitated, then willed herself to go on, "he is such a dear good man, I am sure you will be happy. I could not leave you like this with anyone else." She threw her arms round Clara and went on

On the following morning, after breakfast, Tati was down and waiting in the great hall to make sure Klaus would see her early in the day. She knew that if he were ever to ask her anything important he must do it now.

And in fact, Klaus did ask her to join him for lunch *a deux* on the tennis lawn. As Tati was leaving the hall, looking poised and elegant with a large straw hat shading her perfect face, Clara whispered to her, "You look *magnifique*," kissed her and pushed her on her way.

They seated themselves on wooden spectators chairs beside the tennis lawn outside the west wing of Schenkenberg. Klaus poured apple juice for himself, and handed her some of the estate's white wine, which she did not even taste.

They talked of tennis, and Clara and Peter, and then he picked up a pickle, bit off half and said out of the blue, "I have long been meaning to ask you if you would consent to be my wife."

'At last,' she thought, waiting for the rest. She had imagined this moment, how she would feel a rush of love for him, and say, 'Yes, with all my heart.' But he said no more. Now she felt nothing except that it was a very odd way to propose, with a pickle. In fact, all he had said was that he had been meaning to ask her. Had he asked her?

She sat silent for a moment watching the peasants in the field below

manoeuvre a wagon loaded with sugar beets into the door at the gable end of the long brick barn. She could hear their voices faintly across the field that was buzzing with cicadas in the heat. Then, oddly, several motor cars drove quickly through the far gate towards the schloss, puffing dust.

She looked up at him, waiting for more words, hoping to see some warmth or tenderness in his face. But he was sitting beside her, his head hanging, his eyes fixed on the grass, his big face expressionless and it seemed to her that he might be regretting what he had just said. So she took his hand and smiled warmly at him and said, "Yes," painfully aware that he had not actually asked her. With a tightness in her chest she realized that she had not said 'with all my heart,' and now she never would.

He raised her hand to his lips and brushed the back of her hand with his lips and said, "Then it is settled. We will be married in the spring. I shall apply for leave as soon as I get back to the regiment."

He sighed and got up and offered her his hand. She held his hand tightly as they walked back up the lawn to the house, but he soon took his away and said while looking at the ground before him, "By the way, between us, eh? Not a word to anyone? Agreed?"

'But why?' she thought, and did not dare to ask. It seemed to her that he had offered all that he was capable of.

But she managed to say, "But when? I must tell Mama."

"As soon as I have permission from the colonel. It is an officer's duty." He smiled broadly. "It is an officer's duty to marry." Then seeing the look of dismay on her face, he quickly added, "I have a strange sense of humour."

"Yes you do, at such a time. Oh Klaus." She looked at him in dismay and then, thinking she was risking her whole life, but that now if ever she must be honest, she asked, "Do you want to do this?"

"If I did not, and if I did not think you are the dearest, kindest, most beautiful woman I have ever met, I would not have said a word." He laughed. "Duty or not."

He took her in his arms and kissed her firmly. She wanted to believe in him, but did not quite. This made her feel guilty, because she was not acting with a full heart. 'But then, there are always doubts,' she thought. 'I must go ahead and do what I know is right.'

As they walked up the gravelled drive, he glanced up at the window of the Rose room upstairs, imagining her seated up there in the pink-embroidered slipper chair nursing his son and smiling down at him from the open window as he rode Pegasus up the driveway after a campaign. "I am sure you will be happy," he suddenly blurted out, and pressed her arm smiling down at her and tears came to her eyes thinking of his goodness and simultaneously, 'I will be happy? What about you?' And then she reproached herself for criticizing him.

They came up the steps towards the main door. Claus' 13 year old sister Caroline burst out of the door saying "They've sent for you, Peter and Clara are going to be married, they need you inside, hurry, they sent me to fetch you." She stopped in front of them breathless with excitement and grimacing up at her big brother.

They stood there astonished at her behaviour and she suddenly stamped her foot and yelled, "Right now," and then covered her mouth with her hand and bobbed a curtsy, and apologized. Klaus

smiled a big-brother smile. "Yes we know they're engaged," and she said, "No, today, now, they have to be married right now because of the war," and jumped up and down. "In the chapel because there's no time to do it properly, Father Gerstl has just come from the village."

The family, the weekend guests and all the staff had been called to the schloss, his father the Count from fishing in the trout pond, some from the park, some from reading or writing, some who had been listening to the radio in the library.

Peter and Clara were helping the butler to push the Bosendorfer grand piano out of the great hall. "Ah, there you are Klaus," Peter said, "we'll be ready in a few minutes, where is your mother, here's the ring," speaking all in a rush. The piano blocked half the entry to the chapel, but there was no other place for it, and the organ had been broken since 1921. Six of the maids were inside dusting and mopping with their caps askew. "It hasn't been used for years," said Klaus looking inside.

"What is the confounded hurry, Peter?" Klaus said as he kneeled beside the piano to help old Egon block the casters.

"We've just heard that Canada is about to declare war on Germany."

Klaus started to laugh at this news, but suppressed it because he saw Peter was in earnest.

"And what the devil does that have to do with anything?"

"Clara is a Canadian."

"Oh, I thought she was English." Klaus stood up and brushed off his knees.

"James said that Canada is an independent nation now, and has not yet declared war on us." As they were talking, the villagers began arriving in their boots, doffing their caps to the young master as they sidled by the

piano, obstructing the doorway.

"The minute they declare war, Clara becomes an enemy alien, I am forbidden to marry her, and she will be deported or interned."

"Didn't you say she is a German citizen now?"

"She has applied, but it has not yet been approved." The maids in their frilly caps crossed themselves at the doorway, and genuflected as they entered the pews.

"James said we must do it now, as the Canadian House of Commons is sitting today and the Prime Minister is going to introduce a motion in a few hours. Clara got a telegram from her father's agent in Switzerland a few minutes ago. Hundreds of Canadians died in the *Athenia* yesterday, so they are certain to declare war on us. So we have just an hour."

Peter laughed, his face red with the heat and excitement. "Isn't this bizarre? Thank God the banns were posted in time."

Tati tugged at Klaus' sleeve, pulling him into the great hall to talk in private. "Let's do it now, ourselves," she said.

"Do what?" he said annoyed at the way she was pulling him round.

"Get married. Right after them."

"Impossible," he said, trying to get away from her.

"But why is it impossible? They're doing it."

"For one thing, I haven't told mother."

"But she will approve, you know that, in any case she's here, she will be at the wedding."

"For another, I haven't the right until I speak to my Colonel."

"But General von Frick could give you permission. He's just over there. He would be delighted, he likes us both, he told me last night at dinner."

"What's the hurry? Are you a secret Canadian?" he asked with a whinnying laugh.

Tati, catching the reference to Stefan George's Secret Germany circle, shook her head with a little smile. "Klaus, wake up, this is not dreamland."

"Excuse me," he said still smiling, "No, indeed it's not, but need we hurry because they must? That is the question."

Tati was shocked, at his attitude, at the false smile, but she went on, "Klaus, we are at war, you have been called up, you have to leave tomorrow, you might never come back. Think of those poor people on the *Athenia*, not even at war with us, all dead now. That could happen to you. Klaus, I could not bear to lose you without... without..." she wanted to say, "your child," but she was too embarrassed. He stared at her in amazement, beginning to understand.

"I tell you it is..." he was about to say "...impossible because I don't even have a ring," but his right forefinger encountered the little blue velvet box in his pocket containing the diamond engagement ring and the wedding band his grandmother had willed to him. He pulled out the box, and said, "...it is quite possible." He offered her a tight little smile, still annoyed at the haste being forced on him.

"Then it is settled," she said right away, consciously erasing the same phrase he had used on the tennis lawn to set the wedding date.

"But wait," he said with a devilish hard glint in his eye, "delay has a purpose, a chance to consider, you must think first, do you want to do this, you know I am not a usual man, I have a big wolf note."

"Oh Klaus, yes, yes, yes, with all my heart I do." And she threw her arms round him, and hugged him with such passion that he was

staggered.

He went back to the piano, at which Helmuth was now seated, rehearsing the Mendelssohn wedding music.

Klaus, looking very odd, his mouth turned down, but his eyes sparkling alert, as if his emotions doubted what his will was commanding, took Peter by the elbow and they walked in earnest conversation back towards the main hall, where Tati was watching him as she talked to Father Gerstl.

Klaus said, "Tati has persuaded me that we must join you."

Peter clapped him on the shoulder, drew him close and said in his friend's ear, "Do it, you'll never find another so precious, some of us know that within that strange-duck presence of yours there is a poet-warrior, but how many young women have the patience to search you out? You'll be my witness and I'll be yours."

All that this speech did for Klaus was to remind him of his doubts. He was about to reply to Peter, when old Egon called them to the chapel.

With a feeling of dread in his heart, mixed with the beginnings of happiness which were taking him by surprise, he took Tati's hand and stood waiting for the priest to emerge from the sacristy. She glanced up at him hoping to see happiness, but saw a pale strained face.

They had searched the house and grounds for the Countess von Zollerndorf but she had gone walking and could not be found. Father Gerstl said that he could not wait any longer, as he was due to give the last rites to a man dying in the next village.

So the ceremony went ahead without her, Klaus standing for Peter, Tati for Clara Dunsuir. The joyful music for the couple's departure was followed by the newlyweds hurrying back up the aisle to assist at the

second wedding, a small comedy which caused tears of merriment, because everyone wanted distraction from the news of war, and seized on the smallest excuse to laugh. Thus when Tati entered to the sound of Mendelssohn's music played for the second time, everyone smiled and whispered as if this were another great joke. She was smiling beside General von Frick with her head high, her heart pounding behind the bouquet of wildflowers and roses which Caroline had gathered for Clara, and which was now being used a second time.

Countess von Zollerndorf arrived at what she thought must be the wedding of Peter and Clara, just as Father Gerstl asked her son by name if he took Tatiana to his wedded wife. The Countess thought her son had gone out of his mind. She sat down in grief on the last pew, seeing now that the wedding she had been imagining for him would never take place.

In her dream of this wedding, which she had cherished for years, after the ceremony, Klaus would play the principal cello in the Wedding Cantata, number 202, of Johannes Bach, which had been played at her own wedding. She was almost in tears, remembering the happiness of the duet between cello and soprano as she sang *Phoebus eilt mit schnellen Pferden* in joyful response to the deep rhythmic voice of her son's cello. 'And now it can never happen,' she whispered, watching them turn and kiss each other. In a flash, she knew: 'the girl is pregnant.'

After the ceremony, as they were standing talking in the great echoing hall, Klaus embraced his mother, knowing she was disappointed, and patted her hair, and whispered to her, "We are very happy, mother, and it had to be. I'm ordered away so soon." This made his mother grieve more, for the wedding excitement had made her forget

for the moment that he had been called up. Then she saw that he looked happy as he talked with Tati, and told herself not to let her tears spoil his joy.

Klaus felt elated every time he looked at Tati, wondering how it was that he had ever feared anything about her, and laughed at himself for feeling so silly and happy. The laugh, a loud bark, startled Tati as it followed a moment's silence between them, so she glanced at him, and he said, "There, it's done, no going back now, and it's time to dance. Thank you, thank you, thank you, for all your kindness, and..." There he stopped, feeling he was leading up to something sententious, and said, "*Du bist mein echtes Berlinerinski,*" the first joke he had ever made for her. He bent down and kissed her. "Tonight we'll make love with our window open to the moonlight."

She felt faint with apprehension and wanting the night.

'And in two days he rides away,' he added in his mind.

The old count opened the first bottle of champagne handed to him by Egon Kreuzer, who was so old it was not certain that he could have done it himself. "Make sure everyone has some," he said.

"Very good sir," said Kreuzer. "And where would you like the supper served Countess?"

"Supper?" she said.

"Yes ma'am, the villagers have brought food, and they are awaiting your instructions now." A dozen or more village women as soon as they heard the news, had assembled fruit, black bread, *spaetzle*, and *emmenthaler* cheese, hams, barrels of beer, *wurst*, boiled potatoes sauteed in butter, tomatoes for the feast.

This was laid out according to the Countess's instructions in the great hall on oak tables and sideboards as the Foresters' band struck up a march, Mayor Weissman blowing hard on the tuba. This too was a spontaneous gesture by the villagers, though the old Count was perturbed lest they would play oom-pa-pa music, and mazurkas, and not waltzes.

"A waltz, we must have a waltz," said the old Count, tapping his foot on the floor in three/four time. The Countess gave him an apprehensive look, fearing he was going to try to waltz her about on his gouty old feet.

The little band led by an accordion started *Tales From The Vienna Woods*, and Klaus took Tati in his arms as Peter also led Clara into the dance, only the four of them for the first waltz as the family and all the guests from the estate and the village stood round the room, and the Foresters' band played.

"How do you feel?" Tati asked him.

"Relieved."

In the middle of the dance, whirling her around faster and faster till she was breathless, something unspoken was bothering him, which he kept pushing out of his mind, and then he thought, 'What the hell, I might as well give in to it,' without quite knowing what 'it' was, and said, "You know, I'm feeling happy, I am. It's quite surprising. I'm not thinking about anything except how beautiful you are."

"Oh Klaus, I'm glad," she said breathless at the speed of his dancing.

"My god, we are being married by an accordion band," he said throwing his head back and laughing full out, which she had never seen him do before. "I do rather love you, my bel canto," and he leaned down and kissed her forehead still whirling her. She had never felt so light or

so endangered on the dance floor, her skirt flying out from her left hand as they circled, bobbing and bowing to the villagers who passed by her like faces in a train window, around and around until she was dizzy.

When they stopped she was laughing and staggering holding on to him, unable to stand upright, and perspiring even into her hair. She took Peter's arm and he led her into the next waltz saying "I have never seen Klaus let go like this, it's amazing. He's in love."

Tati smiled and said "Good."

"And you're looking satisfied at last," he said.

"And Clara?" said Tati.

"She misses her family. But we'll go to Switzerland on our honeymoon."

"How can you? The regiment is called up."

"The war will be over by Christmas and we can go to Geneva."

When Klaus took a rest after an hour or so, standing outside on the terrace smoking a cigarette, Helmuth James von Blucher came out to stand beside him. He took Klaus by the elbow and led him across the terrace to the lawn, saying, "Now more than ever we have to stick together."

Klaus, heading off a serious discussion because he was still happy, said, "I'll be in Poland in a few days."

"Ah, good," said James, "You must come to Kernslau on your next leave, we can make some plans. Agreed?"

"Of course, Hitler is a monster, he must go, but how? We are at war."

"Yes, so we must be ready for the day the war is lost."

"It's a good thing you are not a soldier."

"And that you are not a diplomat, dear Klaus," said James.

"James, you must see my position. There is nothing I can do right now."

James nodded. He was in no hurry, but he counted on the decisive Klaus to take action when it was possible. James would not enter assassination plots, because he refused to stoop to the level of Hitler, but he wanted to be informed of all progress towards a coup, so he and the men around him would be ready to install a humane and sensible government.

Klaus went back inside thinking 'James, you are the perfect bureaucrat, you want results while avoiding action.'

Tati was coming out to the terrace by the east door as they went in the west. She stood by Clara who was smoking a cigarette and sniffing the scent of nicotiana blossoms in a pot on the stone balustrade.

Clara sipped her champagne. "What a wonderful night," she said.

Tati said "The last for a long time."

"Cheer up, have some champagne. Perhaps it will all come to nothing again, like Munich."

She offered her glass to Tati who shook her head and whispered, "No wine, I want to get pregnant tonight."

Kroll Opera House, Berlin, October 6, 1939

Adolf Hitler, abstracted by thoughts about his speech, walked between urns filled with hothouse flowers spread in welcome on the apron of the Kroll Opera house. He climbed the steps between the guards of the *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* with their arms extended in the

party salute, then paused at the ornate baroque doors, thinking that Albert Speer would have designed them much better. Then he dropped his head and hurried into the gloomy building.

On stage, in better lighting, gripping the lectern with one hand, he held up the other to calm the applause from the members of the Reichstag. Speaking in a moderate tone, he described the victory in Poland, mentioning the death and suffering along with the cowardice of Polish officers who deserted their posts at the crucial moment. He insisted on the moderation of German policy, and showed how the Poles had designed their own destiny by their cruelty towards the German minorities they controlled, so vicious that in some of the villages liberated by the German army, there was not a single man left alive.

He asked the members to rise while he read out the numbers of dead and wounded. He told the house that 10,572 Germans had been killed, 30,322 wounded and 3,404 were missing, although it was unlikely, given Polish brutality, that any of these would be discovered alive.

He turned to the war in the west. He mocked the western journalists--"these miserable scribblers"--who, secure in countries that occupied 40,000,000 square kilometres, were afraid that Germany wanted to dominate the world, though she occupied only a few hundred thousand. Eighty million Germans must have room to live. Germany had shown over and over that despite the taunts of the hypocrite Roosevelt, she wanted to live at peace with her neighbours and that the Austrians had been overjoyed at the reunion with their brothers in Germany. The French themselves had solved the problem of the Saar after the Great War, and Germany had renounced her claims to Elsass-Lothringen.

He then asked, "Why should this war in the west be fought?" For

restoration of Poland? Poland of the Versailles treaty would never rise again. This was guaranteed by two of the largest states in the world. What other reason existed for war in the west? "Has Germany made any demands of England which might threaten the British Empire or endanger its existence? On the contrary, Germany has made no such demands on either France or England. But if this war is to be fought in order to give Germany a new regime, that is to say, in order to destroy the present Reich once more and thus to create a new Treaty of Versailles, then millions of human lives will be sacrificed in vain, for neither will the German Reich go to pieces nor will a second Treaty of Versailles be made. And even should this come to pass after three, four or even eight years of war, then this second Versailles would once more become the source of fresh conflict in the future."

He sketched in the aims of the Reich government in Poland: First, the creation of a frontier in accordance with existing historical ethnographical and economic conditions; second, solution of minority problems, settlement of the Jewish problem, reconstruction and a guarantee of security in Poland. All this would be done by Germany, but not in any imperialistic way. Elsewhere, he went on, Germany needed her colonies back and access to raw materials and resources, just like the other great nations arrayed against her. Then there might be a revival of international economic life.

He suggested a peace conference, and named as the likely opposition to this, Winston Churchill: "Churchill may think I am weak or cowardly and that is why I make these proposals. If so, and if he and his kind prevail, this statement will have been my last."

He pointed out that "In the course of world history, there have never

been two winners but very often two losers.

"May those peoples and their leaders who are of the same mind now make their reply. And let those who consider war to be a better solution reject my outstretched hand."

He ended with a prayer and with thanks to God.

This speech was very well-received in Germany, but scarcely noticed in France or England. No-one in the western press or in the *Chambre de Députés* or the House of Commons took up the vague suggestion for a peace conference. No more did they answer the taunts in the German press about the allied failure to live up to their obligations to Poland by attacking Germany.

The indifference to his speech convinced him that he must now attack in the west. To encourage the generals, and to discourage opposition, he called the senior Wehrmacht staff to the conference room in the Chancellery. He stood before them at the lectern in his army uniform, to remind them of his status as a decorated hero of The Great War.

"For the first time since the foundation of the German Empire by Bismarck, we have no fear of a war on two fronts. Our treaty with the USSR assures that. Italy is our ally and our friend so long as the great Duce lives. Our people are united." He began to sweat as he anticipated what was coming next, the subject of his own greatness: "Everything depends on the fact that the moment is favourable now, and may not be favourable six months from now. As the last factor, I must in all modesty name my own person. I am irreplaceable."

There was an intensification of the attentive silence here as these

uniformed bemedalled middle-aged men trained to service strained to hear what they could not believe.

"Neither a military nor a civil person could replace me, but assassination attempts may be repeated." At that moment, several persons sighed, perhaps hoping for an assassination, but Hitler, in love with what he was saying, soared over the obstacle, "I am convinced of my powers of intellect and decision. Time works for no single man, but must work for our enemies if they stay united. Now the relationship of forces is most propitious for us, and can never improve but only deteriorate."

He paused and gazed over the heads of the crowd to the dim far end of the room, and continued in reverence, for he was now speaking with a full heart about his divine mission, "Every hope of compromise is childish. This is our destiny, to which I am leading us. To victory or defeat. The question is no longer the fate of National Socialist Germany, but of who is to dominate Europe. No-one has ever achieved what I have achieved. My life is of no importance in all this. I have led the German people to a great height, even if the world does hate us now. I am risking all this work so far achieved on one great gamble. I have to choose between victory and destruction.

"I choose victory.

"As long as I live I shall think only of the victory of my people. I shall shrink from nothing and shall destroy everyone opposed to me. I have decided to live my life so that I can stand unashamed at the end; if I have to die, I want to take the enemy with me. In these last years, I have experienced many examples of intuition which have led to success. I have heard the voice of prophecy and seen it realized. I shall stand or fall

in this struggle. I shall never survive the defeat of my people. No capitulation of the forces outside, no revolution from within."

At the end he stopped without a conclusion, staring toward the end wall. He thought, 'I have done it,' remembering himself trembling in the streets of Vienna. 'Now I have assumed the role that I imagined in those days.' He began to shake inside his uniform. Everyone was silent. Most of them believed they had not just heard a speech, but had been subjected to an elemental force radiating from one person. Their concerns had been made to seem small, compared to this awful and enormous vision of a nation's life which for many had never been more than pageantry and promotion, but which now appeared to be bleak, awful, dark, terrifying, grand, and solemn beyond anything they had ever experienced.

A few of the officers were embarrassed for Germany and for their mesmerized brother officers, thinking the speech was ramshackle, incoherent self-aggrandizement, like his policy for the nation. Klaus von Zollerndorf looked around at the generals who had spent a lifetime in their vocation, and remembered the economists, diplomats, engineers, architects, politicians, editors who believed this man was a genius, and thought, 'Only a dilettante can fool an expert.'

The next day, the generals renewed their planning for an immediate campaign against France. When the date came, the weather prevented the attack. Again this happened, and again, as Europe entered the enchantment, neither war nor peace, which people called The Phoney War. For months, the heaviest missile dropped down on the front by German bombers was poetry. A French *poilu*, Jean-Paul Sartre, who was

a weatherman at Morsbronn near Strasbourg, picked up one leaflet, printed on a leaf-shaped piece of russet paper, veined like leaves:

The leaves fall, we shall fall like them

The leaves die because God wills it so

But we, we shall die because the English will it so

By next spring, no-one will remember either dead leaves

Or slain poilus, life will pass over our graves.

[End of first excerpt from *Our Fathers' War*]