let loose in the big bright young man from Jamaica.

Among those impressed by the young Jamaican was a female member of DuBois' group, Harriet Bruce, a tall big-boned, strong-minded young woman with a glowing copper-brown sun-kissed skin and rich majestic singing voice which became a purring contralto in speech. Jacob Brown met Harriet Bruce at DuBois' group on Thursday evenings, at church choir practice on Saturday afternoons and at church on Sundays. The friendship between them grew slowly, over time, fostered by regular meetings and shared activity. As time passed they found themselves naturally leaving the Thursday meetings together, and meeting for a snack at the cafeteria before Saturday's choir practice and then often spending the evening together as a pair with some group and again being together after the Sunday church service. When, as part of his prepartion for his later work, he was sent to some nearby rural black church to conduct Sunday School classes or deliver a sermon, Harriet Bruce usually went with him to ensure that he did not, through ignorance, violate the racial rules of the American Deep South. And because there was now no one back home in the hills of Jamaica to whom he could confide as he had confided in grandma Sarah, he turned to Harriet Bruce to talk of the things he had once talked of only with his grandma. The letters home, to his father were informative but formal as were the letters he received in return; there had never been great intimacy between them. Indeed, he had hardly known his mother, a thin quiet little gentle woman, always with child who seemed permanently overshadowed by grandma Sarah and her own throng of physically towering and assertive children. This was not a problem for his mother only, all the women brought into the family as wives of the husbands + offspring of David

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and Sarah found themselves overshadowed and largely on the fringes of this tightly-knit family, all of strong-minded individuals, fiercely independent yet equally fiercely loyal to each other, and in total and adoring awe of their mother and father. As with him, Jacob, so all the other grandchildr had slipped easily and naturally into the same special relationship, compounded of love and awe, with their grandparents, and which intensified, especially for Jacob, after the death of grandpa David. His mother had died giving birth to the last girl, his sister Ziporah, now a mercurial bubbling sprite of thirteen. That death, the death of his mother, had not gone as deep, his sense of personal loss was not as great as it was over the death of his grandma Sarah. She had been the heart of the family, the ever glowing centre of warmth, assurance, tranquility to which they all turned naturally, when they were tiny and when they grew bigger and, later, when they reached young adulthood. Winning her over to his coming to America was more important than winning over his father. When she had been won over, she simply told his father: "John, I don't like it; but he wants to go and I think he should go." Just like that. And so it was. All this and more he told Harriet Bruce in the quiet moments when they were alone. He told her of the joys of growing up in the hills: the carefree play of children in a world of peace and warmth. He noticed her eyes lit up when he talked of the special taste of melon eaten in the shade of an old tree near the river after hard bushing in the warm sun. And, hestitatingly to begin with but with more passion and assurance when he saw her deep interest, he told her of Samson and how Samson led the group of runaway slaves to the valley of Mount Zion and all that his grandma had told him of what had happen to them. She usually listened quiet, head down when they walked or

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hands folded her lap when they sat on the soft grass in the shade of a tree. He liked the quietness about her; it made it easy for him to talk and let his thoughts flow. Only her change of expression and the changing rhythm of her breathing told him of her interest in what he said, and so he came to know when she was excited or moved or agitated by what he told her; but she spoke little when they were alone, yet she seemed pleased to be with him. Coming from a place of 'great chat wher everybody talked nineteen to the dozen at the drop of a hat, her silence, when he thought about it, which was not very often, puzzled him. She chatted enough, and with enough animation, in the presence of others , even with him; but always, she fell silent and was content to listen when they were alone.

Then one Saturday near Christmas she and one of the young men of the group went to investigate the details of a lynching near Atlanat They were to go to the Negro section of a small farming community, find out as much as they could of the details, and report back to the group. Somehow, something went wrong and they were followed and attacked by four young rough whites who beat up the young man dreadfull then turned on Harriet Bruce. One of them knocked her down, splitting her lip and cheek, and started to rip off her clothes. She fought and screamed at the top of her voice, possessed by a combination of fear and panic and rage such as she had never known before. Her loud hysterical screams attracted a white man on horseback, strapping grey-haired and obviously affluent and known to the four young whites The wouldbe assault ended. Harriet Bruce helped her battered companion to his feet, and together they hurried away while the man on horseback marched the four young ruffians in the opposite directio

When Jacob Brown heard the story that night, and when he saw Harriet's cut and battered face, and the badly beaten young fellow

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student in the infirmary, face and body trussed up in bandages, he was possessed by a seething cold and bitter rage which stayed with him for days. He did not go to church the next day, and he did not see Harriet. Till that moment being black in America had been an abstraction. The colour line and discrimination and segregation were/~~things~~ abstractions you talked about until four young white ruffians tried to rape your girl and near-killed a fellow student with whom you shared studies and meals and idle chat and DuBois' study group documenting precisely such matters: then it ceased to be an abstration and you had to grapple with rage and anger and bitterness and hate almost choking you. Black is what you are because you are born that coloured; Negro it, Frenchify it and it becomes a description of your state: black people are turned into Negro slave; black slaves may be freed but Negroes are not free. Now he could understand the hatred Grandma Sarah said choked up in Samson when he saw that white man in the valley of Mount Zion.

Harriet came looking for him that Monday evening. Her cut lip was still swollen but looked less terrible than it had on Satruday night. The cheek split showed faintly. The eyes were no longer bloodshot. Her powers of recovery were good, unlike those of many in the hills of Jamaica, where cuts often led to serious trouble.

"I've been looking for you," she said, taking his hand.

She hsd never done that before. He remembered he had thought of her as his girl; she was his girl now. He would take her away from this place, right away from America and its brutality that did not even spare women.

"I don't like America," he said coldly.

"I'm part of America," she said. "Don't you like me?"

"Not what they did and tried to do to you."

"Which is why we are here; to change that." She hesitated

then added "This is shocking and terrible to you, Jacob. It is not to us. It is part of life here. It happens all the time. We were lucky; he was not killed, I was not raped. Some black person somewhere in this country is being killed or raped as we now talk. Do you see why the others were so calm about it?"

He said: "No!" explosively.

"You must; you will," she said, caressing the back of his hand

"Come with me when I have finished here," he said impulsively. "We'll visit my home in Jamaica and then we'll go to Europe and Africa. You'll see my people; you'll see our hills! Oh, come with me Harriet! Be my wife and come with me!" It was out now. He put his free hand over the one caressing his other and allowed the warmth of his feeling to flow over her. Briefly, she rested her forehead against his chest; but for a long time she would not allow him to embrace her, resisting gently by holding on to his hands so he could not wrap them about her. Then, suddenly, she relaxed all of her body and he folded his arms about her. He held her tight and felt the warm softness of her body, and sensed rather than smelled the cool scent of slightly damp dry leaves it gave off. He could not kiss her cut and bruised lips so he kissed the undamaged cheek. After a while she freed herself of his hold and led him on one of their favourite walks to the old fallen tree in the dip of the land where Professor DuBois had first spoken to him the day had received the news of his grandma Sarah's death. The Christmas night air was cooler than usual. A slight, scented breeze made a soft whispering sound as the dark leaves shimmied and danced to its passage. When they reached the spot and sat on the fallen trunk he said: "Well? Will you?"

She seemed faraway and lost in thought. "Will I what?"

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"Will you come with me? Will you marry me? Not now; later, when we have finished our studies."

"Oh Jacob, sweet Jacob. You're sorry for me and you want to protect me. But you can't, my dear."

"Why not? And I'm not just sorry for you. I want you to be my wife."

"And what would you do if one day your wife is raped?"

"I'll kill...." he began harshly.

"And be killed," she cut in quickly. Then she laughed, her rich voice tinged with harsh bitterness. "Oh Reverend Brown, you must not talk of killing; it's not Christian!"

"I'm sure Christ would want to kill if He were here."

"He'd be lynched before He could do anything," she said coldly

"Then come with me; away from this place. I know you'll be happy in our hills. If you don't want to go to Europe and Africa I will rebuild grand pa's church and we could stay in Jamaica. Nothing like this would ever happen to you there."

"Your whites so different - so good?" she was teasing him now.

"No. Just they wouldn't dare. There are too many of us; and besides, we're in control up in the hills."

"What a wonderful thought," she murmured. "To be in control. You're very lucky, my Jacob; never thought I'd meet anyone like you, a really free spirit. But they fear that here, my dear. They will hurt you if they see it. So you must always be on guard and don't let them see how free you are."

"You have not answered me," he said, impatient now.

"Give me a little time," she said. "Better still. Come home with me for Christmas and meet my folk and I will give you my answer on Christmas morning. Will you?"

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"Of course," he said, certain that he knew her answer already it was there in her voice, in the way she leaned against him and took his hand and tucked it more securely about her waist; it was there in the new intimacy of touch and speech and openness, an unexpressed commitment which required words only for confirmation of an already agreed compact. But he wanted to hear her s y the words of lovers so he said: "I love you, Harriet."

He felt the tremor shake her body, then she said in a small voice of pain; "Oh Jacob, I love you too."

"You make it sound like pain!" He laughed. "Love is supposed to be joy and fun! When a man and woman choose each other up in our hills they have a party and there is all night dancing and drinking!"

His joyous mood infected the woman and she laughed with him and snuggled closer to him. All the night and all the world seemed beautiful and as if to share the joy of love the big Georgia moon came from behind a high thick white cloud and bathed the land in a glow. Harriet Bruce's mood changed, her body straightened. The man felt and responded to the changed mood.

"Do you know about sharecropping?"

He said: "No." making it an enquiry.

"My family are sharecroppers," she said. "We live on white people's land and work a piece of their land and in exchange they take half the crop. There's a whole village of us my family and other familes and we are all dirt poor. And I didn't tell you, Jacob, my mother was not as lucky as I was. She was raped by a white man and there was nothing my father could do. You will meet the child of that rape, if you will still come with me. Will you?"

He said "Yes," soberly, heavily, all joy of love vanished now.

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The flat, reddish claylike land had sloped upward all mornin forcing the train to labour hard for every mile it gained. It puffed and heaved and rattled and groaned and strained against the slope of the land, making slow but steady progress. Tiwce, at some point where it left its own single line track and temporarily joined a broader multiple line track smooth and sleek express trains had shot by like bullets, one minute flashing out of the distance with a high-pitched sustained scream of warning, the next minute gone in a whoosh and a rattle, seemingly unaffected by the slope of the dry red earth, as they rushed on to the great cities, to Washington and Chicago and New York and Boston and the others. The the little local train was on its own again, strainging against the vast flat sloping landscape; and stopping at every small station and siding to let off or take on a few passengers and take on mail and all manner of other goods.

The two first-class carraiges were at the front. These were spacious and clean with well-upholstered seats and with a white neatly starched little cover for the headrest of each seat. These two carriages were sparesely occupied. Only whites travelled first-class. After the first-class carraiges came the baggage carriages from where the train guard, who was white and in charge, and his black porters, functioned. Then came the four other carriages with bare wooden benches and no uphostery and no covered headrests. These were crowded with passengers of all shapes and sizes and colours - except white. These carraiges were hot, made steamy and dank by many bodies in a confined space, and uncomfortable and noisy.

Harriet Bruce and Jacob Brown were in the last and best of the browded carriages. This one had compartments with the corridor running down one side of the carriage; the others were rows of benches with

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the centre aisle as the corridor.

When they had boarded the train at Atlanta in the very early morning it was much less crowded and they had the compartment to themselves for a time. With each stop passengers had joined the train mostly to crowd into the four rear carriages. By mid-morning the train was crowded and Harriet Bruce and Jacob Brown shared the compartment with four women, two men in their not very comfortable or accustomed best suits, and three very boisterous children. Quiet, intimate conversation was impossible; to be heard above the noise of the train and the loudness of the children everybody made such conversation as there was at near the top of their voices. But the din and the racket were all amiable and good-natured and there was an easygoing quality about the hot, noisy discomfort. They were all black people together so they were safe. There were no whites around so there was no need to be on guard against some sudden unexpected explosive encounter; no need to hush the children or be on best behaviour. So Harriet Bruce and Jacob Brown sat in silence side by side near the window, their backs to the engine, safe in the hot uncomfortable embrace of the numbers of their own, watching the land flow past. Terribly flat and terribly parched it was to Jacob Brown, used to the lush rolling green hills of Jamaica. Shrublike in places, the clay-earth cracked in places, in places red dust stirred into quick swirling clouds by unseen gusts of wind. But it was the flatness that struck him most. He had never before seen so much flatness, had never before imagined there could be so much flatness. He wanted to talk to Harriet about it; but how do you do it against this noise? He wanted to take her hand; but the two women on the other seat would stare. So he remained silent, watching the bleak, flat landscape flowing by.

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Harriet, for her part, was absorbed in the open book on her lap. It was called Suppression of the African Slave Trade, its autho was W.E.B. DuBois, and it had been published three years before. The flyleaf of the book carried an inscription from the author to Miss Harriet Bruce in salute and admiration of her brave investigati in the interest of her people.

Jacob Brown dozed off and woke abruptly, startled by the high-pitched shout of one of the children in the corridor. After a while he dozed off again. The train snaked its way across the flat land; stopped at each station and each siding, did its business then started off again, groaning and heaving till it got into monotonous stride in its slow steady progress across the vast flat land.

At one point gnawing hunger and thirst had shaken Jacob out of the dulled stupor into which he had lapsed; but Harriet was alseep now, her head held in place by the sharp corner where the seat met the frame of the window. No use waking her, he decided; besides, how could they eat and drink from the hamper she had prepared for the journey while others watched them hungrily. So he got up and found his way down the corridor to the little toilet. But the place stank so much his stomach began to heave, and the water container was empt He hurried out and stood in the corridor near an open window till his stomach calmed itself again. Then he returned to his seat, careful not to disturb Harriet.

In the late afternoon, but with the sun still high, the train drew into the border siding between Georgia and Alabama. There was a long delay and a great to-do over the changing of drivers and guard and the taking on of water by the giant engine, then the shrill whistle screamed again and the train moved into Alabama. As far as Jacob could see, there was no change in the landscape; but Harriet

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was evidently excited: he felt in the new tension she gave off, saw it in the new brightness of her eyes. Ignoring the stares of the women opposite, she pulled his head down till his ear was close to her lips.

"Soon now," she said."The second stop coming up."

He nodded and tried to smile; the effort was sickly. He was hot and hungry and thirsty and tired and uncomfortable; the muscles of his body ached for movement. And still the red clay earth fell away in flat mile after mile.

The train stopped then moved off again. A half hour passed then Harriet stood up and reached up to the luggage rack above their heads . Jacob got up and helped her bring down her two suitcases filled with presents for the family, then he took down his own smaller one . They eased their way out of the compartments to the now friendly smiles and nods of those who remained. Lips moved mouthing words of farewell that could not be heard. The woman who had shown the most forbidding expression throughout the journey relaxed into a beaming sunshine smile which gave her long melancholy black face a dazzling radiance. It was irresistable and Jacob Brown's face broke in warm response. He grabbed the woman's hand, shook it vigorously and followed Harriet out of the compartment and down the corridor to the exit door.

The train lumbered to a halt. Harriet pointed: "There they are!" Jacob saw a cluster of nondescript people around a long large mulecart. Then they were on the dusty earth at the end of the train, a good twenty yards from the little siding platform. They were the only people to get off. Harriet took Jacob's ticket from him, told him to wait, and marched off to the siding platform where two white men, as red and faded as the red clay earth, waited. Not till she had handed the

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tickets to one of the two white men was there any movement from the group by the mulecart; once she had done so, all but one of them came forward. The one who stayed back sat on the driving seat of the cart, a long rifle cradled in the crook of his left arm, his right hand resting near the trigger. The others bunched themselves about Jacob, a group of strapping young men and women in faded old homemade clothes, flappy cloth hats and barefooted, showing their friendliness in awkward welcoming smiles. The young men took up their cases but waited till Harriet returned before moving to the cart. Harriet returned, running happily. She embraced each of the young women and the young men of her own family and called out each name for Jacob's benefit. Jacob could not take it all in; it was all a blur of faces and names and he could not, in that first flush of meeting, connect any face to any name; but he smiled happily. These were Harriet's family and friends and the tedious and exhausting journey was at an end; and there had been no trouble. Unknowingly Harriet had transferred some of her own undercurrent of tension and anxiety to him so that he too, was possessed of a subtle subcoscious alertness against the possibility of an ugly white encounter. He could relax now. He knew these people would ensure that there was no such encounter while he was in their care. That one over there with the rifle was the earnest of it.

"Come meet my big brother, Abner!" Harriet bubbled taking his arm and pulling him to the mulecart.

One of the other young men leapt on the cart and relieved brother Abner of the rifle and took up guard duty so brother Abner could meet the stranger. Brother Abner jumped off and offered a huge calloused hand to Jacob. He wqs a fraction taller than Jacob and much broader; all his body the hard muscle and strong sinews of a human workbeast.

"Hiya!" Abner said in a deep rich lilt. "Glad to see ya!"

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Then he turned, wrapped his huge arms about Harriet and lifted her off the ground as though she were featherlight. "Hiya, sis! Good to have ya back!"

They all bundled into the long cart, Harriet and Jacob up front beside Abner and the young man riding guard with the rifle. The two whites came to the edge of the siding platform to watch them drive off, laughing and joking among themselves, secure in their numbers. The mulecart raised a small cloud of fine yellow dust in its wake. Far ahead, to the left of them, where the slight upward incline of the land seemed to end and fall away, a concentrated clump of tall trees stood out like an alien army in this dry land. When they neared the trees Jacob heard the sound of flowing water, as familiar and intimate to him as breathing itself. He had grown up never far from that sound. The river, when they reached it, was broad and shallow and slow-flowing at this point; the noise of the flowing water came from further up the land, from a higher point where the flow had to be faster. The trees began on the other side of the river and stretched away, in a seemingly carefully drawn line to a far point where the land crested and fell away. They crossed the river by a crude but sturdy wooden bridge and saw the vast sweeping stretch of land in cotton, as far as the eye could see.

"That's cotton," Harriet said. "King Cotton," an edge to her voice. The dirt road ran straight with the trees on its left and the flowing acres of cotton on its right. As they crested the land Jacob saw the village about a mile ahead of them. A series of drab wooden houses clustered near each other in a slight hollow in the land. Some distance beyond it, perhaps another two miles or so away, on a slight rise in the land, were other buildings; bigger, more solid-looking structures, not wooden shacks, glowing pale in the light of the setting sun.

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"That's home, Jacob," Harriet said, pointing to the cluster of shacks.

"And that?" he asked, pointing to the structures beyond and that he knew
certain ~~knowing~~ the answers as he asked .

"The owners," she said."They own everything you can see and much more you cannot see." She pointed as though through the trees . "There is at least as much land again and three other villages like ours over there. Ours is the oldest and the children over there come to our school. I didn't tell you, our mama is the teacher here... That's why they did what they did to her. To show everybody."

Abner turned his head and stared coldly at Harriet.

"I told him," she said. "He's from the islands, from Jamaica; he doesn't know these things. I had to tell him when somebody tried it on me." She answered ~~his~~ Abner's unspoken query. "No nothing happened. We got away."

Abner sighed softly. "That the mark on your face?"

"Yes."

Abner looked at Jacob.

"He wasn't with me," she said quickly. "It was another student They beat him badly."

"He'll be allright?" Abner asked.

"He'll be allright," she said. "They know who the two are and some of the men at the colleg will deal with them."

"You didn't tell me," Jacob said, angry suddenly.

"They didn't want you to know," she said. "Didn't want you involved." To Abner, she said: "He's studying to be a preacher."

"Even preachers have to fight sometimes," Abner said.

"Its not his fight yet," she said thoughtfully. "And they

cannot throw any of our people out of the country; they can with him

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if he is involved."

"If they find out," Abner said.

"There's always some Judas," she said.

"I hope they get them good," Abner said coldly.

"Me too," Jacob said. "Me too."

Abner stared at him a while then his face broke into a half-smile of acceptance. "Want to come fishing?"

Jacob nodded.

Every now and then they passed small groups of people working in the cottonfields. The people stopped their work to watch them pass Those nearby called out welcoming Harriet home; those further away waved their greeting. He had, Jacob realized, entered another island of security, like the university. Here again, the black people of this country seem to have built about them a closed-in and invisible wall of self-ppotection by isolating themselves from the whites and by avoiding,as far as possible, all contact with them. You protect yourselves by segregating and isolating your selves, by being armed against any possible encounter, like members of an opposing ~~two armies~~ in a state of constant hostility where any contact with the enemy could erupt in violence. And this was what DuBois was trying to overcome with his great brain and his great scholarship and understanding. He wanted to bring down the barriers and make the white majority understand that the black minority had, as of right not as gifts of kindness or concessions, the same claims to everything in this land as the whites had. That was the reason for all his writing, all his effort. But what if people do not want to understand? How do you force people to understand against their will? And yet they are Christians too, as we are. They worship the same God and pray in the same way for forgiveness by saying 'Our Father".

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They entered the village and the wooden shacks were set further apart than appeared from a distance. Close up, they were larger than they had seemed and each had ample yard space at the sides and the front and larger space at the back with chicken runs and pig pens and heavily cultivated vegetables patches. Jacob recognised the familiar farming community smells of animal dung, vegetable matter, turned earth in which human waste was used as manure and the pungent ~~strong~~ smell of dry leaves turned to mould. This, at least, was the same as up in his high Jamaican hills. But the Christmas breeze would be blowing up there now, wilting the leaves of the trees with their force. Why a strong and at times very high wind should be called a breeze nobody knew: Christmas breeze it was , bending the trees in the late afternoon and making the normally soft air very dry. Harriet's touch brought him back from his Jamaican hills. She pointed and he saw a tall thin black woman at the far end of the village, in front of the very last house, waiting. He did not hear what she said but he was sure that was her mother. And he noticed the absence of children and dogs. The first things you saw as you entered any Jamaican village were the children and the dogs; the sounds of the children, the bark of the dogs.

"Where are the children?" Jacob asked.

Harriet stood up in the cart, waving to her mother.

Abner said; "Picking cotton."

Harriet jumped from the cart before it had halted properly, stumbled and was saved from falling by her mother's arms. Now, at last Jacob could distinguish Harriet's brothers and sisters from the other young people in the cart: they came off the cart, the others remained on it. The young man who had ridden guard gave Abner the

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rifle, took the reins and urged the pair of large mules to make a u-turn and go back down the empty village street. The young folk in the cart called out greetings and goodbyes to 'mizz Bruce' and 'Hetty' and Abner and Jacob of whom they talked as 'Hetty's quiet young man in the fancy city clothes'. Abner gathered up the suitcase and went into the house.

"This is Jacob, mama," Harriet said. "Remember? I wrote."

"Welcome, Jacob," the woman said. She held out a strong hand and gripped his firmly. She gave off a feel of strength and a sombre mood. Her dark face was unlined, her thin body ramrod straight in the long nondescript dress which had long since lost whatever colour it once had. The kinky hair, nearly all grey was pulled back in a severe bun at the nape of her long neck: not an old woman, but not a young woman either; until you looked into her eyes and then she seemed older. Jacob found it hard to think that this woman had been forcibly violated by some brutal white man. If this were his mother; but it was Abner's mother and he knew how Abner felt, had seen it. He had sensed some of it in Harriet too.

"Thank you for having me," Jacob said, unsure of himself.

"We're dying of hunger!" Harriet exclaimed. "Could'nt eat on the train with all those people!"

"Then we had better feed you," the woman laughed, making it sound like singing, as she hustled them into the house.

This was where Harriet got her beautiful singing voice from, Jacob decided ; from this woman who had been brutalised and who gave you the feel of a cool breeze touching you. He felt glad, suddenly, that he had asked Harriet to marry him. He wanted to see this woman up in his Jamaican hills, see how she would respond to being really free.

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It was a small drab room, compared with the spacious airy rooms of faraway Cyprus. The windows seemed designed to keep out rather than let in the light. But it was larger than most of the campus dormitory rooms which three or four men often had to share. He, Jacob, was lucky his people could afford the higher cost of the tiny one-student room he occupied: the privacy was worth the higher cost. This one was a truly small living room for what he had seen of Harriet's family this far: Harriet, her mother, her brother Abner and the two teenage girls who looked like twins. Still to be seen were the father and the boy who was the bitter fruit of that rape.

Abner took Jacob to the back to wash while the women prepared the table. As in the hills of Jamaica the water and the washing was out of doors. Abner watched as Jacob washed and changed his dark suit and thin pale slacks and shirt for a fresh open-necked shirt. Without his jacket and tie Jacob fitted more neatly into the surrounds: he could be a young man of Alabama or of Georgia not some stranger from some far off island.

"That cool, man!" Abner admired the sharp crease of the slacks and the quietly gay colours of the shirt. "That what they wear in your island - what's it called again?"

"Jamaica," Jacob said. "Yes."

"It like here?"

"No. Different."

"How?"

"We have mountains and hills and everything's green all the time."

"We have mountains and hills too."

"I mean you don't have to go to our mountains. They're there all about you, no matter where you are. It's like having hills and

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mountains out there, just behind this place."

"You puttin' me on" Abner protested. "You have to go to the mountains. Everybody has to go to the mountains."

"Yes; but they are very near with us; most of us living in the mountains and the high hills."

"White folks too?"

"No. They live in Kingston, on the plain."

"Same as whites here?"

"I don't know; I don't know any whites there or here. Few at the university but I don't know them. What I do know is that they will not lynch us or molest our women because they know there will be war. So they don't trouble us, especially in the hills. They did trouble my grndpa a long time ago. They burned down his church and took away some of his congregation."

"They no different," Abner nodded. "Same as here; maybe not so many, but same as here..."

They were interrupted by Harriet's voice, calling. Jacob started to lock his suitcase; his valuable papers and clothes could not be left open on a section of a verahdah partitioned off with canvas into sleeping quarters.

"S'allright," Abner said. "Nobody will touch them."

Jacob felt shamefaced suddenly, as though he had thoughtlessly hurt Abner.

"I'm sorry..."

"S'Allright," Abner said. "Come."

The women had prepared a small feast of cornbread and gummy pig's hock and sweet potatoes and a mound of fresh greens cooked lightly in a deliciously savoury gravy. The others took token portion

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and watched Harriet and Jacob eat with the relish of the truly famished. Then, near the end of the meal, very politely and carefully, but very searchingly, they started to question Jacob about where he came from, the size of his family, the land they owned, what they did, and what life was like in Jamaica. Jacob told them everything they wanted to know, as simply and clearly as he knew how. He had asked Harriet to marry him and it was right that her people should want to know all about him and his people.

They touched on colour when one of the twins asked him: "Is there no colour line? You said nothing about it."

It was Abner who answered: "No white folk around where Jacob's people live so they don't need to have any truck with them."

"Not even for work?"

"Not if all that land is theirs," Mrs. Bruce said softly. "Here..." and she told Jacob much of what he had already learned from DuBois' Thursday evening group. But he heard it as fresh new information because Mrs. Bruce told from the inside of the lives led by black folk as she and others had lived it and were living it, not as some carefully researched and documented piece of scholarship. She talked of her being raped as part of at least a score of other cases of which she had personal knowledge. Some of the women had gone to school with her; others were strangers; all understood that it was part of a deliberate exercise in racial humiliation so that they and their men and their children should never forget their place. Even the personal lust of the rapist was given almost impersonal acceptance by whites of the necessity for black humiliation in every possible form as a way of forcing blacks into accepting their lower status in life

"Do you see, Jacob," Harriet said when her mother paused. "It is not a moral question for them; it is as clearcut as lynchin

only, you lynch black pride and black self-respect instead of black bodies; you leave the bodies themselves to go on living and walking and talking and hurting as reminders of what can be done to black folk any day any time anywhere in this country; and those living bodies are the bodies of your mother, your sister, your wife, even your grandmother. What kind of pride can you have if they can do this to your women and you can't do anything about it?"

"What kind of people are they," Jacob wondered aloud. But somehow he could not get quite as angry about it as these people were. Why couldn't he? It seemed that they knew he was not as angry as they were and the knowledge created a mood of awkwardness To try and get over it he told them about his grandma Sarah and his grandpa David who had been slaves and who had run away to create that haven for their family in the high hills of Jamaica. As he talke he realised why he was not and could not be as angry as they were: theirs was an anger of despair, and despair was alien to the hill folk where he came from. When he had done Mrs. Bruce said, a world of detachment in her voice:

"They had somewhere to run to; we had no hiding place."

"Ya," Abner said. "Your mountains."

The sudden awkwardness was not dispelled, so Harriet changed the subject and they talked about plans for Christmas, two days away. The twins cleared the table; Mrs. Bruce got up and moved about the room; Abner withdrew into blank silence; and so the awkwardness was gradually dissipated in everyday routine.

When darkness fell Mr. Bruce, a tall thin man with a permanent round-shouldered stoop, and the boy who was the symbol of their shame and racial humiliation, returned from the cotton fields. The boy, Martin, twelve-years old and several shades paler than the rest of

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the family, was also physically different; whereas the others were long-boned, tall and lean, young Martin was thickset, ~~xx~~ almost squat, with big not-yet-fully grown but already heavy bones; in contrast with their long narrow faces tapering to small chins, his was round and square. Only his pale grey eyes were like their dark ones, the same quiet sadly withdrawn quality about them in repose.

There was no awkwardness between the boy and the man he called 'paw' in common with the other children of the house; no awkwardness between the woman and this offspring violently forced on her. Jacob had wondered about it but there was nothing to see. And yet they had made it clear to him that they were conscious of this young yellowish boy as the living symbol of their racial humiliation.

The man mumbled something when his wife introduced Jacob. Jacob was aware of a husky rasping voice and sensed difficulty in breathing but the words were unclear; he did not know what the man said as he shook the gnarled and totally inert hand. Then the man and the boy disappeared into the back to wash and clean up. Abner went with them, leaving Harriet and her mother and Jacob alone in the front room. When the room was in complete darkness Mrs. Bruce lit the big oil lamp they used on special occasions only, the one with the glass shade with 'Home Sweet Home' on it, which could burn all through the night.

"Some of our neighbours coming by later to welcome Harriet home," Mrs. Bruce explained. "And you too, of course. First time she's brought a boyfriend home so everybody wants to see you, especially as you're a foreigner from the islands. We've never seen a foreigner, you know." Her smile, made gentler by the softness of the lamplight, made being a foreigner seem special.

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Jacob held on to himself, on guard, not knowing what to expect and anxious to win the approval of this woman. She, it was clear, was the head of this household. Whatever was done here, whatever was decided would be with her approval. Not all that different from Jamaica, and yet different. There, when a woman was in control she exercised it through the man, making him say the words and give the instructions; and women being in control was not as pervasive up in those hills as her. Men and women worked together and decided together, especially where their children were concerned. Here it seemed men left things to the women, elected not to be in control; no, not elected. That implies choice. Was it part of the humiliation, of the destroyed pride being expressed?

Jacob turned to Harriet: "Remember what you said about black pride?"

"Yes," she thought for a long while, searvhing for the connection to his thought. "You thinking about Pa and Martin?"

Jacob looked quickly at Mrs. Bruce who said."Its allright."

"About your men; about black men in this country."

"Dr. DuBois' group has been looking at that," Harriet told her mother.

"I see," the woman said. "So what's tne question, Jacob?"

"Not a question, really, more a thought. As long as they have your men in this position of being without self-respect and pride there is little you can do to change things."

"Unless we counter that," Harriet said.

"And we will," Mrs. Bruce said. "And we, the women, have a special task. Each day we must build back the pride and the self-respect they take from our men. That is our responsibility."

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"It is a heavy one," Jacob said. "An almost inhuman responsibility."

"If it is then we must be inhuman," Mrs. Bruce responded, utterly relaxed and at ease now. "As they destroy our men's pride/so we must build it up again. We must use our minds and our hearts and our bodies to give them back that pride and that self-respect that will make them want to fight back. Our love is the only weapon we have to support our men. If we do not give them that support and make them strong then the day when equality comes will have no meaning."

"The day when equality comes...When is that?"

"I don't know; you and Harriet must tell me; your Profeesor DuBois must tell us. We are prepared to carry on until it comes, however long that is. Does that explain Pa and Martin to you?" Martin will grow up learning to hate what they did to his Pa through me and to all his family, for we are his family and his bastard blood will want to avenge us and him too..."

"In the name of love?" Jacob asked softly.

"Yes!" the woman said. "In the name of love! You will learn, my young pastor, that love can be hard and harsh and even cruel when there is need for it. Your grandparents were slave! Have you forgotte that already in the name of your Gentle Jesus? He was not always gentle." The dark eyes glowed with passion.

"Has she talked with DuBois?" Jacob asked Harriet.

Harriet's lips curled in a happy smile. "No."

"I wish your professor could hear some of the talk in the cottonfields. It would burn his big brain."

Harriet chortled. "I think he hears of it,ma. I think you'll get a big surprise if you ever meet that refined and over educated

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little brown gentleman from Boston; and I'll see that you do."

"I hope so." A small smile flashed across the woman's face and was gone. "You think as much of this Professor DuBois as Harriet does, Jacob?"

Before he could answer there was a shout from outside; then the sounds of many voices. Mrs. Bruce turned up the wick of the lamp and they all hurried out to the verandah. A cluster of people, the first of the visitors, had arrived. And from the verandah Jacob could hear the familiar sounds of the night; the bark of dogs, the calls of the little night-creatures, and the kind of stillness country people listen to and hear.

The people, mostly women and mostly elderly, greeted them one by one in the semblance of a ceremonial line-up: first, Harriet's father, who had appeared at the door when they arrived, then Harriet's mother, then Harriet herself, then the stranger; the rest of the family were not subjected to the formality of the awkward ceremonial handshake. For them the greeting was a nod or a pat on the arm or a 'Hiya, Abner', 'Hiya, Cissie", 'Lo Merl", "Hiya, Martin". Then the visitors spread themselves on the verandah, the older people on the long benches, the younger ones on the verandah steps and on its rails. All the chairs and stools were brought out of the house as more people came. The talk flowed freely, a steady hum of people in harmony, sharing, however briefly, that special intimacy which language, imagination, and common aspiration make possible at moments between one human being and another. After a time the young people naturally found themselves a little apart from the older folk. As from nowhere a half gallon earthern jug of corn liquor appeared and was passed from one man to another. The women and younger children shared cookies and

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a non-alcoholic punch. Abner and two young men disappeared into the night down the wide dirt road and returned, ten minutes later, with their own corn liquor, half a dozen more young people and the tools with which to make music: two banjoes, a mouth organ, and a long reed flute. With their return the gathering took on a musical flavour, and before long everybody, old folk as well as children, were dancing on the bare earth outside the Bruce home. Those who did not dance sat clapping their hands and stomping their feet to the rhythm of the music. But mostly they danced, the earlier physical weariness after a day's hard labour forgotten. In any case the morrow was the Sabbath, the day of rest so they could sleep late And Christmas was two days away and its spirit was all about them.

Mrs. Bruce came over to where Harriet and Jacob sat in the shadow of a huge tree. She took both of Jacob's hands and pulled him to the dancing circle. They joined the dancers. Then, in mid-dance, another motherly woman relieved Mrs. Bruce of Jacob; and after than, another and another and another; and then at last Harriet came to his rescue, danced a few turns with him and took him back to their their shadowy spot under the tree, to rest and to recover his breath.

Mrs. Bruce brought them each a thick slice of corn bread with a piece of smoked hog resting on it. She raised her voice so Jacob could hear her above the music: "You are one of us now, Jacob. If you want to be!"

When they had eaten Harriet led Jacob a little distance from the sound of the music, not too far away, so they could still be seen by the others.

"You know why they all danced with you?"

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"An endurance test," he jested; then: "A sort of welcome."

"Yes; a special welcome. They all like you. Ma was telling you that just now. Do you understand us, Jacob?"

"Understand what? You are people like all other people. You are angry about your status, how you are treated and you want to change that. That's normal. That's how people are; all people."

"All these people help to pay for my being at university, Jacob. My people can't do it alone. When I finish another child from our three villages will be sent to college and university. Because I am expected to earn more with my university degree than their combined earnings they look to me to help that next child as they have helped me. That is my debt to them. And when that other child gets through college and university there will be two of us to support two others. Later there will be three of us then four of us then five of us..."

"I see...When does it end? When do you finish paying your debt?"

"Never. Oh, it will change. When I have children of my own my first responsibility will be to them. But I must always help the others as these people have helped me..."

"What is it you are telling me, Harriet?"

"That if you still want to marry me you take on my responsibility too. If you marry me, you marry a sharecropper's daughter and a bunch of sharecroppers who want to free all their children from sharecropping. We see schooling and education as the way out. Not tomorrow or next week or next year, but still as the way out one day, no matter how far away that day."

"That is the struggle of all black people," Jacob said. "It

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is my struggle as much as your."

"In the abstract, yes, Jacob. In this particular instance, no. My is a specific obligation and commitment to a specific group of people in a specific little corner of Alabama. Dr. DuBois could depend on his brains and ability to get him through those Northern public schools and universities; you could depend on your family who could pull themselves up because conditions are different in Jamaica. You see how it is here. There is no way out for anyone among us such as you and Dr. DuBoi could find. If the day comes when we do have that way out my specific obligation will come to an end and I would become committed, like you and Dr. DuBois, to the wider struggle of all black people. Now it must be to this place and these people."

"What does that mean for us, for you and me?" He forced himself to be calm, to speak calmly:"What does it mean to our marriage?"

"Oh, my Jacob! I just want to marry you and be your wife and have your children and...Oh, so many things!" She, too, now forced herself to be calm: "I will marry you if you understand that I cannot leave Alabama until -"

"Until there is a way out for everybody here?"

"For every child, Jacob. There'll never be a way out for the old folk, not even for ma who has had more schooling than most of them. For the children, yes."

"That is really saying you won't marry me!" He was hurt and angry now.

"No, please, Jacob! I will marry you; I will marry you if you will stay here. You can do your work here; here in Alabama or in Georgia or even Mississippi. We would still be in touch and I

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would be able to do what I must do. Please, Jacob!"

"So," Jacob said slowly, harshly. "You would give up nothing but you want me to give up everything. What kind of love is that!"

Harriet Bruce moaned softly and wrapped her arms tight acros her belly as though trying to hold it together; she seemed shrivelle up and small. Her voice, however, was calm and steady: "Oh Jacob, I am so sorry. I did ask too much. But not because I would give up nothing; I thought you would at least understand that. To just go off with you would be to give up nothing, to take everything from them who have nothing and give nothing back. I couldn't do that and still live with myself. That's why I asked so much of you. I'M so sorry...I'm sorry..." She turned and walked away, to the house, but so that she would avoid the people dancing in front. "Tell them I'm not feeling well; tell tham its the excitement..." She still held in her belly as she went, round shouldered and small looking.

Jacob remained where he was till the hurt and rage left his heart and mind. He tried to think calmly but rational thought was not possible now. He felt empty, depressed, unhappy over Harriet's unhappiness, unhappy over his own unhappiness. The music was still playing, the dirt poor black sharecroppers on the sprawling Alabama cotton plantation just across the state border from Georgia, were dancing away happily, their sorrow, their misery, their hopelessness forgotten for the moment. Christmas, ~~the last Christmas of the old century~~ was just two days away.

Jacob Brown felt very lonely suddenly, very homesick for the high hills of Jamaica.

And in his ~~room~~ study at Atlanta University, Professor DuBois ~~revised~~ re-read an essay which began: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line------"

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4) Jacob / Dan / Liberia

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He came struggling out of a hot dark dank swirling green fog, fighting his way free of an unseen force, intangible but overpowering and determined to hold him back and assimilate him into its darkness. Suddenly it was over; the fog was gone, the fighting ended. The green, now, was peaceful, dispersing in waves, each a lighter green than the wave before it. He relaxed in the world of redeeding green waves, utterly spent, unable to move, hardly able to breathe, aware only of an overpowering heat and an overpowering thirst. From a great distance far beyond the green waves a voice reached him at last. It said: "Jacob! Jacob! Are you awake, Jake? Can you hear me?" He felt a hand on him, on where his head was. He tried to open his eyes.

The man bending over him saw the movement of the eyelids, and, taking his wrist, felt the more even rate of the pulse. He turned to the nurse behind him. "The fever's broken; I think he'll be allrigh Better change his bedding very quickly before the chill sets in; then we'll let him sleep."

"Yes, doctor." The nurse left the room and returned almost instantly with two strapping young men, barefoot and in faded khaki shorts and shirts. Her voice changed as she instructed the two men to lift the semi-conscious man from the bed to a trolley: it became at once authorative and condescending. She stripped and remade the bed quickly. Then, instructing the men how to hold him, she stripped the patient of his sweat-soaked hospital gown, rubbed his body down with dry towels and supervised his return to the bed. "You can go now," she ordered. "Matress to the steam room, rest to the laundry, understand? Matress steam room, bedding and gown laundry. Savvy?"

"Yes, lady nurse," one of the young men said, bowing his head.

The doctor, who had been watching from the window, cleared his

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throat so the others all looked at him. His face broke into a beaming smile as he pointedly recognised the two young men with his eyes. "Thank you. Dr. Brown will be allright now; thank you for helping."

The one who had answered the nurse bowed again, showing his teeth this time. "Thank you, Doctor, sir." The other one echoed him. "Tahnk you, Doctor, sir." Then they bowed themselves out with their bundles.

The nurse made no attempt to hide her tight-lipped angry disapproval. These Afromericans did not understand how to deal with the natives, and they would not learn from those who knew. A doctor praising these boys directly would spoil them; they would want to talk directly to doctors, and then to other people as well. No use talking to Dr. Brown about this either; he was the same. Afromericans and West Indians all couldn't understand.

Silently, to himself, the doctor muttered: stew in your rage and damn you. Aloud he said: "Prepare this seditive for Dr. Brown and then let him sleep. Have a nourishing soup ready for him later. I'll come and take a bowl with him. He hates eating alone." He scribbled on a piece of paper and handed it to the nurse as he walked out.

"Yes, Doctor," she said to his back.

When the doctor returned at sundown the patient was awake and free of fever or chill. The room had been transformed from its earlie hospital-room appearance into a pleasant airy bedroom: a small table beside the bed with a vase of delicately arranged flowers in the centre; and Jacob Brown's favourite big bible within reach; an easy chair for visitors was by the open window and the overhead fan stirred the air casually, gently.

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"Hiya, Jake; welcome back. For a moment back there I thought we'd lose you...You damn stupid idiotic bible-thumping ass! Why the hell didn't you take the quinine I went to such trouble to get for you! You realise you nearly died, you fool! Even the so-called natives have more sense than that! You bloody Jamaican monkey-chaser you!" The doctor's anger went as suddenly as it came. "I see Mrs. Jones has taken over from Nurse Symes. Symes turns every room into an intensive care unit. You should have seen the state of this room but you were too demented for that, you fool." But his voice held only affection now. "How you feeling?"

"Tired, weak, thirsty, hungry and glad you've done with cursing me. I just misplaced your quinine, that's all. Only realised when I got upcountry that I'd left it behind. Tried to get some from the Frontier Force people but they didn't have enough to share, or wouldn't share." the voice was cracked and whispering.

"So you decided to go on..."

"What else could I do?"

"Turn back and save a whole lot of people a whole lot of trouble."

"What do you mean?"

"How do you think you got back here? Frontier Force brought you? If it were up to them you'd be long dead and buried."

"What happened?"

"Bush people carried you back here in relays, running night and day to get you here before the fever burned you up. They kept you cool with their bush medicine. You reached here wrapped in more leaves than I've ever seen. They saved you, Jake. Not the prayers and the services and they get well messages...Tell me, who is Harriet? You kept on calling for her. I went through your papers but found nothing

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no letters, no address, no nothing; but you kept on calling for her like your life depended on her coming. Who is she? Where is she?"

"Goes back a long time," Jacob Brown said weakly. "A very long time, Dan."

"It sounded fresh as yesterday," the doctor said, studying the face of the man on the bed closely; "charged with immediate pain, not the pain of a long time ago. We've been friends a long time Jake, shared many things and secrets, yet you never mentioned any Harriet."

"It was in the past," Jacob Brown said wearily. "The dead forgotten past of youth."

"And young love," the doctor murmured. "And came alive at the moment near death."

"Allright, Dan, I'll tell you; but not now. I'm too tired and thirsty."

The doctor poured a small amount of cool water from a heavy covered earthern pitcher, helped raise his friend's head, and helped him drink the water.

"How cool and sweet it is. Reminds me of the cool spring water of our hills."

"Same principle. The tribesmen say the earth from which this pitcher is made purifies and cools the water and give it the minerals of a spring, only they call it the magic of a spring."

"True?"

"How do I know, Dr, God-man? That's your territory. All I know is it is good for you and the tribes people are right about it. Don't tell Symes though, she will want to boil the germs and everything else out of it. ~~"Being civilised can be such a bore."~~ Being civilised and hygenic can be such a bore."

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A knock on the door interrupted any further thoughts on Nurse Symes. The doctor called: "Come" Then, as the tall and very handsome/young man and scrubbed-clean entered; "Ah, Jones, our reverend doctor is back in the land of/living and screaming for his chop. Got it?"

The young man's eyes twinkled. A beaming smile cracked his face. He nodded and approached the bed. Jacob Brown felt thw warm affection and great relief of the young man wash over him.

"Hello, sir. So glad you are better."

"Not better yet," the doctor said sternly. "Just back among us. And damn lucky, too; thinking he can roam the bush with only his God-cross and no medicine. I'm telling him now and you are my witness Try it just one more time and we'll watch you croak."

"Oh, shut up, Dan," the man on the bed smiled tiredly, but relaxed and spiritually at ease.

There was another knock and this time a young woman entered pulling a tray table on wheels, followed by an older woman pushing and steering the table. The younger woman made way for the older woman to approach Jacob Brown first.

A round, dumpy, shapeless black woman, face shiny and creasy, eyes laughing, a world of experience and shrewdness behind their laughter. She carried the air of self-assured experience found only among women who have survived, unbroken in spirit, in the slums of the great cities of world. Mrs. Willis was a product of Harlem, U.S.A., come to Africa in the srvice of her church. Her Bishop had told her that one of her most important chores at the mission station would be to look after Dr. Brown so that he could look after the business of God. If he had died of the fever she would have blamed herself and Dr. Daniel Lee for not making sure that he had the quinine with him when he

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went to that awful bush country where mosquitoes are as big as flies and more deadly. Only the Lord knows why He made such terrible and deadly things and placed them where they could attack and kill His servants. But then, nobody knows what the Lord knows...She tied to shake ~~herself~~ free of these thoughts: the Lord's business always confused her mind; better just do what she knew best. She took Jacob Brown's hand.

"Good to see you, Rev'rend. You should have..."

"Yes, Matron; doctor's already told me all about it. He says you'll all leave me to croak next time!"

"Well, I never!" Matron protested, eyes wide in mock horror.

Young Mr. Jones and his wife, Dorothy, giggled by the window.

"I will, too," the doctor said defiantly.

"We'd better eat," young Mrs. Jones said.

"You've all heard him," the patient said.

"He's getting better now, Jonathan," the doctor said. "The tyrant returns. Better make sure everything is in order."

The young woman came to the bedside. "I have a lot of mail for you. Can we go over some of it before school tomorrow morning?" She looked at the doctor who nodded. Jacob Brown agreed with his eyes. Mrs. Willis set about dishing up the thick, rich, very meaty, very nourishing soup for all of them.

This group of five was the core of the team with whom Jacob Brown ran the mission; all five of them from the States. The rest were locals: Nurse Symes, and Americo-Liberia and half a dozen teachers; two of them from coastal families, and the other four mission-trained descendants of the tribespeople of the hinterland. The mission was a good twenty years old but the members of his team had been here for a little over five years and they had nearly doubled the size and capacity of the mission in that time.

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Jonathan and Dorothy Jones ran the school and the mission farm and workshop. Dr. Daniel Lee ran the hopsital with the help of Nurse Symes who had a string of young trainee nurses and young male orderlies under her all of whom she treated atrociously because they were 'natives'. On this point neither Jacob Brown, the doctor, the two Joneses or Mrs. Willis could budge her. Natives were different from other people: backward and savage and uncivilised and would remain so for a long time to come. Until such times they had to be treated in such a way they would not be confused into seeing themselves as the same as the people who had been exposed to civilisation for centuries. Being civilised or not was not like putting on or taking off a piece of clothing; you did not become civilised by changing from barefoot nakedness to wearing clothes and shoes, or by learning to speak English or by becoming converted from heathen paganism to Christianit All these were only the beginnings of a long, long road that would take hundreds of years in most cases. A few very exceptional ones may do it in a shorter time, say fifty to a hundred years or so, but for most it would take centuries to move from savagery to civilisation

~~As~~ The difficulty they had all found was with the deep and passionate sincerity with which Miss Symes held and expressed these convictions. Her ancestors/had been among the first one hundred and two brothers and their wives fourteen pioneers who had landed on the coast way back in 1822. One had been killed in the wars with the native savages, the other had become a righthand man of the Prophet, Jehudi Ashmun, who organised the pioneers into a disciplined and cohesive force able to grow its own food and defend itself from savage native attacks. So, for black Nurse Marjorie Symes, as for the other descendants of the freed slaves who landed in Liberia, the gap between the natives and the American-Liberians was wide and deep and permanent for as far into the future as they could see. This the new arrivals at the

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not understand. This had often caused grave problems between Nurse Symes' people, the Americo-Liberians who saw and thought of themselves as the only true Liberians, and the more recent arrivals from the United States who called themselves Affomericans. Many had been unabl to adjust to substituting a racism of black against black, with them as part of the new top-dogs, for the more familiar racism of white against black which had driven them to come to Liberia; so many stayed a while, then gave up and returned to the familiar racism of America. A few had stayed to become good Liberians; most had been unable to stomach it; and most Liberians had decided that the Afromericans were not really such good settlers and pioneers after all. So relations between the true Liberians and other blacks were uneasy, with the missionarie especially the black American missionaries, being the most difficult. Bringing schooling and the rudiments of good health habits, and teaching them trades, was welcome. Planting false notions about their status and the rights they were supposed to have was sheer trouble-making. This the Liberians, their President, their True Whig Party, would not tolerate. The most troublesome of these new arrivals were told, politely at first, more sharply if they did not take the first polite advice, that they were not suited for Liberian settlement and citizenship and would not be given the piece of land to which every accepted settler is entitled. None who were unwelcome remained for long; Liberian coastal society was adept at freezing them out; the men of the Frintier Force were good at preventing anyone so minded from slipping into native territory or going into hiding. And the natives of the hinterland were not likely to welcome strangers who looked and spoke in the language and accents of those they saw as thieves who had stolen their lands by force and imposed alien and

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oppressive laws and taxes on them. As for the coastal detribalised natives, they were too anxiously working their passage into becoming good assimilated Liberians to have any truck with troublemakers of any sort, be they newly arrived hinterland natives or black Americans who did not understand Liberia and its problems. So when any new arrival did not adjust quickly enough and was advised to leave he usually left very quickly and very quietly.

Dealing with the missionaries was much more tricky. Behind each missionary enterprise in the country was a powerful and influential church beck in the United States. Pressure on the head of a local mission had, in the recent past, led to stern warnings from the U.S. State Department that any further harrassment of any American missionaries would be viewed as unfriendly acts which could have grave consequences on the good relations now existing between the two countries. So word had gone out to the Provincial Commissione and the District Commissioners and the Sub-District Commissioners and the Commanders of the Frontier Force to be careful and circumspect in all their dealings with the missionaries, and to only act, in even the most flagrant abuses on Liberian national interest, after consultation with Monrovia. So the missionaries were distrusted and resented, but left alone, or else the pressure exerted on them was covert, careful, subtle; nothing sufficiently tangible for them to be able to complain to their governments of being persecuted or obstructed. And the Liberians were particularly careful with the American missionaries who's government was the guarantor of Liberian sovereignty and whose remittances and loans and investments kept their country afloat. It was particularly important, at this time, not to do anything that might upset the delicate negotiations to lease one million acres of land to an American rubber and tyre company which was expected to

bring great relief to the near-bankrupt economy over whose treasury agents of foreign banks presided, collecting their due installment from the top as money came in. The American dollar had replaced the English Pound as the Liberian National currency; American missionaries brought large amounts of dollars into the country to finance their efforts and to thus go into the general pool of available dollars. The missionaries were important and powerful and needed enough to be handled with care whatever they did and however much the Liberians resented their presence and their influence on the natives.

When the five had eaten their rich nourishing soup which Mrs. Willis had prepared especially to restore the strength of the Reverend Jacob Brown, and when the small talk was done, and when the African darkness had crept over the land, Mrs. Willis and the young Jones couple departed with the leftover soup and the used dishes and the table on wheels. The doctor stayed with Jacob Brown, relaxed in the big comfortable chair by the screened open window. The noises of the little night creatures flowed through the room in circular waves, rising to a peak of intensity then fading away only to return again. There was a slight damp chill to the air, not as sticky as it would be down at the coast, but sticky enough to be noticed even at more than seven hundred feet above sea level. At a thousand feet or over it would be cool and comforable, but that would mean being much further in to deep bush country. The mission stood on the highest point of the land here, overlooking a broad swampy forested stretch of land sweeping down to the coast sixty miles away and the capital city of Monrovia. Its founders had chosen this particular hill because it was the first tolerably comfortable spot they had found and because it was in a densely populated area of the hinterland which was yet within

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the Frontier
comparatively easy reach of ~~xxxxxxxx~~ Force post ten miles back; and that, in the early day of native hostility and suspicion, was a most important consideration.

Jacob Brown had dozed off; now he woke.

"Dan..."

"I'm here."

"The truck. What happened to it?"

"Don't worry. We've sent Sam for it. ~~The sub-D.C. at the Frontier post has sent a driver with one of our boys.~~"

~~"Just like that?"~~

~~"You know better than that. I had to remind him of the things we do for them and the things we may be unwilling to do if he didn't help us. It worked."~~

"Hope they don't wreck it before Sam reaches ~~on the way here~~."

"We have to take that chance. I hope they have not stripped it of everything."

"How long?"

"Should be back sometime tomorrow, if things go well."

"I mean how long have I been like this?"

"Hard to say. They say they carried you for two days but if they carried you from where they say it couldn't be done. You've been back three days."

"And the boy Smiley?"

"He stayed to guard the truck and its contents. He should be back with the truck."

Jacob Brown sighed and closed his eyes again. Daniel Lee left the room and returned a few minutes later carrying a tall cool drink. He sat down and took a long appreciative swig. The wave of creature

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noises rolled to another peak. The tinkle of ice against ~~xxx~~ glass caused the patient to open his eyes.

"Sounds good. Can I have some."

"Not this stuff. This is for strong men."

"Drinking out my booze?"

"Yap!" the doctor chuckled. "I'll get you something soft."

He went and came back shaking a soft drink in a ~~xxx~~ tall glass till the ice in it tinkled. "Something for the weak." He helped his friend to a sitting position with easy gentle familiarity and handed him the drin

Jacob Brown sipped his drink and made a face.

"About Harriet, what did I say?"

Dr. Lee turned his face to the window, as if to see through the darkness outside. "You called for her again and again and you wept, Jake, as you called. That's all. It went on for a long time."

"Just calling..."

"And weeping, Jake; pitifully. I sent Symes out of the room. We were alone the first time, so I knew what to expect when it began the second time when Symes was present so I sent her out. She won't forgive me, of course."

"So you're the only one..."

"I told Matron you'd called for Harriet in case she knew her."

"She didn't."

"I know; she told me."

"It was a long time ago, Dan. Thought I had forgotten all about it. More than twenty years ago."

"That why you didn't marry?"

"Probably. I'll tell you about it one day."

"You'd better."

"What d'you mean?"

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"It needs to come out, Jake, desperately; it's choking you."

"My friend the psychologist!"

"I mean it, Jake. It is choking you; I heard your desperate weeping."

"Perhaps you're right," Jacob Brown said softly. "I really thought I had got over it. Such a long time ago."

"Time is as relative as life, my friend. You haven't gotten over whatever happened between you and Harriet. You were not weeping for some dead twenty-year-old experience; your pain was here and now.

"Allright; but not now."

"To yourself, Jake; let it out to yourself, not to me or anyone else. Face it. That's the thing."

Jacob Brown put the glass on the table and slid lower down into the bed.

"Time for sleep," Daniel Lee said briskly.

He helped Jacob Brown swallow a pill, turned down the lamp, gathered up the empty glasses. At the door he paused for one quick careful survey of the room, then he went out, leaving the door open. A young man, the night 'boy', appeared out of the dark and settled down outside the open door. He would stay there through the night, sleeping lightly on the bare floor, keeping watch over the patient while the doctor slept in the next room.

The moon rose late, appearing suddenly and moving rapidly to a central spot in the great curved cloudless sky; then it seemingly stopped moving and hung, a bright glowing ball of light, suspended over the dark land, over this small flat hill on the western rim of Africa. The mission buildings lay white in the moonlight, low and sprawling and neatly arranged but irregular circle with the church at the highest

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point on the western end. The cemetary was behind the church, on land gently sloping downward. The quadrangular hospital structure was to the south of the church, by way of a ~~neatly arranged~~ walkway marked off with large evenly shaped lime-washed stones. Beyond the stones flat broad-bladed grass clung close to the reddish sun-leached earth. Prodigious effort went into keeping the grass alive and green. The after-classes work on planting, keeping, and spreading the lawns provided scholarships of free board and tuition for at least a score of young boys each year. They were the ones whose homes were too far back in the hinterland for their people to send ground provision or livestock or vast amounts of coffee beans to pay for their schooling. So the founding missionaries had hit on the idea of the working scholarships which provided houseboys and gardenboys and building brigades in exchange for learning. In time the system became so refined that all the work in the mission, from housekeeping and cooking andy laundry to clearing the land and putting up buildings and terracing and landscaping the land was done by the worker students who often made up as much as two-thirds of the student body. They grew the food and tended to the livestock; they dug the wells and transported the stones and felled the tree needed to build; they cooked and cleaned and scrubbed and polished under the supervision of the missionaries. And in return they were taught to read and write and wear western clothes and become Christia and followers of the gentle Jesus who was killed on a cross.

Beyond the hospital was a vast livestock area, and beyond tha the big nursery grounds where the mission's vegetables were grown.

The worker-scholar system in time made the mission ~~almost~~ near economicall self-sustaining. The coffee, cola nuts and other exportable crops

were shipped back to the States and sold and helped contribute to the remittances from the home church to sustain the mission. There were ~~xxfxx~~ times when the mission's enterprises turned a profit for the home church. On such occasions there were great celebrations back home and the successes of the mission stirred home congregations to even greater Sunday offering and inspired many young men and women to opt for missionary work. The mission under the Reverend Jacob Brown was into one period of such prosperity. The hospital was more than paying its way and winning the trust and confidence of the native tribes for the church, thanks to a highly successful campaign against yellow fever in which doctor Daniel Lee had saved the life of an important hinterland chief, and then, by introducing live fish into their water source, held down the disease. This, to the natives was powerful and convincing juju and any god that could do that was worth following, at least with one's mouth and in public where he could hear and see.

The classrooms and dormatories and playing-field were in a tight cluster all by themselves on the south-eastern end of the circular ~~little~~ missionar village on the hill; and to the north-east, on ground rising as high as the church ground, was the cluster of bungalows in which the missionaries themselves lived. The whole hill was a neatly laid-out combination of buildings, gardens, trees, walkways, manicured lawns: an efficiently managed, well organised bit of America deep in the African bush. Surrounded on all sides by that bush, sweeping away, dense and dark and heavily forested, with small native villages tucked away everywhere in the bush and natives people living and working hidden away in these villages, unseen, except perhaps, from the high and distant and clear perspective of the bright full moon which, if it could see, would see everyone of the cluster of villages circling the mission

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on the hill. Mr. Jonathan Jones, the bright and gifted young missionary teacher from Ohio had, in his first year and after careful questioning and many journeys into the the surrounding bush, estimated that there must be upwards of five thousand people living in the hidden villages within a radius of ten miles of the mission. The mission head, Dr. Jacob Brown, had warned the young man not to passed that figure on to the Frontier Force people. Dr. Lee had explained to the young man that the Fronier Force people would want to relate the taxes they levied on the tribal folk to the highest figure they could get./ Mrs. Willis, the all-purpose Matron from Harlem, U.S.A., who supervised everything to do with eating, drinking and sleeping for every section of the mission, had murmured something about the Frontier Force people being blavks with Georgia cracker minds. So young Mr. Jones kept his estimate to himself.

On the fourth day Jacob Brown was strong enough to resume his full normal workload. Dr. Lee had moved back to his own bungalow and Brown's spare bedroom was again reserved for important visitors. He was moved by the spontaneous cheer that went up on his appearance at assembly, and amused at the sternness with which one of the teachers from the coast, Mr. Johnstone, hushed them. The coast was full of Johnstones; almost every other detribalised coastal native family was called Johnstone - pronounced as it was spelled.

Then Mr. Johnstone told him that a delegation from two of the farther villages had arrived the night before and were waiting to see him, if that was allright, if he was strong enough? He assured Mr. Johnstone he was strong enough. He guessed that one or more of these would be members of the tribe to which Mr. Johnstone's people had belonged before they moved to the coast. Mr. Johnstone would come with the

delegation and 'speak for' it since none of its members spoke English E-ch of the local teachers spoke one or the other of the many tribal dialects; some more than one. Only Nurse Symes denied speaking any native tongue though she was quick to react whenever any of the natives said anything about her in one of their tribal tongues. Mrs. Willis had reported once coming on Nurse Symes fluently cussing out one of her young trainee-nurses in the most ~~xx~~ heathenish swear-words she had ever heard.

"How you know it was swearing?" Dr. Lee had teased.

"Swearing is swearing in any language!" Mrs. Willis had snapped.

Jacob Brown looked in on the hospital where Dr. Lee, Nurse Symes and a couple of strappihg young men were wrestling with a huge man, stark naked, who was violently resisting an injection. The half dozen other inmates of the cool thatch-roofed ward, as well as the four trainee-nurses present, were in paroxysms of laughter which added to Nurse Symes' quiet determined fury. After a while they held the man motionless long enough for Dr. Lee to push the needle into ~~the~~ his rump. The man let out an almighty bloody yell then relaxed, allowing the doctor to complete the injection.

"Up to your old trick, I see," Jacob Brown laughed.

"Subject for your next sermon:" Dr. Lee said. "The needle is not the spirit of the devil. It is a good juju, sent by the good gods to drive out the spirit of the devil."

"Superstitious nonsense!" Nurs Symes snapped, glaring at the grinning trainee-nurses who fled to their various tasks.

"I'm seeing a delegation," Jacob Brown said to Dr. Lee. "Mr. Johnstone's bringing them. Can you come?"

"I've one operation; gangerene; and a delivery."

"I'll take care of the delivery," Nurse Symes said.

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"I'll come after the operation," Lee said. "It's a bad one; they left it too late before bring him here. An old man. Is he under, nurse?" Nurse Symes looked at one of her trainees. A silent signal passed between them.

"Yes, doctor."

"See you later," Jacob Brown said; then, from beyond the door he called: "Good luck."

The place was deserted as he walked to the administration building in the centre of the circular mission compound. The early morning sun cast a tolerable, almost gentle heat over the land. There was the hint of a breeze which barely stirred the leaves on the trees. Again, as so often since he had come to this part of Africa, Jacob Brown had a sudden longing to see a dog scampering across the grass or between the buildings; to see two or three dogs playing in the morning sunlight. There were no dogs here and it was hard to accept the absence of dogs. Some of the villages were a little better off, but not much. Wild dogs, lean and hungry and nondescript sometimes attached themselves to a village and stayed on its fringes, scavenging and cleaning up and having an arms-length relationship with the people of the village. The intimacy between dog and man with which he had grown up in the hills of Jamaica, was rare here for dogs were few and not often seen. He had been told that in other parts of West Africa, and even further back in the hinterland and in the border areas the type of relationship between dog and man with which he was familiar, did exist, especially among the tribes who were Muslim But here, the joyous sight of a man or a child with a prancing, dancing dog at heel was missing. And he marvelled again at the odd little twists nostalgia takes. the remembrance of a boy and his dogs and the raising and caring for them under the watchful guidance of his grandma Sarah for whom all life was

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precious, even the life of an insect. He remembered once when he had shown a boy's casual cruelty to a donkey, overloading and then whipping it to make it move. She had called him into grandpa's room and instead of the whipping he had feared she had opened the Bible that was always on the great crude table. From it she had read:

> 'I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.
> 'For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.
> 'All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again..'

He had slunk away, feeling worse than any whipping could have made him feel, and hidden for a long time in the rocks above the river. Fathful old Max, the strong and gentle old guardian dog with whom he had grown up had found him there among the rocks and had comforted him by licking his face and begging him to play until he forgot his unhappiness. And they had gone for a long walk across the rolling hills, a boy and his dog. You did not see a boy and his dog in this part of Africa. Perhaps you would in other parts...How they rush in on him, these memories. It was almost as though old Max were there now, slightly behind his right heel, a huge smile on his face!...And it had taken him years to find the place in Ecclesiastes from which grandma Sarah had taught him the equal worth and value of man and beast in the eyes of God's/ Preacher, the son of David of Jerusalem. A far cry from the centrality in the scheme of things modern man has chosen for himself, and all the human cruelty that goes with it. How clear and simple it was when one was young, a boy

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and his dog in the green and rolling hills of his native Jamaica; in another world and another time; a world long gone, like old Max, and grandma Sarah, but remembered with the freshness of yesterday's happenings. And now, out of the suppressed part of the past Dan wants him to remember Harriet as mental therapy; but that is much more distant, much more difficult of recall than those clear and sunny boyhood days over which the serene presence and person of grandma Sarah presided. Not difficult at all to recall her face and hear her voice and hear Max call for their morning walk. No boy and his dog here; but many old folk like grandma Sarah: but for the barrier of language...

The delegation was waiting when he arrived. There were four old men; three of them tall and thin and one short and rotund. They were spotless white seamless cotton robes which made them look like people out of the Bible. The robes were so clean they had obviously not been worn on the journey and had only been put on for this special meeting with the mission head. Mr. Johnstone had not yet arrived and the young man who acted as office boy and office manager was in class so no one had received the delegation which waited patiently outside even though the office was open and there were benches where they could have sat.

Jacob Brown had met many such delegations so he bowed ceremoniously, smiled warmly, shook each by the hand and ushered them into the office, noting the order in which they went in. The eldest and most senior would enter first, so he would know whom to address and show most respect to even if someone else were the spokesman or linguist. Nothing could begin till Mr. Johnstone arrived so they waited, examining each other politely and showing their teeth in token of goodwill.

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Mr. Johnstone arrived shortly after, breathless and apologetic for being late. For all his learning he showed great deference and humility toward these illiterate elders. They, for their part, showed to Mr. Johnstone the thoughtfulness and kindness of the good master or overseer for the good servant. Again and again Jacob Brown hae been impressed by the easy authority illiterate tribal elders invariably exercised over even the most educated coast native

"Can we begin now, sir," Mr. Johnstone said in English. "The elders want to start the journey back as soon as possible."

"Allright," Jacob said. "Tell them I greet them and I welcome them and the mission is their home for as long as they wish to visit

The short round one, who had entered the office last, was the spokesman. He spoke in what Jacob Brown guessed to be the language of the Mendi.

"We are grateful for your welcome, Lord of the mission, and for the graciousness with which you welcome us without notice. Your District Commissioner will not receive us in this manner. To have audience with him we must send a messenger to beg for audience; then no matter how urgent the matter, he sets a distant date and a time when he will receive our elders. If any elders arrive as we have done here today, your District Commissioner will not see us. So we are grateful to you. We had heard you would receive us so, which is why we came; but we were prepared to return home without seeing you."

"It is my duty and my pleasure to welcome you and to do whatever is in my power." Jacob Brown spoke directly to the most senior of the elders. Mr. Johnstone translated smoothly. "And please permit me to make one thing clear. It is this: There is no connection between the District Commissioner and our mission. We are the servants of Almighty God; the District Commissioner is the servant

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of the government of Liberia."

The eldest of the elders spoke up in a dry soft voice:

"And are not those who are the government also servants of your Almighty God. We hear they worship at your shrine, at the shrin of your God."

"There are many who say they are servants of our God, many who worship in his temples, who violate the spirit of His teaching."

The eldest elder's face broke into a half-smile. He nodded slightly. A flash of understanding passed between the elder and Jacob Brown. "It is so among us too. And you teach our children this?"

"We do."

"So we hear from others. It is good to hear it from you."

"But they - your District Commissioners and your government - will not approve. For they want us to see them in a certain way and to fear them."

"We do not seek their approval; we serve only our God. We do not seek their enmity either. We do not violate their laws. We do only God's work."

The elder nodded and smiled again. "We must talk about this God of yours another time; and about our gods, too. But now for the business that is at hand."

The rotund one, the spokesman, took it up: "We ask of you to intercede on our behalf with the government. Taxes and tributes are traditionally collected once every year. We paid our taxes at the usual time this year, no more than three months ago, and the burden was heavy. But we paid. ~~But~~ Now, eight days ago, the soliers have returned and are demanding more taxes and are taking our people's food and

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are threatening to destroy our fields and burn our huts if we do not give them more tribute. We are a people of peace and we prefer the ways of peace..."

The eldest of the elders cut in: "But even people of peace must fight when the locusts darken the skies and swarm down on their fields; no man stands idle while the locusts destroy his crops..."

"...So we seek your help," the rotund one ended. "Will you help us?"

"I will try," Jacob said promptly. "What is it you want me to do?"

"They say you interceded on a matter such as this one in the past when your District Commissioner dealt unjustly with the people of another village."

"That village was in this district where we ourselves of the mission are under the rule of the same Commissioner. Your village in the land of the Mendi ---"

"Not one village, Lord of the Mission, four. We are each the chief of his village."

Jacob nodded acknowledging the correction. "Your villages, chiefs, in another district, are under another District Commissioner whom we do not know and with whom we have no dealing and who does not rule over us?"

"So?" the eldest asked.

"So we must find another way to intercede."

"So?" the eldest pressed.

"I could ask our District Commissioner to intercede with the District Commissioner of your land."

The chiefs consulted among themselves; Mr. Johnstone did not translate for Jacob Brown. Instead he, too, took part in the

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consultation. When it was over Mr. Johnstone turned to Jacob: "They are not sure that would be the best way, sir."

"Why?"

Mr. Johnstone hesitated, seemingly reluctant to persue this line of thought.

"What is it, Mr. Johnstone?"

"It is difficult, sir." He was uncomfortable now.

"I must know their thinking if I am to help. Tell them I want to know why and then just tell me what they say."

Mr. Johnstone told them; again they consulted among themselves Then the eldest spoke, measuring his words.

"It is not our wish or intention to be disrespectful of you or of your District Commissioner, especially if he is also your friend. We speak only from our experience. If you send a thief to plead with a thief you may end up having to pay tribute to two thieves. We know nothing of your District Commissioner, we know much of others, and there is a sameness about them. They will show respect for you because you are the lord of the mission and we know they fear you; but if your eye is not on them all the time they will turn on those who sought your protection and punish them for it. If you ask one of them to keep his eye on another they will say 'yes' to you and then do their will, knowing you do not really see. If you cannot assert your own authority there is no reason for the thief and the wrongdoer to fear you."

"So how must I proceed?"

"Only a fool tries to teach his teacher," the eldest said.

"We are all teachers and we are all students," Jacob replied warming to the exchange now.

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A wintery little smile flitted across the face of the eldest. "That is true, but a truth few know; it is only seen when we learn wisdom."

"So how should I proceed?"

"I --" he turned his head to include the other chiefs; "We see two ways. First, for you to come among us bringing your authority and the fear it instils in the hearts of the wicked, and telling us, and through us the soldiers, what to do and what not to do; and after that for you to be our linguist as we meet the District Commissioner, for he will meet us if you are with us. We know the journey is long; we will pay for it and for your time in much produce and in diamonds that will buy you all the things you want. And then," the eldest paused for effect," And then we will swear to follow your God and be Christians as you are. All the people of all our four villages. That is the first way." The eldest waited for Jacob's reaction.

"And the second?" Jacob asked.

"For you to go to the coast and ask their big chief, the one they call the President to stop the soldiers from robbing our people. They say the soldiers and the District Commissioners fear him as much as they fear you."

"Much more," Jacob cut in.

"But we do not know if you can see him."

"I can see him," Jacob said; probably much more easily than your District Commissioner, he thought to himself. "So which would you prefer?"

They consulted among themselves again, a little more excitedly then the tubby linguist said; "To do both would be ideal; to get the President to instruct the soldiers and then to have a big palaver and feast at our villages: that would be good. Everyone, all the tribes would know of our victory then."

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"We have not won yet," Jacob said drily.

"And only a fool trumpets his victory," the eldest added. "Better to be humble and win the friendship of the vanquished."

"I will do the second thing," Jacob said. "If it is successful there will be no need for the second."

"Then it will be so," the eldest said, rising. "The journey has been fruitful; the gods have been kind. We will add your God to our gods and we will pledge allegiance to Him and build a temple to Him whenever you are ready to come among us."

"That is not the way of our God," Jacob said. "We plan to start a school if you will help us. And we will send people to teach your children and to make clear the ways of our God. Only after that can the matter of allegiance begin. Our God is a different God from your gods."

"You know of our gods?" the eldest asked; "Of our river gods, and our tree gods and our land gods?"

"No."

"If you come I will tell of them and you will see that the gods are not really all that different. They pretend to be because all gods are vain. We will leave you now, Lord of the mission. You are indeed as they have said. One day you must tell us why the others are so different, more like the white men who would take everything from us."

"Stay and rest and eat before you leave."

"We thank you; but the journey is long and our people wait anxiously. We will eat on the way and we will rest on the way."

Ceremoniously the eldest brought a little pouch from the folds of his robe. He opened it and tilted it so that four marble-

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sized but irregularly shaped diamonds rolled into his cupped right hand. They the early morning light made them glow and send off sparkling shafts shooting in all direction haphazardly as they turned in the old man's hand.

"A small token of our gratitudde," the eldest looked straight into Jacob's eyes; a look of embrace and blessing all at once.

"It is not necessary," Jacob murmured.

"Not for you, perhaps; for us yes. There is a need to show thanks. That is our way."

"I know."

"You do? That is good. Not many who are not born here do."

"My grandmother told us. She knew your ways."

"She came from this land?"

"I do not know. She was a slave. Perhaps she did. She knew your ways."

"Yes; I heard of the terrible times of the slavers from those who were old when I was young. Perhaps that is why your people and your soldiers are so harsh with our people. Perhaps they blame our ancestors for what happened to them."

"Perhaps it has just corrupted," Jacob said.

The eldest shook himself as though to banish that thought-pattern. "We must deal with the troubles of this day. Thank you for receiving us." He pushed the diamonds back into the pouch and handed it to Jacob. "We will hear from you. We will tell the world of your kindness to us." The eldest shook hands solemnly and led the way out. Each of the chiefs, in order of seniority, did the same. Mr. Johnstone bowed to Jacob and hurried out after the tribal chiefs.

Jacob weighed the diamonds in his hand, ~~moving his hand up~~ Must be a good many thousand dollars worth. He sighed heavily

No way not to accept these without insulting them; but the line between the genuinely voluntary gift and the 'dash' for services rendered, or anticipated, was so thin as to be almost invisible: there was a price even to allegiance to God. No, not that; a different perceptic of God, perhaps. Where there are many vain gods there has to be a different perception...River gods and rain gods and tree gods and land gods. They didn't prepare us for this so we have to learn on the job. Perhaps they didn't know how to. Must find out from the young men from the Hinterland. He knew he was consciously avoiding the word 'boy' because it had such a special meaning here: houseboy, yardboy; field-boy, office-boy; not the same as when you say that's my boy over there, he's twelve years old, or, that boy is a good ball-player.

He went into the inner office and put the diamonds in his desk drawer. They would probably fetch enough to pay for the buildin of the girls' wing. Like a good American woman Mrs. Willis had long pressed for a girls' dormitory so that girl's, too, would be able to receive the benefit of a good Christian education. You canno Mrs. Willis had insisted, educate the men and then send them back to marry tribal bush-girls. In black America the women were usually better educated than their men, which is why there had been so much progress and until the same happened here there would be little progress.

He pushed these thoughts from his mind, took up pen and paper and started to write, beginning: "Dear Mr. President...." It was a request for the President of the Republic to please receive him on an urgent matter the day after tomorrow. He expected to arrive in Monrovia in the very early hours of the morning and he would

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await the President's convenience. He sealed the letter, put it aside and took up the monthly report he had half written before that journey into the bush which brought him down. He wrote quickly and steadily for the best part of an hour, spelling out all the details of the missions operations for that month. He ended with the visit of the chiefs and his intention to appeal directly to the President on their behalf. He was satisfied, he reported, that the Frontier Force soldiers of that District were indeed extorting tribute over and above their ligitimate tax collection from this distant tribes. Then he signed the report, gathered all its many pages together, added the pouch of diamonds, and put them all in a large envelope with the mission's head office address boldly printed on it. The United States Government's representative in Monrovia would send this report back to Washington in his own diplomatic pouch; from there it would be sent to the mission headquarters. Good friends in high places always helped things along. Which was one reason why the Liberian President would see him. His predecessor had once, in the early days of his running of the mission, made a similar request to see the President on an urgent matter. When he arrived in Monrovia after two days' of journeying, they had no mission truck in those days, the receptionist at the Palace told him the President was too busy to see him and he should try again in three months. There had been a roar of laughter in the main office and his predecessor had though he recognised the President's voice as one of those laughing voices. The man had gone straight to the American representative, told him what had happened and written a letter to a very high personage in Washington. Then he had returned to the mission. A month later the President himself had appeared at the mission to apologise for not having received the head of the mission and to offer to do whatever it was that was needed. Washington, it seemed, had drastically

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reduced the size of a budget-supporting Grant-in-Aid with a pointed explanation of the reason why. In the years since the head of that particular mission station always had access to the President. None of the other missions, blakk or white, enjoyed that rare privilege. No one knew for sure why that particular mission enjoyed such a privileged position, not even the missionaries at the mission Headquarters never mentioned it. But the Provincial Commissioner, who was a crony of the President, had warned the District Commissioner and attentive to always be correct/in his dealings with the mission, and to so advise the commander of the kmx Frontier Force in the District to do the same.

Dr. Dan Lee arrived a little after ten, followed by a young murse-trainee with their morning coffee.

"Sorry I missed them."

"How did the operation go?" Jacob asked.

"I don't think we can save him. Too far gone."

"Pity."

"Yes. If only they wouldn't leave it to the very end."

"Can't you do anything about that?"

"Not yet; but soon I hope. When my young fellows are trained enough I want to send them into the villages in pairs to explain such basic things, and kmxmmx to deal with minor ills and be our eyes and Contacts to get serious cases to the hospitals quickly. I'm going to need your support and some money."

"You'll have it."

Dan Lee paused midway to pouring the coffee, his eyebrows raised in question. Jacob waved, indicating the bulging envelope. Lee finished pouring the coffeee then took out the contents of the

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envelope. He let out a long sigh when the diamonds rolled sparklin on the desk. "Wow! At least five grand, if not more. Your visitors? What for?"

"They've being held to ransom by the Frontier Force. Seizing their crops; threatening to burn their huts if they don't pay more and more."

"Godmammit!" Lee exploded in a sudden peroxysim of rage. "Is this what Garvey's Back-to-Africa means? Blacks exploiting blacks instead of whites. And is this DuBois' Panafricanism? Yankee nigger on the neck of tribal blackman in true white bwana style? Jesus, Jake!"

"Easy, Dan."

Lee expelled his breath in a loud angry burst. "What you going to do?"

"I'm going to see the President. I'm going to ask him to stop this. He will."

"Of course he will - this time. And he'll curse them out for not being more discreet; and they'll do it better next time."

"Oh come on, Dan! Your rage is becoming a self-indulgent pleasure. They're no worse than what we've seen in the states; different perhaps, not worse."

"They're black, Jake! Black like us!"

"So?"

"They should know better. They have suffered; their ancestors were slaves."

"And suffering is supposed to confer wisdom and understanding? Come on, Dan! Have you ever seen anything brutalised into wisdom and understanding? Man or beast?"

"Isn't that the teaching of your God?"

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"I refuse to argue with irrationality. Give me some more coff We'll stop this thing this time. And each time it comes up and we know about it we'll try to stop it again. That's all we can do. You get your young men trained and send them into the villages. Those diamonds will get you some of the drugs you need and Mrs. Willis her girls' dormitory. That's how we do it: step by step. One thing at a time. Each plouging his own little corner of God's earth; each using his little talent as best he can. White people have just finished slaughtering each other in the most awesome blood-letting the world has ever known. I don't think you want to go on judging Dr. DuBois' ideas and dreams, and Marcus Garvey's through the eyes of white folk. They've made too much of a mess of things for you to accept their values and their judgements as a yardstick by which to measure everything everybody else does."

2 "What other yardstick is there? Even your friend DuBois uses what you call a white man's yardstick."

"He'll get away from it. You wait and see: I am sure of it." Jacob Brown's mind went back to those days in Atlanta. He could almost see those hooded eyes forever searching. "For what he wanted to do, for what he wanted to understand, for the things he wanted to think through, he started late even though he was only in his early thirties. You need two or three lifetimes to do certain important things like propounding great new scientific theories or charting new ways of thinking and seeing and understanding. Usually those three lifetimes are spread over several generations of people with one generation learning from and building on the understanding of the other. When a man has to begin from nothing and chart what is a completely new way of seeing for himself and his people it is a long and lonely process."

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Dr. Daniel Lee looked searchingly into Jacob Brown's eyes, there was that suddenly stillness between them which came in high moments of mental intimacy.

"You really believe this business of the generations, don't you? A kind of apostolic succession of understanding and perception?"

"Why not? What's wrong with it?"

"You're dodging, Jake."

"Allright, I believe in it."

"Experience is the one thing people do not inherit, which is why anything that is not recorded is lost. Even your Bible tells you that."

"Lost to whom, Dan? As far as I know those chiefs who were here have no written records of their past does that mean they have no past? Not by the way they spoke to me. The senior one even offered to introduce me to their gods. Does that sound like folk without a past, or without a knowledge of that past?"

"How will your DuBois' or Garvey's ideas reach them?"

"Like all ideas have travelled through the ages. You have the stories, the legends, the songs, the poems which are spoken songs; and those that grip the human heart and the human imagination most forcefully are passed on from generation to generation. Surely I don't have to tell you ."

"No, Jake. But what about science and technology? Those do not fit into your oral tradition."

"Come, Dan. Aren't you passing it on to your young men now? Won't you send them back to their villages to pass it on. And won't one of them one day want to be a doctor, just like doctor Dan?"

"I thought ---"

"We exclude nothing, Dan. Nothing that can be put to the

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service of our people; certainly not your science and technology."

"But you, my employers, your church, have excluded others who have offered to serve because they look different."

"You are shifting ground, Dan. Science and technology as against the message of DuBois and Garvey, that was the aggument. I say there is no conflict unless you invest science and technology with a sort of exclusive copyrighted Western European character and quality. Is it all really so exclusive? Even the written language of which you make so much: is that really a West European invention, any more than explosives are, or the philosophies are. We hold that there is nothing exclusive to any set of people about any aspect or facet of world civilisation. The uncivilised barbarians were not always the danger races of mankind; the rulers were not always the lighter races of mankind."

"If you see this much, Jake, then why exclude?"

"White missionaries who offered to join us? And the white man who went through med school with you and volunteered to join you here?"

"Yes. Why do you - or, rather, your church - exclude them by refusing their help?"

"Jim Crow in reverse, thinks Doctor Dan."

"Well, isn't it?"

"There are many white missions here and elsewhere in Africa, Dan; many more than there are black missions such as ours. So there' greater opportunity for whites to be missionaries in Africa than there is for blacks. There is also a history of takeovers. Wherever there is contact and co-operation they take over sooner or later. That is history, whether you like it or not. To be in control of our own we must exclude them."

"Like they exclude us."

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"Not quite the same, Dan. We have not yet developed, as a race that arrogance of power that wants to dominate and control wherever it goes and whatever it touches. Perhaps we will one day. I hope not. That is the key difference now."

"Even in the face of an extortionist Frontier Force?"

"Yes."

"And venal and corrupt black administrations?"

"If and when they come, yes. We don't have all that many yet. And Lord, how the dice are loaded against them, Dan!" Jacob Brown reached out across the desk and held his friends hand in a gesture to take all personal sting from his words. "That med school made you a good doctor and a very good American, Dan. I hope this mission and Africa will help make you a good man and a free black man... That is the mission of our black churches in the twentieth century. If it's any comfort to you Dr. DuBois is as sceptical about us as you are. But the logic of the path he is on will bring him to our viewpoint; not in religious terms necessarily but there will be a meeting point."

"Because of his Pan-Africanism?"

"No. Because he's a good and great man in search of true independence for black people."

"And that is the one criterion"

"Before a man can belong properly to the world or even to his God he must first belong to himself; he must know himself as a man on this earth."

Daniel Lee rose and said "Amen!" but only half in jest. He put the coffeee tray on a side table, raised his hand and went back to his hospital and the old man from the village whose gangerene had spread too far to be arrested.

Jacob Brown turned to the accumulation of paper work on his

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For one hour, two hours, he worked steadily, totally absorbed in his work. He paused once to straighten his back and ease the cramp in his body by walking briskly round the room. He tried to think about Harriet. Dan had said he needed to bring her out into the open. There was not anything to think about. Twenty years is a long time and time filters memory and cleanses recollection, leaving only the essentials remembered. There was the memory of being deeply, passionately in love, and, surprisingly, especially for a Jamaican, the memory of not having made physical love to her. That was all. If she walked into this room now, he would not know her. So what is there to bring out into the open? He couldn't cut off his life at ~~twenty-three~~ Twenty and restrict it to struggling on behalf of the black folk of Alabama. To do that would be to break faith with the dreams that were nurtured and fashioned in the high hills of Jamaica with his grandma Sarah. This was his life; being here, doing what he was doing, serving his church, and helping to strengthen its independence and spread its message was a double fulfilment: for himself and for his grandparents whose church had been burnt to the ground because they resisted the white religious establishment. If this were done well, if he could give to these people here a fraction of what his grandparents and the other founders and leaders of the black independent churches had given him then his life would be fulfilled. Harriet was a beautiful and painful interlude of his young life. DuBois now, there was a man you never forgot. He had met him twice since, once immediately after the war in Europe, and later in New York when he was a leading figure in the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People and the editor of its magazine The Crisis. But even without those meetings would have remembered DuBois. ~~Odd, he~~ Odd, he had loved Harriet to the point of wanting her for his wife. Now

could not even remember what she looked like, and would probably walk past her on the streets of Atlanta or New York without recognising her. Yet Dan said his subconscious cried out for him in his fever...And we talk about knowing ourselves...

Jacob Brown returned to his desk and worked steadily till the church bell rang announcing the end of the morning work period and time for lunch.

Jacob Brown took over the driving some ten miles from Monrovia. The road here was easier and less bumpy and jarring. It was also much more dusty. The red dust rose and swirled in their wake and he was glad there was no other truck ahead of them, or behind them. Anybody caught in that swirling dust was likely to choke to death. He had shared the driving with Sam the Handyman who usually travelled with him and became quite a good driver, but it was wiser for Sam not to be seen driving in or near the town; some nonsense about 'natives' not being allowed to drive until they became 'civilised' and taxpayers. Same sort of thing goes on in South Africa, he had heard. Dan's rage was understandable. They approached the town from a distance. From the slight rise of the land the town looked flat and drab. A heat haze hung over it at even this early hour of the morning. The outstanding feature from the winding dirt road, was the Executive Mansion, the home and office of the President. It rose higher than all the buildings in the town, and gleamed white in the early morning sun. And beyond the Executive Mansion was the sharp blue sea and the little fishing boats bobbing and tossing like toys in a vast pool. To the right on slightly rising land was the bluff, the residential quarter of the affluent. Jacob Brown turned the truck in the direction of the bluff. He would find a bath and breakfast among Church connections before calling on the President. It would

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be no real imposition on them, only on the army of 'native' servants who did everything for every member of every affluent civilised Liberian household. Houseboys - men in their middle years - would get the water and prepare his bath and cook his breakfast and dust his clothes and polish his shoes, they would feed him inside and Sam outside, without any inconvenience to any other member of this Christian family. This army of 'boys' lived in a clustered compound of shacks at the back, a safe distance from the main house. Where the employers were of kindly disposition the 'boys' were at times allowed to have their families with them. In such cases the entire family worked for the employing household for which only the 'boy's' was paid; the assumption was the his family thus paid for their keep.

Jacob Brown had used this particular household many times in the past so the head 'boy', a clean-scrubbed graying old man, tall and straight and dignified, welcomed him and ordered other 'boys' to do the things he knew had to be done. There was no need to check with the master or the mistress of the house and they, in any case, were still in their sleeping quarters.

His host, a senior government official whose precise job Jacob Brown had been unable to pinpoint even after asking him of it directly, came from his sleeping quarters just as Brown was finishing breakfast: a fruit salad followed by a deliciously fried freshly caught fish. The head 'boy' had remembered his preference from those other early morning visits.

"Ah, Dr. Brown!" the host beamed. "Don't get up! I see they are taking good care of you!...Just coffeee for me, Charley One..." The head 'boy' went away to get the coffee. "Had a bit of a night last night. Thought you might be coming. Word about it at the

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palace yesterday..." He sank into his chair at the head of the long breakfast table, making it something of an effort. He was big and heavy, thick around the waist, a puffiness to his face, especially under the chin.

This man had come to Liberia as a missionary teacher, one of the first black missionary teachers, some twenty years earlier. He was a member of Jacob's denomination and had been sent here by them. He soon discovered that the good life in Monrovia was more to his liking than teaching backward tribesmen in the hinterland. He had married one of the daughters of a very rich descendant of one of the original settlers and had become a member of the True Whig Party, and as a result of these two acts he had become an important member of the upper crust of Liberian society, and only the second non-native-born Liberian to become a member of the Lodge to which the President himself belonged. As a result he had become a high and highly paid government official holding a high but hard-to-define government post. His sense of obligation to the missionaries who sent him to Liberia in the first place was said to be responsible for the people from the mission station being allowed to use his home as a rest-house whenever they came to Monrovia. It was also assumed by some that this connection assured the government the goodwill of this particularly powerful missionary group, and kept it in some sort of touch with what they were doing back there in the hinterland.

Charley One brought his coffee. The host changed his mind and ordered a dish of bacon and eggs 'quick-quick'. Charley One hurried away again.

"There was speculation about the reason for your visit. Nothing wrong, I hope?"

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Jacob finished, put down his napkin, looked at his host and shook his head slowly.

"Nothing wrong at the mission. We're fine."

"Oh. Good..."

Go on fishing, Jacob Brown said to himself. He waited.

"Something else?" the host said tentatively.

"Something else," Jacob agreed. "I expect you'll hear about it after I've seen the President. He will see me?"

"Oh yes! Oh sure!"

Charley One returned with the bacon and eggs. Jacob got up.

"Thank you again for letting us use your rest-house."

"My duty," the host mumbled and tucked into his breakfast.

Charley One poured more coffee. Jacob rested his hand briefly on Charley One's shoulder. Their eyes met. Then Jacob went out into the already fierce sunlight and the beautifully kept garden and down the path to the modern little outhouse the mission people used as their resthouse. The use of the resthouse was this man's repayment for the breaking of his compact to be an educational missionary in Liberia. No one in Liberia knew whether the payment was voluntary or not. And those in faraway America who knew, told no-one. Jacob Brown was glad he had not met the man's wife and children this time around.

Two other Charleys - he did not know whether they were Two or Three or Four or Five - were helping his handyman, Sam, put water into the truck radiator and remove the worst of the dust. He knew that Sam would have been well-fed. He looked at his watch. It was time to go and see the President.

They drove out of the beautiful garden, past other equally beautifully kept homes and gardens, and down toward the town, the startlingly bright blue sea on their left and the ramshackle town

straight ahead. The town's buildings were mainly faded wooden structures, washed and bleached a drab uniform earth-brown by the constant sun. The main street, wide and lined with tall palm trees, and the Executive Mansion in sprawling well-kept grounds, added up to the one saving grace of the drab shanty West African coastal town. The Mansion rose high above the rest of the town, a many-storied thing of opulent splendour that was brightly lit every evening. But it was not just for show, or, rather, it was for show with a special purpose. The story is that the tribal peoples near the coast had been so impressed by the size and splendour of the Mansion, were so convinced when they saw it that it represented the superior juju of this new immigrant people that they gave up the long effort to drive the strangers back into the sea from whence they came. A chief who inhabited such a place truly had to be of the family of the gods. The Europeans - the French and the British - who colonised the neighbouring territories missed this point and saw the Executive Mansion as yet another example of the childish delusions of grandeur of the freed black American slaves who were dumped on that part of the West Coast, utterly unable to manage their own affairs let alone the primitive tribespeople over whom they sought to impose their rule. Reports were that there were moves afoot to close the main street and the area around the Executive Mansion to trucks and jeeps and animal drawn carts and to allow only the few cars in the country passage on the street and past the Mansion. It had not yet gone beyond talk, so Jacob Brown drove his truck slowly along the main street, passing a few other trucks, but mainly people on foot, the important ones in striped pants and black jackets, for all the world like business people or government servants in London or Paris or Berlin or Washington.

Jacob Stopped the truck by the huge gate and waited the for

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armed soldier with the list of the names of people to be admitted. It took a while before one of them rose from his camp chair and approach while two others covered him with long rifles.

"Dr. Jacob Brown to see the President."

The man sprang to sudden attention without looking at the list.

"Yes,sir!" He saluted briskly. The two others lowered their rifles and stood at attention.

"Can I park where my man can have some shade?"

"Yes, sir!" The soldier motioned and the other two opened the great gate. "Under the tree to the right, sir." He pointed to a shaded spot just inside the gate.

Jacob Brown drove the truck in and parked it in the shade but so that any other vehicle would be able to pass.

"They don't want us any nearer their mansion, Sam."

Sam showed his teeth but there was no hiding his unease in the presence of the soldiers. Jacob Brown made a point of handing Sam the keys to the truck while the soldiers watched.

"Just in case you need to go anywhere before I come out, Sam."

Sam smiled a little more boldly this time. The first soldier handed his list to the next one, snapped to attention again, and escorted Jacob Brown up the long walk to the Mansion. Had he come by car he would have been allowed to drive up to the Mansion door. At the door another soldier took over and led him inside. There a secretary met him in a cool room filled with flowers.

"Morning Dr. Brown. Nice to see you again. Please take a seat." She went through a thick polished ebony door with huge shining brass knobs; then she came out almost as quickly as she went in, followed by a tall jet black man, dressed in the most elegently cut black suit Jacob Brown had ever seen. The man bowed slightly and disappeared through another door.

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The secretary murmured, "this way Dr. Brown," and ushered him into the President office. Jacob Brown shook hands with the tall dark brown man. This man, he knew, was likely to be the last brown man to be President of Liberia. A dark group, an ultra-conservative faction of black Americo-Liberians, had just captured the leadership of the True Whig Party from the brown-skinned group who had dominated the party and the government up to now. When this man's term was over that black conservative group would take over. Would they treat the natives and the concerns of the natives any better? Jacob Brown was not sure, though their leader, a man called Tubman, had made some interesting noises.

"Morning, Dr. Brown. Take a seat, please. When did we last meet? Let me see..."

You know damn well, Mr. President, Jacob thought but said nothing.

"Ah, yes; a year ago. That unfortunate business with our soldiers and the girls of that village. I confess that/when I got your request this time I was so alarmed I ordered the Commissioner here to report. He said there was nothing. He's on hand in case we need him."

"Nothing like that, Mr. President," Jacob Brown said.

"I am relieved. But not totally; you don't make social calls. Not on us; though I hear you do make them on the tribespeople. We were all very concerned about your illness. Glad to see you look so well. There would be much less risk of fever if your social calls were on us."

"The bush telegraph," Jacob murmured.

"Knowing these things is our business, Dr. Brown."

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I will not be toyed with, Jacob Brown told himself. He suppressed the sudden wave of anger, smiled easily and said: "Then perhaps you already know what I am here for."

He saw the flash of irritation in the President's eyes; then it was gone. The President opened both hands in a Jewish gesture, shrugged, ~~xxxxxxx~~ pursed his lips in a smile that did not reach his eyes. The poker playing gambler's smile, Jacob thought, glad he had gotten under the man's skin.

"You have the better of me, sir," the President murmured. His mood changed. "I'm sure you are eager to tell me."

"I wish I did not have to, Mr. President."

"Tell me anyway. That's what you are here for." The President looked down at the notes in front of him.

Jacob Brown told him of the visit of the delegation of chiefs to his mission ~~xx~~ a few days back, and the reason and purpose of that visit. The President listened without raising his eyes. He made notes occasionally. His face remained expressionless. When Jacob had done the President leaned back in ~~xx~~s chair and fixed his eyes on some point on the far wall ~~xxxx~~ behind Jacob Brown and just above his head.

"And you believe what these chiefs told you..."

"Yes, sir."

"Of course; otherwise you would not be here. So what do you want me to do, Dr. Brown?"

"To stop it, Mr. President."

"And if my men deny the charges?"

"I am sure they can be proved, Mr. President."

"And who will do that? The tribespeople? They always lie."

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"We will; if we have to."

"But it is not your business. It's not missionary work. Tax collection has nothing to do with converting and educating natives."

"Unjust and unfair treatment is our business, Mr. President."

"So you say, Dr. Brown."

There was a long uneasy pause in the large, high-ceilinged room. In the silence the slow whirring of the big overhead fan came as a steady, enless whisper in the room. The President shifted his eyes to Brown's face. They looked directly, frankly, openly, at each other.

"How will you prove what you claim if my men deny it? Will you close your mission, or leave it to the women,and you and the doctor and your other young man spend weeks or months in the hinterland collecting evidence? How will you ~~xxx~~ do it, doctor Brown?"

"I will be sorry to have to do it, Mr. President."

"But you will do it..."

"Yes, sir." Jacob paused for effect then added. "I would have to call for skilled help from our headquarters."

"And you are sure you will get it?"

"Yes, Mr. President. I think you know that too."

The President sighed and relaxed suddenly. He pressed a button and the secretary came in .

The President said: "Coffee, Dr. Brown?" Jacob Brown nodded. "For both of us," the President told the secretary. He rose from the desk and went to the big curtained window. He pulled the curtains aside and light streamed into the shaded room. The President looked out at his beautiful garden.

"Do you understand our position, Dr. Brown?" He spoke without

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turning his head.

"I don't know, Mr. President. Which position? Which aspect?"

"Choose any you like, sir!"

"Like the matter that brings me here?"

"You are persistent, sir. Allright! We have no money. Our treasury is empty. The European bankers give us credit under the most extortionate terms. Your government is only a little better. How are we to pay our civil servants? Our soldiers? Our police? How are we to maintain and to spread civilisation without money? You know they all want us to fail. They want to use us as an example that no black sovereign state is possible. We need the Frontier Force to keep the peace. Without the Force your mission out there in the bush would not be possible. The tribesmen would swoop down on you and burn and loot and kill. And the truth, sir, is that there are times when there is not enough in the treasury to pay even the small monthly salaries of the soldiers of the Frontier Force. So when they help themselves to food and crops and we know it is because they have not received their pay, we may not like it but we cannot be hard with them. Do you understand that, sir?"

The President swung about and glared at Jacob Brown. "Do you think it's easy to confess this to you? I am told you have little sympathy for us because you think we are unjust to the natives. Are we any more unjust to the natives than are the British and the French and the Belgians? You are a man of colour, Dr. Brown, you know the state of men of colour in our world and in our time. Surely you see our difficulty."

"I do, Mr. President; believe me, I do."

"By threatening me?"

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"~~But~~ Mr. President!" Jacob Brown protested, surprised and angered.

"Oh, ~~I~~not improperly, Dr. Brown! I am not saying you said or did anything improper. I would not stand for that. You have been perfectly correct and proper. But you know and I know that if you made this matter public it would be more fuel for the fire of hatred against the Republic of Liberia by those who do not wqnt to see black folk ruling their own country."

"Mr. President: must we then close our eyes to wrong because it is done by black folk and because the enemies of black folk would exploit its revelation?"

"You do me an injutstice to even ask that question, Dr. Brown That is not what I am saying."

"There is nothing persOnal about this, sir. The question asks itself and we must face it..."

The secretary came in with the coffees and while she poured and served it there was silence in the room and the whisper of the fan could be heard again. When she had gone the President said:

"Not all questions have simple direct answers, Dr. Brown. And justive and injustice are not always as clearly separated as you make out. We cannot afford to pay our Frontier Force. Do we therefore disband it and abandon the rule of law we have brought, and leave the tribes to war amo.g themselves as they did before we came? Do we demoralise the Frontier Force by severe and heavy punishment - execution perhaps - for those who do what you say they did? Is it acceptable for the whites in neighbouring territories to do what they do in the name of bringing civilisation but not for us to do the same?"

"Neither is acceptable." Jacob Brown said

x "Both are realities," the President retorted.

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"Slavery was a reality once," Jacob Brown said softly, bracing himself for the reaction he was sure would be explosive.

The President returned to his seat behind the big impreesive desk and sat silent for a while, deep in thought. Then, instead of the explosion Jacob had expected, he said quietly:

"They told me that as well as being a great theologian your were also a great scholar, Dr. Brown. They said you had studied under the famous Professor DuBois. Now you make it sound as though slavery was ended by Christian goodness. Well, sir, slavery was not ended because it was not acceptable to you gentlemen of the cloth, and neither will our present realities end becauae they are not acceptable to you. When there is time and cause for change, the change will come, with or without the approval of all the Doctors of Divinity in the world. Slavery came to an end, sir, not out of any goodness in mankind but because it became too clostly and the needs of the times were for cheaper and more economic forms of labour. The time came when an army of sharecroppers who must find everything for themselves while still working for their former slave owner, became much more economic and profitable than an army of slaves which had to be fed and clothed and housed and nursed. So slavery was ended."

"As simple and clearcut as that," Jacob teased, reminding the President of his own earlier words.

The President nodded acknowledgement of the point.

"Not as simple; but the essential reason why Mr. Lincoln and the abolitionists prevailed. The time was ripe for it and they seized it. If there were no need for the change they would have failed, for all their high-mindedness. Anyway..." The President made a gesture, both physical and mental, of dismissing the subject. He had, he thought, made his point and at least engagaged the sympathy of this

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particular critic. He looked at the clock on the wall. Jacon Brown rose and the President stood up as well. Again the soft sound of the fan filled the room with its hum. The President came round his desk and put on his beaming official smile.

"It was good talking you, Dr. Brown. I wish you would come to one of our balls or receptions. We could provide you with good comfortable overnight quarters. Or you could stay one weekend as our guest."

"I thank you, Mr. President."

"Then you will come?"

"I am no good at balls and receptions, sir."

"So I've heard. We will not ask you again, sir."

"I'm sorry, Mr. President."

"You can send a message to those chiefs, sir. Tell them from me that I do not approve of what has been done and I am sending strong instructions to their District Commissioner that there be no more of this."

"And the damage already done?"

"Do not press me, Dr. Brown!"

"I think their livestock should be returned."

"Where it has not yet been consumed. They cannot return what has been eaten and they have no money to pay compensation."

"Accepted. But I also think that where there has been needless destruction of homes as a form of coercion your men should make amends by helping with the rebuilding." The President was on the point of protest, but Jacob Brown carried on quickly: "This way, building together, the men of the Force can help build up better relations between themselves and the tribes people and they can all

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get to know each other; that could be of benefit in future relations, sir, even in the matter of collecting taxes."

"Allright, Dr. Brown. I am persuaded by you. In return you wil use your influence to make the tribespeople understand the importance of paying their taxes."

"In return for services they can see and understand."

"Tell them the missionaries and their schools cannot operate without our permission. That is one of the services! And we keep the peace, that is another!"

The President went to the door and held out his hand.

Don't push him any more, Jacob Brown told himself.

He took the President's hand.

"I've spoken as I have because we are both men of colour, Dr. Brown. I have spoken to you as to a friend and brother. I do not expect to hear from others what we have spoken about. I would not speak in this way even to missionaries who are not of our colour, eve though they give us less trouble. You understand?"

"Yes, Mr. President."

"For all our differences, we have the same ends, Dr. Brown. We want freedom and dignity for all people of colour..."

Hold it, Jacob Brown told himself.

"Yes, Mr. President."

The warm official smile was now fully lit up. There was a benign twinkle in the small dark brown eyes which looked too small, too widely set apart, for the big heavy brown face.

The President opened the door and emerged into the anteroom, an arm on Jacob Brown's shoulders. A dozen or so people rose. The tall, smooth young black man in the black suit came forward, whispere to the President and then, after another warm handshake between the

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President and Jacob Brown, he xxx escorted Jacob Brown out.

The President nodded and beamed at the people in the outer roo except for two white people, they were all familiar faces. This morning's meetings looked like being good. The first one had gone off well, better than he had expected. It was clear he had impressed the missionary. It was all worth last night's careful preparation, especially the bit about slavery which his personal assistant, the young man xxxx in the black suit, had come up with after the best part of an afternoon spent at the library run by the American representative's office. Must make more such preparations for difficu interviews. Must warn that damned greedy D.C. that Brown and his people will be watching them all the time from now on. Best thing would be for Brown to be transferred elsewhere. He's getting too interested in the xxxx tribespeople and that could mean trouble. He's been here longer than most of the others who ever headed that mission so they should be transferring him. Unless they made him their bishop here... Oh, Lord, what a thought!

The President hurried back into his office and signalled for th secretary to bring in the next visitor so that he can stop thinking about the visit of Jacob Brown. But it had gone better than he had feared. The damn-fool action of the Frontier Force men in those villages will not be reported to Washington or the foreign press. Of that he was sure.

Back at the mission, after a late supper Jacob Brown, Dr. Daniel Lee, Mrs. Willis and the two young missionary teachers, Jonathan and Dorothy Jones, gathered for what Dr. Lee called 'a strategy session'; a reminder of his days as a medical officer in the American Army in Europe during the war.

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Among the mail Jacob Brown had brought back from Monrovia had been a letter from the Chairman of the Council of Bishops ordering him to return to headquarters as soon as it could be arranged. It was a familiar letter, polite, friendly, nothing officious about it; all missionaries of the this particular church had come to recognise it as the prelude to a new posting. The one difference was that instead of just the advance warning which would be followed, a month or two later, by the formal notification of a new posting, this one required his presence at headquarters; this meant rather special promotion. When Daniel Lee had finished reading it, he grinned wickedly at Jacob Brown and did a little mock genuflection: "His Grace, my Lord, Bishop Jacob Brown, I presume."

Jacob joined in the laughter but sensed a subtle change of attitude, especially in the young Jones couple. A Bishop was, somehow, not quite of this earth. So Jacob told the story of a tipling Bishop under whom he had served for a year in a hopeless mission in a tiny Eastern Caribbean island. It amused Mrs. Willis and Dr. Lee, but embarrassed the Jones couple. So Lee helped him out with one of his funny war stories which made them want to laugh and cry at the same time.

Now they sat on the most exposed part of the verandah to catch whatever hint of moving air stirred in the still, heavy, hot night. The sky was an immessity of limitless blackness in which no star showed. The moon had not yet risen. To keep the mosquitoes at bay a series of little oil lamps burned a mixture of kerosene and a pungent smelling soapy concoction which, to the suprise of everyone, including Dr. Lee who had invented it, kept the mosquitoes at bay. The noise of a wave of grasshoppers, travelling from east to west, approached,

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rose to a piercing crescendo, then faded slowly away as the wave passed. The life/song of the grasshoppers, the tribespeople called it, for the noise, they said, stunned the predatory enemies of the grasshopper into immobility and so allowed them to pass on their way unharmed. Little boys, who were sometimes called 'grasshoppers' were told to copy this example and make a fearful noise in face of danger.

At last the night-duty houseboy had brought out everything: the drinks, the big thermos bucket of ice, the glasses, the fruit punch for the women, the plates of cookies and freshly roasted nuts, and Mrs. Willis' specially baked savoury little meat pies for later.

Dr. Lee served the drinks. There was some sort of concert going on in the students' dining hall and every now and then the sound came up to them, but softly, not disturbing. There was such a soft wave of sound now, and Jacob Brown again marvelled at the quietness of the Africans compared to the noisiness of the Americans and West Indians. If that were an American students' hall affair or a Jamaican village fête, the noise from it, at this distance, would be almost overpowering. An evolved cultural difference, perhaps.

"It had to come but it's still a shock," Dr. Lee said. "I always had the foolish hope that we might stay together as a team."

"Especially the three of you," Dorothy Jones said, looking from the doctor to Mrs. Willis then to Jacob Brown."

"They sent me here to look after the Doctor," Mrs Willis protested. "Who will I look after now?"

"There's your girls dormitory," Jacob Brown said. "It will soon be built and you'll have to look after the girls. They will need you."

"And so will I," Dr. Lee said softly.

"But if they make you a Bishop you will be able to call him —

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the doctor - to work with you," Mrs. Willis said.

"I will not leave here," Dr. Lee said. "I will not leave till my work is done."

"Which will never be done," Jacob said.

"Then I'll never leave," Lee said. "I've found what I want to do."

"Your bush orderlies?" Jacob asked

"Yes; and proper health for all the tribespeople we can reach. And one day a really good hospital here."

"If you're right about this Bishop business I'll see that you are left alone to get on with your job. And you, Mrs. Willis?"

"I can't go back to Harlem. Not after this. They do need help, Dr. Brown. Especially the girls: I can't reach the women; but the girls..."

"So you want to stay? Or shall I try and get you to join me wherever they send me?"

"Where d'you think you'll be sent?" Lee cut in to give Mrs. Willis a little time for thought.

"Probably elsewhere in Africa; East or Central."

"What you've always wanted."

"Yes," Jacob said. Mrs. Willis would have thought her thing through now, so he looked at her.

"Long time we've been here," she said. "And you get used to a place and to people. This is my 125th and Lennox now; and safer and more peaceful. And you know something, doctor, they really do need you. It's good to ne needed." She lowered her head, seemingly embarrassed at showing this much feeling. "They love learning to cook and to bake. And they're such beautiful girls. It would be hard for me to start again, doctor. Hard to make new friends and learn new ways."

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"You won't have to, Mrs. Willis!" Jacob Brown thought back to when he first met this thoughtminded product of the hard life of Harlem some six years ago. Coming to this part of Africa had changed her, softened her, made her look at life in a new way. And for a person, any person, to change that much in her middle years is something special. "I think you belong here now," he said.

"You and I," Dr. Lee beamed, reaching out and touching her hand

"But who will take care of you, Dr. Brown."

"Don't worry," Dr. Lee said, the old mockery back in his voice and bearing. "Before they make a man a Bishop they marry him off. Haven't you noticed all our Bishops have strikingly good-looking wives and all our Bishops are big and tall men with what they call 'presence' Those are the qualifications for the job; a tall man of striking presence and a beautiful and equally striking woman for his wife. You can't have one without the other!"

"Oh, doctor!" Mrs. Willis protested.

"Think about it, Willy, love; are any of the Bishops not married?

"None that I know."

"There you are! Are any of their wives plain retiring homebodie

"No."

"There you are again! There's a special school of wives for Bishops and our friend will have to take one of these before he becomes Bishop Jake!"

The two Joneses roared with laughter; Mrs. Willis had a hard time containing her laughter.

"I'm beginning to get worried," Jacob Brown said drily. "All well and good for you to joke about it. I've just realised they don't have any bachelor Bishops!"

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"There you are, Willy! There will soon be a Mrs. Bishop Jake to look after him! Or else he will be back here."

"Now about our plans for you two," Jacob turned to the Joneses. "I'm afraid they will have to be postponed now."

"I hope not," the young man said earnestly.

His wife nodded. "Dr. Lee could supervise us."

"Sure I can," Lee said. "I'll even become a member of your missionary order provided I don't have to be called the reverend anything."

"Stop the chaff, Dan."

"I'm serious, Jake. There's a golden opportunity now, Those diamond bearing chiefs are grateful. Just the place for them to start their school. I can send two health fellows with them."

"I think you'll have to introduce us, though, sir," Jonathan Jones suggested. "It would be easier than if we just arrived there."

"And I'll have to come along, too," Lee said. "Sort of introduced me as your official representative when you have to leave. They set great store by proper and formal succession, properly and formally announced."

"And what of my religious successor? What of the man who will be sent to take over as head of the mission?"

"Oh him!" Lee mocked. "We'll do like the civil servants do. We'll brief him and guide him and prop him up as head man but we will go on running the show, just as we've done under you. All we need is a word from you when you meet your successor."

"He may want to run things his own way."

"Not if you make it clear how successfully we've run things all these years. And no God-man oversees my hospital..."

"Or my housekeeping and catering," Mrs. Willis added.

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"And you?" Jacob glared at the very-much-still-in-love two young teachers. He wondered if they really knew how rough starting a school deep in the tribal bush would be.

They both showed beaming smiles that made him feel at ease. He felt sure they would cope. This was their choice. Dorothy, he knew, wanted their first son - she was sure it would be a son - born deep in the African hinterland. For her that would be the proof that at least two natives had made the way back, across the centuries, to their historical roots.

"They'll be allright," Lee said. "I promise you."

"One condition. You, Miss Dorothy, will write me, no matter where I am, if things get rough and difficult. Promise?"

"I promise, Doctor Jake." She gave him a clear-eyes stare of love and trust.

A powerful wave of warmth washed over him; it brought a lump to his throat and he knew his voice would choke if he spoke. This had become his family over the past few years. A warm intimate little family sharing a common bond of service and commitment. Now it was going to be broken up. And this sturdy, self-contained young woman from the Georgia plains had been both secretary and daughter to him. And her husband, the bright teacher and quick learner of languages from Mississippi /was as a younger brother-pupil to him. Now he would send them into the deep hinterland, which was what they wanted, and he would leave them and he would not be there if they needed his help.

As if reading his mind, Daniel Lee said; "I will be here, Jake."

Jacob took a long swig at his drink. He felt guilty at having made it necessary for Dan to say that.

"The others can manage the school?"

"Mr. Johnstone can act as headmaster," Jonathan Jones said. "He's good, sir. Good enough to be the permanent headmaster."

"I'll [illegible]. Can we make the journey in

the next two days? Or do you need longer?"

Jonathan and his wife exchanged thoughts silently, reading each other's eyes. Jacob recalled his grandma Sarah's ability to reach and pass messages without words. These two youngsters made him think of her at times.

"Anxious to leave us, already," Daniel Lee said.

"Two days will be fine, Dr. Brown," Jonathan said.

A pall of sadness descended on the little group suddenly; its members fell silent, each recalling some special facet of the years they had shared. It would take two or three weeks before Jacob Brown would leave but in a very special way this was the real moment of parting. This was the moment of the conscious planning of the departing and the breaking up of the family which had been built around Jacob Brown. The later parting would be a sad formality. This was the aching moment of heartbreak that comes with the first knowledge. Not even ~~xxx~~ Dr. Daniel Lee wanted to use words to make the heartbreak less bearable. Suddenly, the moon, a thin crescent, appeared and stood out clear in the black sky. They became aware of the rising noise of another wave of passing grasshopper. Mrs. Willis and Dorothy Jones, as though by hidden signal, gathered up plates and glasses; Jonathan Jones went to their assistance and the three slipped away quietly.

At last Dr. Lee said: "So the moment has come, old friends."

"You really staying here for good?"

"Yeah. This is my world now - if you can keep Monrovia off my back."

"That's an easy promise. Alone always? No marriage ever?"

"No, Jake. No woman for me. Something in my make up; but no little boys or young men either. Not the sort of thing to tell a Bishop in the making."

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"Are they supposed to be such fools?"

"You mean you guessed?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Long time ago; early on."

"And..."

"And what? I watched you and realised you were under control.

"And that was all?"

"That was all. Being a Christian, being a priest, is not about sitting in judgement. Don't let me preach you a sermon now. For all your front I know you read the Bible."

"Its a beautiful book, Jake, and I love beautiful books and beautiful people. And you are one."

"So are you, Dan. So are you. I will miss you."

"I will miss you bad, Jake. Goodnight, my favourite God-man."

"Goodnight, Dan. I'll need a complete brief to present on all you want."

"You'll get it."

Now he was alone and for a few minutes Jacob Brown allowed the ache of parting to overwhelm him. Then, as he had done in the past, he put the hurt and the memories away from him and found solace in thinking through what lay ahead and what had to be done. This going forward in duty had always been the constant in his life, from the time he had learned about God and the need to serve God through serving the weakest and the poorest and the most downtrodden of his fellow black men. And above all, in helping the struggle against the enslavement of their minds by white folk using the word of God. To this he had been constant. To this his church was constant: not in hostility against whites or anybody else but because that was the true spirit and intent of the message of Christ: that all men be free in body and mind and heart and spirit; none master over the other.

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The journey into the deep hinterland to the land of the four villages from which the four chiefs had come took two and a half day of steady travel by truck. The going was slow, difficult, tedious and only relatively easy on the clear, higher ground. Though the way by which they travelled was a well-worn track, many parts of it were difficult for the truck to negotiate. Twice they got bogged down; twice, as from nowhere, men appeared out of the bush to help ease the truck out of some deep rut. Then, with the truck on its way, the men faded back into the bush country. Sam was the one line of communication between the men who appeared in times of need and then faded back into the bush when the trouble was over. Sam, it seemed, spoke all the tribals dialects of this part of the country. Jonathan Jones spoke a few and when he recognised what was being said he would join Sam in the palaver with the tribesmen.

The Belongings of the Joneses took up most of the space on the truck. Jacob, Dr. Lee, and Dorothy Jones, travelled in the truck cabin. Except when they each took a turn at driving, Jonathon and Sam travelled in the body of the open truck, with the Jones possessions. Jonathan and Sam were permanently covered in a fine coat of powdery reddish dust, which permeated their thick curly hair giving it a stiffish steel-wool texture which no amount of combing could removed. Throughout the journey Jonathon Jones , with the help of Sam, practised the three key dialects spoken by the tribes among whom he and his wife would found their school and mission out-station. Towards the evening of the first day they picked up three all young men, naked except for the leather strand around each waist from which hung a roughly squarish patch of soft leather which covered their private parts, this was held in place by two additional

strands tied in the manner of a jock-strap. They were, they told Sam, on their way home from an errand for their people: they had delivered four animals owed to another tribe to the east of the great mission station, and they had started out just a few hours earlier than than the truck from the mission. The steady African tro at which they travelled had covered almost as great a distance as had the truck. Now, they could rest while the truck bumped and lurched ~~through~~ across the wild country, moving like an alien insect along a narrow/ strip of land, briefly reclaimed from the dense/tropical bush.

At sundown the sky suddenly darkened and rainclouds grew black and heavy and ~~xxx~~ hung low over the land.

Jacob pushed his head out of the cabin and shouted:

"How far to their village? Can we make it before the rain?"

Jonathan Jones shouted back: "They say not far now! They say it depends on the rain gods!"

Inside the cabin, Daniel Lee, hiding his face/a muslin/ dust mask and a wide brimmed felt hat/giving him the appearance and of a masked gunman out of a wild western, muttered: "Ask a damnfool question..."

Dorothy Jones was asleep in the far corner, her rough ride made bearable by all the cushions Daniel Lee had carefully packed about her.

The first flash of lightning and the first roar of thunder split the heavens as they topped one hill and saw in the distance, tucked between two other hills, a village in the clearing above a small river.

"That must be their village," Jacob said.

There was another, bigger and brighter streak of jagged lightnight, far away, fortunately; another delayed clap of thunder; then

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the rain came down: a hard, heavy, blinding torrent of water, beating down on the earth and everything on it as though intent on hurting, bruising, damaging. Jacob brought the truck to a stop. The men on th open body took shelter under the truck. The three in the cabin shut the windows but could not keep all the water out. They waited.

They waited for an hour; then the rain stopped abruptly. The sky became clear, free of cloud and all the African world they could see lay bathed in the clean-washed half-light of day's end just before dark. They were all wet; those with clothes soaked to the skin, the naked with water running off their ebony bodies in little trickles. Their efforts at shelter had not kept out the wet, only staved off the worst of it. Jacob Brown tried to start the truck engine; it turned over, groaned and refused to. Sam and Jonathan Jones raised the bonnet and set about drying plugs, points, distributor. The three young men of the village argued among themselves about whether to go on to their village, now so near, or to stay in case their help was needed. Lee, Dorothy and Jacob came down from the cabin, wet and sticky in the heavy atmosphere. Another cloud formation, appearing from nowhere, began building. Lee measured it and muttered: "Another drenching in another hour."

Jonathan Jones tilted his head and looked at the skies.

"Another half hour, I would say. Heh, Sam?"

"Half hour," Sam agreed.

"Can we get this thing started by then? Can we get to the village?"

Sam and Jonathan worked in silence. Then Sam said: "Try now."

Jacob climbed back and tried. The engine fired straightaway.

"Hurry!" Jacob called.

They all scrambled into and onto the truck. As they moved off

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there was the first distant rumble of a new round of the rolling sound of thunder. Jacob looked at the skies, now darkening fast, and drove toward the village at a higher speed than was prudent. At this pace they would be in trouble if there were some unexpected rock or fallen tree obstructing the track. They were lucky; there were none and they reached the village ten minutes before the new downpour fell violently out of the sky. When it came they were crowded into a stuffy but dry hastily vacated hut on the edge of the village. This second rainwave lasted twice as long as the first. When it broke the night was black and the tiny oil lamp played games with the shadows of the five people in the oppressively humid little hut.

Two of the young men of the village to whom they had given a ride came in out of the black night bearing a huge calabash and several smaller ones. They poured a thick whitish liquid from the big container into the little ones and passed them around in order of precedence by age and sex: first Jacob Brown, then Dr. Lee, then Sam, then Jonathan Jones, then Dorothy Jones. Dr. Lee tasted the brew first and recognised it: a soupy, sweetened sour cornmeal porridge, mildly fermented, which was food drink and relaxant all in one; a standard nourishing standby which could be given to travellers and children at short notice. He nodded to the others and they all drank the brew. Then they were offered refills, again in the same order of precedence. The young men of the village withdrew. Dr. Lee passed out his anti-malarial tablets. The brew warmed their stomachs and relaxed their minds and bodies.

"Try to sleep," Jacob Brown said.

"I go to the truck," Sam said.

"No," Jacob said. "You sleep where you are. The truck's allrigh

"Yes, Sam," Jonathan Jones added, stretching out of the bare damp eaerth and pulling his wife into the crook of his arm.

The dim flickering light made it seem that Sam's eyes glowed. Then he, too , lay down and curled himself into the comfortable foetal position.

"All's well, then," Dan Lee said softly.

"Peace," Jacob Brown said.

The morning broke bright and clear and the travellers slept till sunup, later than they had intended. The villagers were well into the business of their day when the strangers came out of the hut A group of elders were waiting for them under a nearby tree where a fire had been built. Elders sat sipping bush tea. The most senior offered his calabash to Jacob.

"Greeting, lord of the mission," Sam translated.

Jacob took a ceremonial sip from the elder's cup. They were served breakfast of dumplings and fried fowl, softened and highly seasoned.

"We would have welcomed you more warmly last night but the rain came. We would have prepared a feast instead of sending you children's soup."

"It is the spirit of the welcome that is more important than the show," Jacob answered gravely. Sam injected the air of gravity into his translation.

The elders nodded their approval. The spokesman said:

"We have heard of your wisdom, now we hear it for ourselves. The spirit is indeed more important than the show but your people and the white people put much store by the show."

"Not all of us. As with all people, some are wise and some are foolish; some see, and some, seeing, are yet blind."

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"It is good to know it is so for you, too," spokesman said.

"Easy on the high-tone palavar," Daniel Lee said. "We have a journey to make. No translation, Sam."

"What is it your brother says?" The spokesman looked curiously at Daniel Lee. "Is he the medicine man of your mission?"

"He is, and he reminds me we still have a long journey to make"

"And the journey which is started early ends early. How can we help you? What do you need?"

One of the others cut in: "Is the purpose of your journey the same as that of the journey which led the four chiefs from the north to you mission?"

"They rested here," the spokesman explained.

"Yes," Jacob said.

"And the word you have is good for them?"

"The promise I carry is good for them. We also carry the two young people, the young man and his wife who are down by the river now, to start a school in the north."

"We have three children at your mission."

"But no girls," Dan Lee said. "Translate, Sam."

"But there is no place for them to stay separately from the boys."

"There will be, soon; it is being made ready. And the wise old woman will remain in charge of them."

"Remain? Then who is leaving?" The spokesman took over.

Daniel Lee chuckled. "How's that for a quick pick-up! And those fools down there want to civilise these people."

"Don't translate, Sam" Jacob said.

"What does the medicine man say?"

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"He speaks of the foolishness of some of the leaders of the Coast."

"Is one of you leaving because of them?"

"No!" Jacob said quickly. "No. I am leaving. The elders of my church want me to return in order to send me to work elsewhere.."

"And to give him more power," Dan cut in. "Translate, Sam."

The elders spoke quickly among themwelves; Sam did not translate.

"Tell you not to?" Dan looked at Sam who nodded.

When the consultation was over the spokesman signalled to Sam and spoke:"We do not like what we hear, lord of the mission. We have come to know you, some of us through our children whom we have entrusted to you to teahh, and some of us through our personal knowledge of you, and some of us through your deeds, for the greatest judgement of a man comes from his deeds, so we do not like to hear that you will leave us, even to gain more power. You have come among us and learned our ways and you have learned to understand us. We respect you and your God because you respect us and our gods. So why do they call you away now? Why not give you more power here, to build a greater mission here? If they are not pleased with our response to you then we will send out the word and make our response greater if that will keep you here. If we call a great palavar of all the leaders of all the peoples and if we ask your elders not to take you from among us, will they heed our words?"

"I do not know." Jacob was visibly moved and surprised. He had not expected this.

Daniel Lee came to the rescue. "You know he is a priest of his church, part of an order of priests." This, it was clear, they understood. "It is part of the rules of that order that the priest must

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do whatever the elders, who are called Bishops, tell him to do. I believe one of the reasons they are calling him back for is to make him one of the elders, one of the bishops, so he will be one of those who make the decisions for the church and all its work everywhere in the world."

"And still ~~you~~ they can send him anywhere they wish?"

"Yes, but as a bishop he would be part of the council that makes that decision."

"And if he does not come back?"

"They will send someone else."

"'And some are wise and some are follish'" the spokesman quoted. "That is so even among priests."

"He will have great influence in the choosing of who is sent here. I think his will be the greatest influence. For who is chosen will be important to the work of all of us at the mission."

"So whoever comes will be his man?"

"He will not agree to a man whose spirit is not in harmony with the spirit of the work he has done and which we will carry on at the mission."

"And you?"

"I will stay here."

"Till your elders call you back."

"No. I am not of their order. I am not a priest so they cannot order me back or anywhere."

"Then who gives you orders. Unless he is a king or a chief, a man must take orders. And even then, he cannot do as he pleases..."

Jacob said: "I have promised to ensure that he stays here as long as he wants to, if he does his work well, and I know he will."

"And you can make such a promise, even for a time when you are

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not here?"

"Yes," Jacob said. " I can."

"And the new lord of the mission will not over-rule it?"

"I will persuade the council of our elders to make/ the control of the hospital a separate matter from the control of the mission so that the lord of the mission and the lord of the hospital will work together but as two separate authorities. And those who have deep experience of the work they do will, if they are wise, always know how to manage when a new overseer is sent, especially if that overseer has no expeienc

"It is all planned then? "

"It is all planned."

Again they consulted among themselves. Then the spokesman said:

"It is not as bad as we feared when we first heard the word. But the land/ and we of the land will mourn your going for you are a good friend." "I leave good friends among you," Jacob said.

Jonathan and Dorothy Jones came walking up from the river, hand-in-hand/ and carrying towels. A group of village children following at a discreet distance.

"Time to go," Dan said. "Should have been long gone if we are to reach before tonight's rain."

A line of women came from the communal cooking place with bundles of aromatic foods wrapped in huge palm leaves from which hot steam escaped. Sam received the food and packed it in a secure dry corner of the truck, under the tarpaulin which covered the Jones's personal effects. The Jones's/ went through the formality of greeting each of the elders in turn. Jonathan impressed them by speaking in their own dialect. He looked fresh and clean and young and strong, all the red dust washed out of his hair. His wife glowed with a scrubbed clean vitality found in the young who are healthy happy and at peace with themselves and the world.

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parting
When the/ceremonies were over Sam and Jonathan Jones took a last look under the bonnet then signalled to Jacob to start. The truck shuddered and came alive; the villagers drew back from the strange machine, watched it move off spewing a cloud of bluish-white smoke in its wake; then the smoke disappeared and the noise of the machine changed, became softer, more even. Sam and Jonathan jumped on to the back of the truck. They waved as the thing moved off; the villagers waved back. The younger children ran behind the truck. ~~at a discreet distance.~~

Dorothy Jones looked back at the last point from which the village could be seen: a tranquil little village on the slope of a hill, with a sweet ~~and long~~ little river running through the valley below it. She had felt the soft water of that river on her body this morning, had tasted the sweetness of the water as it splashed on her lips. No river blindness in that river, it flowed too fast. As a passing flash, her mind told her how good and safe it would be for their school to be in that village, for her son to be born there and to grow up among these rolling hills and with the safety of clean, fast flowing water. Then the village passed from sight and she firmly put the thought out of ther mind. Their work lay ahead.

"Pretty dream..." Dr. Dan's voice said, close to her ear, above the hum of the engine.

She smiled gaily and took his hand. "Yes. And don't eavesdrop!"

The sun came up and the land grew hot and humid once more. They saw no people for long stretches of the journey; but they were aware of the presence of people most of the time; they felt the people all about them, out of sight and sound. Occasionally this sense

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of people all about was confirmed by the sound of drums, either coming from behind them or else far ahead. And Sam who told them about most other things remained silent when any of them asked questions about the drums and the meaning of the drums. Jacob, who had travell the deep hinterland more than the others, and usually with Sam as companion, and who had heard the drums more than the others, and who at had/times witnessed the tribespeople's reaction to the drums, was being a convinced that as well as/language, there was something spiritual in the connection between the tribespeople and their drums. But then, perhaps there is something spiritual about all language, whatever its form.

So the truck bumped and twisted its way across the vast Africa landscape; up and down the land, round its bumps and bends, skirting deep forests, crossing rivers at the their widest and shallowest parts. From the perspective of the heavens it was as any other insect crawling slowly across a tiny piece of a vast landscape. And over it, as over everything else, hung the hot sun making the humid air heavy and draining the people in the truck of will and energy so that just sitting became wearying and driving a heavy burden demanding great effort from mind and body.

When the sun set high in the sky with its heat at its fiercest they moved into the protection of a cluster of trees. There they rested in the shade for an hour, drinking tepid water but, except for Sam, not eating any of the savoury food the women of the village had cooked for them that morning. Then they moved on again, enevelope in a heat-trance that made them too listless to speak.

So the metal insect crawled across the landscape, wrapped in the debilitating heat-haze familiar to all creatures who cross the tropical African landscape, whether in the dry season or the wet.

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In the late afternoon when the sun moved to the rim of the world the air grew less oppressive and heavy. A slight breeze blew from the north bringing a hard dryness with it. It was mild here but further north, on the edge of the great desert, the hard dry winds of the Harmattan were fierce enough to crack men's skins and bring on nosebleed, especially to those unused to it. Here, it was a welcome change from the oppressive humidity. Now they could eat a little and talk a little. But there was anxiety, too, for the first rain signs were beginning to show in the sky. So they only stopped to refill the gas tank with one of the many standby drums of petrol stored on the truck. This gave them a chance to stretch their legs, to seek some hidden spot to respond to nature's call. Then the truck resumed its northward crawl across the vast green land.

When the wind stopped the air grew heavy and oppressive and dark. The first downpour struck them within twenty minutes of the stopping of the wind. It was less fierce than the downpour of the day before, but only slightly so; and it lasted a shorter time. As the rain tapered off, they saw, coming to them out of the rain, a tight formation of a half dozen tribal warriors with long spears held aloft. They were naked exept for the loincloth.

"The welcoming party!" Jacob Brown shouted to reassure Dorothy Jones.

She nodded and smiled.

And seeing the approaching warriors coming mistily out of the curtain of rain, Daniel Lee remembered some lines from a poem he had read recently and said them aloud:

> One three centuries removed
> From the scenes his fathers loved,
> Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
> What is Africa to me?

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"What's that?" Jacob shouted.

"A poem. You won't find it in your Bible. Young man in Harlem name of Countee Cullen wrote it. One of the so-called New Negroes."

"Oh..."

"Yes, God-man. Oh!..."

But now the warriors were close up and Sam and Jonanthan Jones had emerged from their shelter under the truck. Jacob Brown and Daniel Lee jumped down from the cabin , leaving Dorothy behind. Sam did the speaking. The warriors were indeed from the village. The message of their coming had preceded them and the people of the villages had prepare a reception and had sent out the welcoming warriors. The warriors refused to ride on the truck and trotted easily beside it: three on each side, in single file. They ran easily, steadily, ~~even~~ casually, breathing evenly, moving effortlessly across the rain soaked land, until they reached the first village where a great throng of villagers waited, at their head were the four elders who had called on Jacob at the mission. They looked less regal without their flowing white robes, more ordinary, but still special for all their earth-coloured robes for they wore sandals while all the rest were bare-foot.

Because another round ~~xxx~~ of rain-clouds were forming, the ceremonial welcome was brief, the welcoming speeches short and Sam supervised the ~~the~~ taking of their baggage to the three huts which had been set aside for them: one for Jacob Brown and Daniel Lee, one for the Jones couple and one for Sam all to himself in which he would keep the more special stuff they had brought such as the truck's fuel and oil, the tools and spare tyres. People might take these if left on the truck; they would not touch them once identified

in Keeping of a fellow Tribesman.

talking tree,
The elders led them to the/ palavar tree, which was ~~xxx~~ a ~~xxxxxxxx~~ a clearing in the centre of the circular village where a planted
series of/posts supported a vast thatched roof thus achieving the effect of a meeting hall without walls. In the centre of this thatched hall without walls was the huge trunk of the dead tree in ~~xxxxx~~ whose shadde the tribal ancestors of past times had held their great palavers; so even though it was dead, it was still there, the old ~~xxxxxxx~~ tree which had been witness to the deliberations of the ancestors, which had heard/ and stored their wisdom, and which held that wisdom in trust for those who now spoke in its shade - if their hearts were open to receive that wisdom. The senior of the four elders, the eldest, who was the chief of this particular village, told Jacob and Daniel, who sat on either side of him while they ate, of the meaning and importance of this place in the life of the villag It was the connecting point between yesterday and today and tomorrow. It was the reason why this village and its people did not, as some others did, pack their belongings and move elsewhere when the land was not kind. To do so would be to would be to desert the ancestral meeting place and, therefore, the ancestors themselves. And have you noticed how lonely, how without joy and ~~s~~laughter, are those who wander across the face of the world far from their ancestral grounds Those who wander across the great desert, those who drive their beasts from one grazing place to another, if you look into their eyes, you will see a great emptiness and a great seeking; it is the seeking of the spirit for the ancestral places and for the feel of the comfort and protection the spirit of the dead wrap about their living descendants.

squatting behind, them ~~loudly~~ just loud enough for both Jacob and
All this Sam translated/ ~~xxxxx~~,

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Daniel Lee to hear.

At the other end of the small inner circle of people Jonanthan and Dorothy Jones were entertained by two of the other elders. The presence of the Dorothy among the men, instead of in her natural place among the women,waa easily excused and accepted: the ways of the strangers were different and good manners require the adjusting of your ways, temporarily, to the ways of the strangers who are your guests, if you honour them. Indeed, there were times in their own history when women had become leaders and chiefs and doctors and great warriors, so a woman among men, while not normal, was not all that unusual, certainly not as unusual as among the people from the great desert whose women had to hide their faces and cover all of their bodies. Jonathan flattered his tribal hosts by being able to communicate with them, on however limited a scale. And whenever he searchingly found a word of aphrase to reply to some question or statement they clapped their hands and roared their approval./ And the watching crowd on the outer edge joined in, not knowing what it was they were approving of, except that it was something their own leaders approved of. So the senior elder said to Jacob:

"Your young man learns our language."

It was the opening Jacob had waited for. He told the chief of their intention to establish a school and a clinic later, if the tribes would welcome these. The young man and his wife were here to start the school. If the tribes agreed they would be left behind and Sam would stay with them for a time and help to build the school, and organise the help from the tribes that they would need. This is why they were brought along even though the message from the Presiden could have been deliverd without their presence. And, of course, the word from the President does not depend on how the tribes respond to

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the school proposal. That is a separate and unconnected matter.

"But the time of our gratitude is a good time to raise it," the elder said, a hint of mockery in his soft voice.

"A wise man chooses his moment," Dan Lee said. "Translate, Sam

Sam obliged and a fleeting smile passed over the elder's face.

"We will have a big palaver in the morning and you will speak of this matter after your message from the President. And I will tell you, and our people of our gratitude. A man should know he is loved before he goes to a far country - if he is loved."

"Then you know?" Jacob said.

"A word that is spoken in one village today is known in five tomorrow; we know. And we know the doctor will stay and of your plan. You did not speak of the school. There is a piece of land in my mind and we will go there after tomorrow's palaver, and your young people will have a place there to sleep and to begin before the day is done - if our people agree."

"That's how to do it, daddy!" Dan chortled.

"Don't translate," Jacob snapped.

"He'd appreciate," Dan protested

"Shut up," Jacob said.

The elder looked at Sam; Sam smiled and shook his head.

"Your brother teases you." The old man pursed his lips at Jaco

"He's a big joker."

"Only God knows how Sam's translating that," Dan said

"I hate to leave this place," Jacob said suddenly; a wave of sadness shot through him. If only he had learnt to speak this old man's language. Now he was going with so much unsaid.

The old man said something that seemed to embarrass Sam.

Daniel Lee said: "Go on, Sam; what is it?"

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Sam looked sombrely at Jacob. "He says he heard you crying inside. He says you are not to cry. They will not forget you. They will do as you want. We will all do as you want."

Daniel Lee got up abruptly and walked away. The crowd made room for him to pass.

The elder said: "Now he is weeping too..."

Then the clouds burst and the rain poured out of the sky. Those outside the shelter of the palaver tree scampered in all directions for other shelter. Those under it pressed inward as far as they could. Daniel Lee hurried back, soaked to the skin in less than a minute. The noise of the rain drowned all other noises. A jagged shaft of lightning lit up the dark sky and was followed, forty seconds later, by a deafening clap of thunder. The people under the shelter of the palaver tree made themselves as comfortable as possible and waited for the downpour to exhaust itself.

The palaver, the elder had promised the evening before, started early and ended early. Jacob delivered the President's message that there would be no more unauthorised taxe levied and that restitution would be made for the damage done. Then he spoke about the two young people he had brought to start the school if, as he thought, the people of the villages in this part of the country wanted a school where their children could be taught the skills and the knowledge and the language to make life better and to be able to talk with other people from other lands and to be able to protect and safegaurd what is their own. The boys would learn new ways of farming and caring for the land and building homes and making things and how machines like the truck that brought them there worked. The girls would learn how to fight the diseases ~~and stop their~~

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that come with not knowing how to deal with the water and how to keep the sickness from the food; when the young girls know these things they will, when they become mothers, know how to stop the running belly which kill so many children, and they will know how to fight the fever of the mosquito, and the sleeping and blind sicknesse carried by the fly and the fluke. All this they will learn. And the lord of the hospital will soon send two of the sons from your own villages whom he has trained to deal with wounds and cuts and fevers and broken bones. They will help the two teachers and the peopl of the villages, and what they cannot heal or understand they will send to t e doctor at the mission hospital. And perhaps one day a young man from your villages will learn enough for the doctor to send him away to become a doctor himself and then return here to be a doctor to his own people and heal them. For it is the purpose of all we do, it is the purpose of all who work in our mission here, and our missions everywhere else, to train those among whom we work so that the day will come when they will be in control of the missions and the hospitals and ths schools and the governments of their own lands. This is our way, the way of our mission. So you must help us to serve and to help you.

Then the elder spoke and from Sam's translation it was clear that he was telling the people the defisions was theirs but the way in which the elders had decided and expected them to decide was thus.

And as the elders had decided so the people signified they had decided. Then the leading elder raised a chant of praise for the lord of the mission who would soon be leaving this land to continue his good work in other land. And when he paused, the vast throng turned his last sentence into a chorus, repeated twice. He listed the dee

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He called on the ancestral spirits to walk with the lord of the mission; to protect him from evil spirits, and to guard him from the enemies who would turn aside his work - for there are always those who would turn back a man's efforts to do that which is good, and not all of them had white faces...Not all of them had white faces..

"You'd better watch the subversion," Dan whispered into Jacob's ear. "If this gets to the President you may not be allowed to leave."

"And offend Washington from whom all shekels flow?" Jacob returned

"Point!" Dan conceded. "Better to be rid of the bad rubbish, heh?"

The speech came to an end and the elders led them to a gently rolling hill just outside the village.

"This," the senior said, looking at Jonathan and Dorothy Jones, "is the land for your school and your home. Choose the spot where you will sleep tonight."

Sam and a group of villagers went off with Jonathan and Dorothy Jones to choose a housespot.

"It pleases them," the old man said. "The young are easily pleased ~~at times~~." But without Sam Jacob and Dan could neither understand nor respond. So they smiled, African-style, a show of teeth in a tentative grimace of goodwill which at least assured a spirit of harmony even though there was no understanding. The elders also showed their teeth. Someone hurried after the crowd to bring Sam back and restablish communication.

"Language is key," Dan said, half in wonder.

"You don't say!" Jacob mocked, ~~paying him in his own coin~~.

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By mid-morning Jacob Brown's mind was at ease about the Joneses. A small hut and a thatched shelter for the belongings had been built in record time, and Dorothy and a group of women were preparing a meal for the men, women and children who were clearing the land, portering felled logs and thatching material, and building the tight small circle of huts that would be the new home of the young educational missionaries. And, somehow, Dorothy was communicating with the women: mostly in body language and facial expression, but also by touching objects and giving them names, first in English and then in their tribal language; and each time they repeated the name of the object and applauded themselves with much pleasure. Dorothy would soon learn the rudiments of their language, and she would teach them hers. The real thing of importance though, was the easy air of fellowship she had so quickly established with the women. This would be a point of strength in the days ahead, at the inevitable times of misunderstanding and of friction which is part of the interaction between people, even if they are within one family. The goodwill now building between Dorothy and the women of the village, and between Jonathan, and the men of the village, would make those coming encounters easier to manage and defuse.

And yet, for all their alikeness of colour, any stranger appearing on the scene and seeing the group of women preparing the food would, even if her dress were not different, instinctively recognise Dorothy as not quite the same as the others. And Jonathan too, for all his stripped-to-the-waist mahogany brownness just like the others, would stand out as the odd man: growing up in another place, among other ways and other values and other forms of learning and seeing and speaking, had somehow changed them so much that their

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difference stood out, declared itself, whether they wanted it or not. That differnce showed itself now in the way Dorothy would, in the midst of everything else, pause and seek out Jonathan with her eyes and communicate with him excluding all the others about them; and Jonathan doing the same thing.

In the afternoon, after they had eaten and rested, and the women were rubbing the clay floors of the two main huts to a shining gloss, and the men were putting the last touches to the water-proofing of the roofing thatch, the senior elder strolled up from the village alone. He summoned Sam from the work gang and Sam then called Jacob

Sam said:"The chief invites you to walk with him alone. I will be there as his voice but I will not be there."

"Something special, Sam?"

"Yes, doctor."

"Then let us walk." Jacob made a small bow to the chief.

The chief took Jacob's arm and steered him along a track which dipped into the valley behind the village and then rose and disappeared into a dense forest about a mile beyond the village, near the point where the river appeared out of the forest. Sam fell in step behind them, just near enough to translate if either spoke. They walked in silence.

The land on the hill where Jonathan and Dorothy would live and teach was rich and loamy but well drained; but once the three men got off that hill and onto the rising land approaching the forest the earth felt damp underfoot, as though the heavy moisture could not escape; the atmosphere, too, seemed considerably damper; it was as though they had made a sudden transition from one type of climate to another, but with the startling quickness and completeness as

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and strikingly
of pasing through a door from one to another totally/different room.

"You notice it," the elder said. "We live on the edge of the rain country. You can stand where the young ones are building and watch the rain w ap this part of the world in darkness. To the south and the east of here you find the rain country and the rain forests. To the north is the great desert with its great winds. We live on the edge of all this: touched by all and spared by all."

They stopped at the edge of the forest, where the water came down in a foaming torrent to settle ~~d~~ in a deep wide clear pond, dammed at its outlet so that, from there, the water flowed down slowly, giving life & sustenance ~~l~~ to the three villages nestling near it further down the land. It r minded Jacob a little of his Jamaican hills, but the climate there was so much gentler, so much kinder: the rain fell more gently; at Christmas time which the high wind/they persisted in calling a breeze was softer than the fierce dry brute that came down from the desert; and oh how sweetly refreshing the air up there!

"To be spared by all is to be blessed by all," Jacob said.

"So it is," the old man said. "And we praise the ancestors for their choice." A smile flickered across the old man's face. "As with all good choices they had no other choice. Our people do not love fighting. We are known as a cowardly people and have ever been so. We will only fight if there is nowhere to run. So when the fierce fighting tribes took our land near the coast the ancestors ran and ran and ran. They stopped here for no one wanted to chase us any further. The fierce fighting ones were the first to be made slaves and we cowards were left in peace for we were too far from the slavers' ships; so there is virtue and safety in cowardice too. Some of the great tribes have been destroyed and scattered; we cowards are still here. But to serious matters. This thing you bring among us, why do you bring it? Where will it lead? Tell me."

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They sat on rocks a little way back from the edge of the water so that its incessant roaring sound was muted and they did not have to shout to be heard.

Jacob said thoughtfully: "It is hard to know what to tell, father, when the question is so wide. What is it you want to know? Is it about ths schooling? About the work of our mission?"

The old man made a small physical motion of impatience ~~/~~ compounded of a slight move of the head, a small jerk of one shoulder, ~~xxx~~ a half-motion with one hand. "Let us not blind ourselves with words. It is not of schools and gods I talk; they are always with us. You know that and I know that. It is how men use their schools and their gods which is of moment: it is what they wish to attain through the use of their schools and their gods that I speak. What is it you plan to gain from your school here among us? And when your school is followed by your one God, where is it you wish that God to lead our people. It is of that that I speak; ~~xxx~~ let there be no more fencing between us. You have called me father to show respect for my age: but this is not your way. Why do it?"

"You rebuke me," Jacob said.

"A son does not fence with his father, nor with someone he calls father: not among us."

"It is a foolish son, a foolish man, who pretends a greater understanding than he has. You ask me a question and because I do understand the full meaning of your question, and because I seek to understand that full meaning so that I might try to answer with full honesty you rebuke me. Among us, that is not just."

The old man's face cracked in a wide, appreaciate smile: "Among us too. Among all people, I think. Hear me then:"In my youth, which is a long time ago, I and my younger brother left our village

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and journeyed to the coast and then north until we came to the plac
controlled by the white men you call the English. We went wishing to
learn and to understand their wisdom. They caught us and locked us u
for entering the land without their permission. They called us
foreigners and sent us to work as their slaves for a year just because we
had entered what they called their colony. In that place we found
other men like us, from different villages in Africa who had gone to
that place without permission and had been caught and had been put
to work like slaves. They took away our manhood from us and they
handled us as we would handle beasts. My younger brother died in
that place. And the white priest who had no respect for us came and
prayed for him with no interest in his eyes. Many had died before
and he always came and prayed with no interest in his eyes. A man
in sorrow sees these things. When my time was done they offered me
the choice of leaving their colony or working for them for a few of
their silver shillings every month and food and shelter. I chose to
leave their colony. I did not like the food. I did not like the work
I did not like to look at men and be among men who had lost their
manhood. I did not like the ugly and unclean and taboo things men
did to each other in that place. And I noted that it was only men
like me who were in that place as prisoners. The white ones we saw
were always overlords. And as you do now, they spoke of schools and
of their one God. I was one of many who refused their work; but many
more made their mark on the paper and stayed to work. Those of us
who did not they carried to a place on their border as far away from
the coast as they could get, then they let us loose and chased us across the border without food and without water and
in a desolate place where there were no villages. It took a very

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long time for me to reach back here again. It was many years ago now, perhaps as many as the years of your life. And I have not left this place since until we made that journey to your mission after the soldiers came among us as predators. So where will your coming lead? To what I saw in tha place they call Sierra?..."

"Sierra Leone..."

"That's it."

"Then why did you let us come? Why agree to the school. You know I would have respected your wish if you had said no."

"I wanted to say no..."

"But you were grateful?"

"That's not the reason. It's the children. I would be happy to spend my last days here, just as we are. But the children...You understand that. No man has the right to cut them off. The things you have to offer are what they want. If we try to cut them off they will do what my younger brother and I and many others did."

"And perhaps they will return as you did."

"Leaving a dead brother behind? And with a sickness of the min which it has taken a lifetime to cast out? I would prefer them not to. Because of the ugliness and unnatural things I saw men do in that place I have had no children of my own. I was too much of a coward to expose any sons of mine to that degradation. But seeing you made me ask; is it possible to take what they have without the degradation?"

"We have all experienced that degradation," Jacob said slowly. "In different forms perhaps. You were never a slave, you said. My grandmother, at whose knee I learned about life and about God, was a slave. My grandafather, her husband, who became a priest and founded a church, was a slave. I met, as a very small boy, a giant of a man called Samson who was brought from Africa as a slave and whose body

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carried the scars of all the beatings he had endured. When I met him as a child he was paralysed and had lost the power of speech; but his anger at the degradation he had seen and expereienced showed like burning fire in his eyes. We have all known that degradation, either directly or through those close to us."

"Even you with all your learning..."

"Yes; all of us who are not white. And the purpose of my work, of the work of all of us here, is to put an end to the degradation for all our people everywhere."

"Is your mission then at war with the white men's missions?"

"No; not at war. We say we serve the same God. We say we seek the same end, but as you say, men use their schools and their gods to attain their own ends. Our end is freedom and no more degradation for our own people. To strive for this is not to be against any man and not to be at war with anybody."

A skeptical smile flashed across the old man's face; but there was a touch of tenderness as he looked into Jacob's eyes.

"Will they let you be? You challenge their power."

"We do not seek their permission. We do not break their laws."

"Yet they will attack you, if they see you succeeding."

"We will know how to respond. When the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth they attacked Him and tried to destroy his teaching."

"Your own people, those who look like you, will be used agains you."

"We know that too. Remember I told you of my grandfather, well, they burned down his church when he did not agree to submit to them, and when my grandmother explained the reason why to me, I decided to carry on where my grandfather left off. We want a church of black people under the control and guidance of black people. All other

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churches are controlled by their own people. Why not ours? And no matter how many of our own people they use against us, no matter how many of those they have degraded into tools and puppets we have to face, we will prevail in the end, as Jesus himself prevailed in the end."

"And so your school and your hopsital will take care of the minds and the bodies and your church will take care of the spirit of your people. Just like a tribe; just like a village."

"Only a new kind of tribe and a new kind of village."

"But for black people, you say."

"No; not for black people only; but with black people in contr because it is theirs. Others may share but they must control for it is theirs."

"And this is your mission?"

"That is the mission of our church."

"Everywhere in Africa?"

"Wherever it is in Africa or the world. And we hope to spread it."

The old man leaned back on his rock, and in the silence they again heard the noise of the water. The old man began to chuckle, a low, purring happy chuckle. Then it rose to laughter; then the laughter grew, warm and infectious, till Jacob found himself laughing too, swept along by the old man. His laughter is infectious. Then Sam joined in and the three of them laughed and laughed and laughed till their laughter mingle with the sound of the water and rose above it.

The old man laughed till he was breathless and tears streamed from his eyes and he held his sides and swayed from side to side. Between gasps of laughter he said: "They even lie about your God! He loves laughter! I know that now! He's just like some of our gods! Only more loving because he is alone, heh! I am happy!"

Their laughter rang above the roaring water.

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After a time they grew exhausted; their laughter tapered off then died into a long silence made loud by the muted roar of the water plunging into the pool. Sam looked curiously from the old man to Jacob, wondering, with speculative curiosity, at precisely what it was that had caused the old man to wrap them all in that wave of exhuberant laughter. He tried to retrace the conversation: trouble was he had been just a conduit connecting the flow of words between the old man and Jacob, not a participant, so he had had no time to obsorb them or think about them. To bring them back now as something remembered was almost impossible: the concentration on interpreting the flow of words had been too great to allow for thought of the meaning of the words, or for personal responses. So why did he join in the laughter? Because they had laughed and their laughter had carried him along and lifted him out of himself. What was certain now was that the school would be well received and well attended. This old man would see to that.

At last, his breathing regular again, the tears of laughter wiped from his cheeks, the old man rose from the rock and looked at the trees and the forest, and at the point where the water plunged down out of the forest, then he turned his eyes to Jacob and they were again the hooded and guarded eyes which saw everything and revealed little; he exhuded again the feel of cold detachment.

"We have talked," the old man. "My spirit is at ease."

He led the way back to the gently rolling hill where his people and the two teachers were now putting up a large shelter under which the first classes would begin in the morning. They worked feverishly because the sky was darkening and it seemed that the rain would come early.

Jacob and Daniel Lee started the journey back before dawn the

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next morning, accompanied by four of the strongest-looking young men of the tribe. The old man had insisted on this when Jacob had announced that Sam would be left behind and would remain until the Joneses were settled-in. Without Sam to speak for them and to enlist help from the hidden villages on the way back in case of need, they may be in trouble; people who could help, may look on and hold back because they did not understand and no-one asked. The young men would ensure against this. Sam and Jonathan Jones had given them a kind of crash course in how to ease wheels out of ruts or holes and how to change tyres. The rest, drying out the engine and removing any moistness from the carburettor and filling the gas tank, Jacob and Dan could manage by themselves.

Jacob was glad of the pre-dawn darkness as he took leave of the two young people. He was leaving them deep in the African bush and would probably never see them again. If things go wrong he would not be there to help. He would be on the other side of the earth. He had encouraged them in this undertaking, feeding the dream of service and the sense of adventure of the young; and now he was cutting the connection, through no choice of his own to be sure, but still cutting the connection and leaving them without that invisible umbilical cord which is the permanent link between the parent and the child; and he was their parent in this enterprise, anxious and hurting for them, fearing for them, at this moment of parting.

He would always remember Dorothy as an upright, supple, willowy shadow in the dark pre-dawn, with young Jonathan towering protectively over her, a taller, stronger tree. He wrapped his arms about her and muttered up at Jonathan: "Take care of each other..."

"We'll be allright," Jonathan growled. "You take care."

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"And you answer my letters, hear." Dorothy fought back the tear "I'll write once a month and I'll expect to hear from you once a quarter."

"You're letting him off easy," Dan's voice came from near the truck. "I'd say a letter for a letter like a tooth for a tooth."

"Ignore him," Jacob said, glad of the easing interference. He turned to Sam. "Don't come till you're sure everything is all-right for them."

"Yes, doctor."

Then the old man, who had left his bed to see them off. He took both of the old man's hands.

"I will always remember you."

Sam translated.

"And I you, my son."

"You will guard my young people - even when you are not here.

"As long as they do your work; in my heart I say our work."

"It is our work and they will not change from it as others have. I know them."

"Then they will be safe here, always. I promise you that."

"Thank you."

"And we thank you. I wish there were more days for us to talk more. If only we had met earlier. It is ever so. Now go, for your journey is long. Go well."

"Stay well." Jacob turned away from the old man and the two young people and reliable Sam. Of them all he would only see Sam again, for a short while. "Come, Dan!"

They got into the truck cabin and the engine came to life. The truck lights snapped on, two searching beams piercing the dawn and pointing away from the village. They waved and moved off...

How it hurts, Jacob told himself, this parting. Dan touched his hand briefly.

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Ten days later Jacob left Liberia.

Dan Lee, Mrs. Willis, Sam, and, to Jacob's utter astonishment, Miss Symes , saw him off at the ~~xxxxxxx~~ docks. There were no proper port facilities so the ship that would take him away lay at anchor far out in the harbour. Small boats, barges and canoes laden with all manner of supplies moved constantly between the dock and the distant ship riding the/Atlantic waters. Little boys/in slip canoes early morning and young men hovered about the ship and dove into the clear water when passengers flipped coins over the side of the ship.

The parting was awkward for everybody. It had been stretched out too long, too much time had passed ~~be~~ between the decision and ~~xxx~~ its ~~e~~execution. At the last moment Miss Symes pressed a sealed letter into Jacob's hand and whispered: "Please don't read it till the ship is out of sight, doctor." Her eyes brimmed.

Then it was time for him to get into the little boat that would carry him to the ship which would carry him away. He put his arm about Sam's shoulder. He had found this one when he first arrived at the mission;/tentative, uncertain, possessed of an enormous able to speak English but inferiority complex that made him appear stupid and ingratiating, Now he had a quiet self-assurance and had grown into a decent kind of man. Jacob and Daniel Lee had agreed that he was ready for greater responsibility and Jacob's parting gift had been to make him manager of all mission supplies and works, and provide him with an office that had his name on it: "Mr. Sam Kirili,/~~xxfxxxxxx~~ Manager of Supplies and Works". This, too, would be a fact any new successor would have to accept. Mr. Kirili was part of the establishment, not a Liberian boy anymore and Dan and Mrs. Willis would see to it, and so, it now seemed, would Miss Symes/~~even~~ as well. A small change,a small progress, not much, but good.

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"Thank you for showing me your country,Sam; for helping me to understand; for all the journeys we made into the bush; for all the palavers we have shared. It has been good. I will remember it and you always."

"Thank you, sir," Sam said. Briefly, it seemed he would break down, then his manhood asserted itself and he took a deep breath. "I will never forget you, doctor. Never!"

"Take care of Dr. Dan for me, especially when he goes on journeys."

"I will, doctor...Please bless me as you do in church." Sam bowed his head, standing there on the dockside, and Jacob put his hand on Sam's head, just as he had done so often in church during the sacrement of bread and wine. Then Sam turned and walked away to where the truck was parked.

Mrs. Willis hugged him her body and air showing her determination that it should be a no-nonsense parting.

"Take care of yourself and eat properly; and write when you have time."

Oh, Harlem, he thought; you have produced strong new black women, tough, durable, capable, who have learned to stand alone in a different kind of jungle. If she passes just a little of what she has to the young women here then tomorrow's Liberia had better watch out.

"You take care, and let me hear about your young women.Good-bye."

"Bye, doctor."

And now, Dan. They stared silently at each other for a long time, then they shook hands, each trying to smile. There was no need for words between them, no need for promises. Then Jacob turned and went to where the boatman waited [illegible].

His helping hand on the tiller.

5) Jacob / Chitale

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Jacob Brown stood alone, felt alone, for all the vast throng of peole about him. They were singing now, in low, rolling notes that swept across the high green hills and down into the shallow valleys between one hill and the other, across the fields of coffee and the fields of cotton. Margaret always loved this singing; her eyes always glowed when she heard them singing. Now they were singing their farewell to Margaret. And he was standing there alone at her graveside. It was hard to say, as one of his priests taking part in the burial service had said: The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed is the name of the Lord. Hard, but you must accept it. Was there any other choice but to accept it? Not accepting it would not bring Margaret back. So you accept what you have no control over; but the Lord would not want you to pretend a grace you did not have. I do not want to bless His name now.

The little English Bishop and his big bony wife had come all the way from Kampala for the funeral. Now, the little Englishman came up and took Jacob's hand in a surprisingly firm grip. Behind him, his wife said: "Pleae come and see us, Bishop Brown...Whenever you want to...Come and stay for a few days...It will be lonely..."

The little Bishop said: "We mean it, my friend. We share your sorrow. Of course we can't, really. I mean we feel with you."

"Thank you," Jacob said. "Thank you for coming; I appreciate that."

The Bishop and his wife walked down the hill, away from the cemetery, to where a number of cars were parked. The English Governor had sent his private secretary to represent him. The tall thickset young man, very fair, with almost blond hair and pale green strong eyes which squinted against the/light, now came to take his leave.

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"His Excellency particularly asked me to express his personal condolences, my lord. If there is anything we can do..."

Behind the Governor's personal secretary, accompanying him, were the District Commissioner and his lady. These two were less relaxed and sure of themselves than were the Bishop and his wife or the Governor's secretary. They telegraphed their sense of awkward out-of-place-ness and tended to make everybody else they came into contact with feel out of place and awkward. Yet the D.C. was known as a firm and decisive man in his everyday work, brooking no nonsense from the natives over whom he held authority. Both man and woman looked like rather superior weatherbeaten rednecks who detested where they were and what they were doing. Unlike the rednecks of the American South they could not, it seemed, let down their hair and be themselves. They had to impress the natives and keep a distance. The effort seemed to sour them.

"So sorry," the woman murmured, moving as though to offer her hand and then thinking better of it.

"We are sorry, sir," the D.C. said and pushed out his hand deliberately.

"Thank you," Jacob Brown said remotely. He did not like the D.C. They had had several runs-in since the young man had been posted to this district. He should have been posted to a district across the border in Kenya. But the individual really made little difference.

Then the Indian who was the import-export agent for what the mission's business section produced and required, came to take his leave, anxious, it seemed, to be gone from this vast throng of black people as soon as it could be done with due observance of the racial mores which defined both class and precedence: first the whites...

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"Goodbye,my lord. I wish..."

"Goodbye, Mr. Patel. Thank you for coming."

"I wish..."

Jacob looked into the man's eyes, silently reassuring him.

"I know, Mr. Patel."

Again the Indian said: "I wish." Then he turned abruptly and hurried away to his car.

The young black Ugandan doctor, a small-boned neat little man with sharp features, came and stood beside Jacob. The singing continued to roll over the land in waves of sorrow.

"We really did everything we could, my lord."

"I know," Jacob said. "There isn't much you can do about cancer. It was her pain that worried me."

"It eased up near the end, which is what gave us that false hope of a remission. Remember?"

"Yes."

"There's a saying among our people, my lord: if you lose a loved one find comfort in more love for God is love."

"Not quite than kind of love, doctor, but thank you; I've heard the saying."

"My lord..." The young doctor hesitated for e long time, so Jacob said: "Yes, doctor?"

"You have brought comfort and hope and prosperity to so many of our people for such a long time. And when you grieve and you need comfort there seems nothing that we can do. All the people here want to comfort you in your sorrow and there is so little they can do except be here and sing their hymns of sorrow to show that they share your sorrow. That is all we have to give you."

"That is more than enough, doctor. ~~Let them know.~~"

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"I must leave now, sir. They need me at the hospital. Can I leave something to relax you? You'll need it later."

"Nothing, doctor. Thank you; goodbye."

The little doctor left him. Then the chiefs who had come from the nearby villages came and expressed their sorrow, each in his own individual way, and left. He stayed there by the grave, all alone, though surrounded by a vast throng of mourners whom he had known, to varying degrees, for upwards of three decades. These were his people, had been his people for a long time. His people and Maragret's people. She had helped deliver babies who grew to young womanhood, and got married at their church and became mothers themselves. Now they were mourning Maragaret's death. And still he felt cut off, as though with her death, he had lost contact with these who had for so long been his people. But he knew it was only temporary; contact would come back because that was his job. That was what he was here for. Pain, hurt, is much more tolerable than this deadness of feeling. This must be what hell is: to be living and for all feeling to be dead.

How beautifully they sang. How calm and clear and fresh the highland air, clear enough to see the misty distant Mount Elgon, hanging in the sky, far to the north. They say the Mau Mau soldiers sometimes escaped to the Uganda side of the mountain-slopes when hunted by British soldiers. Nothing to prevent the British soldiers following them right into Uganda; its all British, after all.

Jacob's secretary, the Reverend John Chitole and Margaret's longtime housekeeper, Mrs. Adina Kilu, pushed through the vast and moving and singing throng and came to him.

"It is time for food," Mrs. Kilu said.

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Some of Margaret'a firm managerial manner had rubbed off on Mrs. Kilu and showed now as she waited to lead Jacob to the house.

"I'm not hungry," he said.

"But you must eat," she insisted. "Missy would want that." Then her sterness relaxed. "Please, sir. I promised her to look after you well."

"And I have very important news, sir; from Entebbe," John Chitole cut in. "Just got it on the phone."

"Then tell me."

"Not here, sir. Someone might hear."

"Allright."

Jacob looked lingeringly at the grave, as if willing his Margaret to rise from it, then he turned and walked briskly to the car that would take him to the big sprawling house nestling in spacious grounds on the next hill.

The house, the grounds, the trees, the flowers, they were all Margaret's. Her presence was all about the place. This was the home she had created and they had shared these many years. Now, for all her being buried in that cemetery on another hill, her preence was all about the place, and it was as though the three who entered expected to see her trim neat figure to come briskly out of one of the rooms to meet them. Jacob looked up at the painting of her which hung in the centre of the wall furtherest from the door. It brought back the dark vitality of Margaret. A painting in the bold, dramatic manner of the art of the 'New Negroes' of the Harlem Negro Renaissance of the 1920s. Except for a few lines at the corners of her mouth, and a slight sag under her chin, and the greying of her hair, she had not changed much, looked much as she had when she sat for that

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painting ~~somewhere in Harlem~~ more than a quarter century ago.

...And now that is all I have left of her, Jacob thought. Then: no, no, there is much, much more. There are all the invisible, all the hard-to-define-or-describe things. The memory of a mood, of a time, a place, a look of the eye; of a passing sense of a specia moment or a special smile or a special silence. Presence and the remembrance of presence which is the remembrance of person. She had said it, in her quiet, self-assured way which could be so exasperatin when she was wrong, so comforting when she was right: "As long as you remember me/I am alive; I will be dead only/when you don't remember me any more." He suppressed a mighty impulse to talk to her out loud.

John Chitole said, facing him:

"They deposed the Kabaka this morning, my lord."

At first Jacob did not take it in; his mind was so full of Maggaret. John Chitole saw it and repeated the news. Now Jacob absorbed it.

"Who did it?"

"The Governor; the British Governor."

"I don't believe it. Where is he? Is he allright?"

"He's on his way out of the country, my lord."

"Stop calling me that. But they were friends. Get me the Bishop on the phone."

"Which one?"

"The one who was here."

"I don't think he's back yet, sir."

"You think he knew?"

"I don't know, sir. I think so. They say the British army is in force at Government House so the English here would have been alerted."

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"So Kampala is in turmoil."

"Yes, sir."

Adina Kilu pushed in a trolley of food and John Chitole joined Jacob at the meal table.

"What do you think will happen, John? How will the Baganda react? Will they rise? And will the others support them?"

"No to that last, sir. Lesser people rarely rise to the defence of superior people. The rest I can't answer."

"I thought you were Muganda," ~~John.~~"

"I am, sir; but too long under your influence to still believe in the natural superiority of the Baganda. One day we must fashion a real nation instead of the present series of nation-tribes with each claiming pride of place over the other."

"Oh, John! Is that really what I taught you?"

"No, sir. You taught us pride and self-respect in our blackness and you taught us to think for ourselves. That was enough. We are responsible for the rest."

"We?"

"There are many of us, sir. We have learned from you not to be ashamed of our blackness and not to be afraid of questioning all sorts of assumptions. Even little children now ask who gave Mzungu the right and power to decide anything for us and to sit in judgement of us."

"No wonder they call me the subversive black American Bishop!" Jacob laughed. "You go on with this and they'll expel me yet."

"They cannot expel you for being a good Christian and preaching and practicing the truth of the gospel."

"You'll be surprised, young man. If they can depose the Kabaka they can certainly expel me."

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"Will the Americans allow it?"

"I don't know, John. Our friends are no longer in power in Washington. I'm not sure the new people care about us and our missionary enterprises all over the world. I suspect the State Department will now see black missionaries in far away places as nuisances. I rather suspect black Americans in the United States will feel the difference too."

"But they have no reason to expel you." John Chitole was suddenly worried at the prospect.

"They may think they have. But that's not important. If we've done our work properly and well then it does not really matter who goes or who stays. The work will go on. You and all the others will see to it. If we've laid/~~xxxxxxxx~~ sound and strong foundations and the structures are right then the removing of any one person should not matter. You know that. That's how the church works."

"We care about people, too," Chitole protested, and then wished he had not ~~siad~~ said that as he saw the change in Jacob's expression.

Jacob's spirit had slipped away, back to that hill where they had buried his Margaret earlier this day. And there was nothing, John Chitole knew, that he or anyone else could do to help make more bearable this utterly quiet and contained and controlled grief.

Chitole finished his meal and left quietly. His best service now would be to ensure that things ran smoothly till his bishop was ready to take control again. There was much to attend to for the church had grown into a big and flourishing and many-sides enterprise in its years on this piece of the East African highlands.

Chitole returned, half-opened the door and pushed his head and shoulders into the room.

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"Sir." He had to repeat it twice before Jacob heard him. "Si

"Yes, John?"

"I thought...Do you think a visit somewhere..."

"No , John. I'll be all right."

"I thought not," Joh murmured and withdrew again.

You must not do this, Jacob told himself; don't you become a worry and a concern to them when they need you; especially now with the trouble in Kampala. But how do you stop a mind and a heart that will not be stopped. So many things we've shared, arguments and quarrels and coldnesses, irrational angers, explosive moods and seemingly unforgiveable unjustnesses, and hard and cruel thoughts; but always also the acceptance of the shared life and the instinctive almost automatic sustaining of one another when the need arose, as though conditioned. How do you bury that part of yourself? You don't. That is what you have left, all you have left, when the flesh and bone and blood are buried deep in the ground to become earth again. And will we ever meet again, dear God? And if we do, how will we know one another without the body which was the temple by which the one recognised the other? Or have we had our heaven here on earth and I am now in hell for what remain of my days? If so then where is she? So much we need to know. Faith needs a deal more knowledge to sustai it at its highest level. Where is she now; not the body, but that which was in the body? Is it still individual and separate, the distinctive and unique spirit I knew housed in that body? I sometimes caught its thoughts and feelings, flowing without words, as light wind between two spirits. If it is still the same then I should surely know it and feel it. Perhaps it needs time to adjust to the shock of the death of the body; then perhaps, after the shock has passed it will come back. The old man of that village up in the hinterland of Liberia had said the spirits were all about and took care of the

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ancestral land and those who remained on it and spoke to the wisest of the descendants...

Mrs. Kilu came and cleared the table.

"You should rest now. That's what Missy always made you do after food. Please go now."

He got up and walked to the bedroom, hearing Margaret's voice

"The Lord, and we, can do without you for an hour, dear."

It had started when young David was two or three. It was a way of getting young David to take his after-lunch nap without a fight. So it began with: 'Daddy does it because its good for him.'

'Good for daddy?'

'Yes, dear. Good for daddy.'

'Why?'

'Because' And the cuddling and the peals of laughter.

'Because?'

'Yes. Because. You go with daddy. Rest with him.'

'Because?'

'Yes, dear, because.'

And young David would take his hand and tilt his head far back and look up at him and say: 'Come, daddy. Because'.

And she would smile, a hint of mockery in her eyes and say:

"The Lord - and we - can do without you for an hour."

And young David would lead him to the bedroom...

He went into the familiar room and lay on the bed. And now, at last, tears filled his eyes and Jacob Brown wept for the wife he had lost to death. The clear, almost dazzling light of the highlands filtered through the curtains and lit up the room.

He woke; the room was in darkness. He lay still for a while, remembering. No Margaret to come and put on the light. And David

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far away. Mrs. Kilu would not dream of coming in here to put on the light: one of Margaret's quirks about the privacy of her bedroom. Only she tended to it, made the bed, changed the linen, tidied it, swept the floor, cleaned the windows. The one place from which all the world except he and young David were excluded; and when he grew bigger, even young David. He had walked into this room once, a long time ago, and she had been asleep on the bed, completely naked, her dark/bronze body utterly relaxed - smooth thighs, flat belly, firm breasts with black nipples - hints of sweat on her brow and upper lip. It had moved him to passion and the impulse to touch her, fondl her, was strong. Having young David had been more difficult for her than was normal and the doctor had talked about some problem with the size of her womb or something, and the danger of her having more children since he, Jacob was so big, and the also child/being so big and the chances of any other children being equally big. They had decided there would be no brothers or sisters for young David, and, with the methodical thoroughness of the well-educated American woman, she had managed their sex life to provide for this. But that high noon she woke, perhaps through sensing the strong desire in him. She looked at him and smiled sleepily and murmured:

"Come. Thou shalt not lust after thine own wife. Come."

He had hesitated, conscious of Mrs. Kilu and the people under her all about the house. She had read his concern and assured him: "No one comes here; and it is better to lust after own thine/rather than another's wife.2 And she had laughed at him, a low gurgling provocative and teasing sound. It had been a very beautiful hour of high passion followed by ~~gentle~~ tender friendship. So many sides to her. So many sides to remember and to mourn.

He got up and groped his way to the/big french window

and drew back the curtains. He must have slept for many hours. The world was in darkness. He went onto their very private verandah which led straight onto the small courtyard, fenced in by a high wall of thick tall grass. This, like the bedroom, an extension of it, had been Maragaret's very private sanctuary. Here they had been able to shed all appearances and wear sloppy clothes and play cards and listen to records that were not strictly 'proper' and be unshaved or even scantily clad. Here, after work, he had been a man instead of a bishop; she had been a woman instead of a bishop's wife: ordinary folk for a time. And it had been good...You build your life around a person and then you lose that person and only the empty symbols of that life remain.

Then, as from a great distance, he heard the sounds from the cemetary. They were still there, still singing. He put on the verendah light and saw that it was after seven. He turned on the lights in the bedroom, went into the bathroom and washed his face and combed his hair. Then he went into the main part of the house, leaving all the lights on in the bedroom section. He must have been awfully tired to let things get this out of hand.

Mrs. Kilu was still there though it was long past her time for tending to her own family.

"Why are you still here," he asked.

Her eyes lit up. This was how she knew her bishop.

"Reverend Chitole asked me to stay, sir. You didn't eat much today or yesterday or the day before. He thought you may want to eat properly later."

"Where is he?"

"In your office, sir."

"Allright, go home."

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"And your food?"

"Leave out something cold. ~~for me.~~"

"The ham sandwiches with lettuce and tomatoe you and Missy used to have in the evenings?"

"Yes, please, Miss Adina."

"There be a chilled beer in the ice box."

"Good; thank you. Goodnight, Adina."

"Sir...I'm sorry; we all are. We'll do everything the way she taught us. We all loved Missy, sir. We know it is hard for you."

"Goodnight, Adina. And thank you, all of you."

Mrs. Kilu left to take of her own large family and Jacob went to his study where John Chitole worked on the books to do with the business side of the mission. He rose as Jacob entered and, as with Mrs. Kilu, his eyes showed relief when he recognised the bishop's old familiar mood and bearing, ~~were back~~. The darkness had passed; the sorrow was still there but the darkness had passed.

"Those people are still up there, John."

"We didn't know what to do, sir. They all loved Missy."

"So they're turning it into a Nine-Nights party."

~~XXxxx

from a great distance
They could see the lit candles/as the jeep bounced along the
to the demetary,
uneven road/ like a vast number of peenie-wallies spreading their cold light on a dark Jamaican night before the rise of the moon. The voices carried clear across the stillness of the night, one of them rising above all the others every now and then.

John Chitloe remembered and said:"There was a phone call from the Anglican Bishop. The one who came to the funeral. They asked you to spend an evening with them next week. Offered to put you up overnight if you liked. Your diary was clear so I accepted tentatively. Its for a week today. They're trying to help."

"And you think I should go?"

"Yes, sir."

"We'll see."

"I promised to call back sometime tomorrow."

They entered the cemetary and the singing was nearer, louder, and the candles no longer like distant fireflies. They parked near other cars and approached the gathering on foot. The two priest
thin and
one/young, one in his middle years with a middle age spread, came to them out of the crowd. The potent smell of waragi, as overpowering as Jamaican overproof white rum, mixed with the smell of candle wax and fried meat. The singing was everywhere, as it had been earlier in the day; it was as if they were singing the same song they had sung earlier.

"Surely not the same people," Jacob said, immediately aware of the stupidity of what he had said.

"They go and others come to take their place," the middle-aged priest said.

"But there are fewer of them now," John Chitole said.

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Jacob went to the head of Margaret's grave. The people - mostly women dressed in flowing ~~black~~ white - made way for him. Here and there, someone touched his sleeve, kissed his hand, bowed low before him. Those nearest to him fell silent, and gradually the silence spread outward like a rippling wave putting out sound, till all were silent. Jacob said:

"It is late, my people. It is time for you to go home. Missy has gone on her great journey and we have gone with her as far as the living can go. She is safely on her way and we will never forget her till we all meet again in heaven. So I want you all to now go home. God bless you." He held up his hand in silent benediction.

John Chitole said a loud 'Amen' and there was a responding rumble.

The women nearest Jacob started the march back to their villa candles held high. Someone started the singing again and all gradual joined in, marching away with their slow, dirgelike hymn to the dead

"They'll be all right?" Jacob said.

"The men will escort them all to their homes," John Chitole said.

"You go on," Jacob told his three priests. "I want to stay a while."

"I'll wait for you," Chitole said.

"No." Jacob said. "Ride with the others. Leave me the jeep. I'll be allright."

"My lord..." the eldest priest began.

"Come," Chitole said and hustled the others away.

Smart young man, Jacob thought, waiting for them to be out of sight; till he heard only the sound of their vehicle above the receding

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sound of the mcurnful singing. He waited till there was only the silence of the natural noises of the night and he was alone with his dead. He ~~looked~~ stared down at the grave as if to see through the earth to where she lay and look once more on that familiar face.

Whereever you are, thank you my dear.

Thank you for having shared these years with me

Thank you for having looked at me with seeing eyes

For having touched my hand and kissed my lips and warmed my soul/

For having laughed with me and cried with me and fought with m/

For having hated me and baited me

For having roused a fuming angry rage in me

And then for having made me soft and gentle, pliant and bending

All against my will

Thank you for lips that moved

For eyes that mocked

And a voice of music

Above all thank you for having lived and love with me.

Jacob Brown smiled, a mixture of grief and tender joy. Then he said aloud, as though she were beside him;" Sorry I din't always tell you how felt about you. We never do these things when we should and then we say sorry. Sorry you're not going to retire to Jamaica with me. I wanted so much to show you our hills. And you wouldn't have had the frustrating problem of language you had here. And sorry I had to stop the Nine Nights thing they had going here. It really does go on for nine night in Jamaica and people sometimes get paralytic drunk by the time they have seen the departing spirit on its way. I went into a blind funk at the thought of being without you, love. I'm allright now. I'm glad David was'nt here to see it. It will be hard enough when he does come. I think he'll come out

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allright. He is your son, after all, and mine too, and we have tried to lead upright lives and we certainly have obeyed the most importan of the Commandments: we have loved our neightbours and done our duty by our people and our God. Wish I had been able to talk to you like this, as easily while you were with me. I can even tell you about my doubts and uncertainties. I guess I didn't want you to see my weakne ses. Oh, about that funk; I haven't written your family about your death. Chitole took over and did all the formal notifications and your Mrs. Kilu and your Women's Committee managed all the feeding and other arrangements. I was in some private dark hell these past three days and out of control as no bishop is supposed to be. Its all over now. I will carry on, but oh, my dear, it is going to be so lonely, so desolate, without you. So much of me lies buried here with you. I don't know how I'm ever going to leave this place knowin you lie here. I must go back now, my dear. There is much to do and I think the political upheavals which have swept the West Coast and our neighbour across the border is about to come to this peace-ful place. Remember the game of speculation we played about the African future? Sorry you won't be here to see how our forecasts are played out. I'm beginning to doubt our forecast of this place as an oasis of peace in a turbulent desert. When you remove the most important symbol of stability and power you leave an awful vaeuum which is what they did today. I'm going back to write to your people and Dan Lee in Liberia. Kilu is putting up some ham sandwiches for me, and there's a chilled beer in the icebox..."
He stopped talking suddenly, a tight band of physical pain gripped his chest. His head throbbed. He waited for the pain to pass, using the force of his mind to relax his body. At last the pain passed.

"I must leave you now, my love."

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As Jacob Brown parked the jeep under the shelter beside the house he saw the small slender figure of John Chitole come out of the house and hurry away, a shadowy black-clad figure disappearing into the pale moonlit night. I must stop making them worry about me, Jacob told himself, especially conscientious John Chitole. He went into the house and felt the empty stillness of it. He knew there was someone on night duty somewhere about the place; the knowledge did not ease his sense of aloneness. All the world, now, would be like this for him. In time he would grow used to it and it would not be as stark and startling as on this first acute awareness of it: if time is the only anodyne then make haste time! Make haste and pass! He went into the neat large modern American kitchen in Africa, took the chilled beer out of the ice box, poured it into an earthern mug and carried it through to the dining room where the sandwiches, wrapped in a snow-white napkin, were under a fly cover on the table. He took these up and with sandwiches and beer in hand he went to their bedroom and through to Maragaret's private little courtyard. There he sat down under the African stars and for the first time since he had married Margaret all those many years ago he ate alone. He remembered clear nights like this in the high Jamaican hills. And he remembered his grandma Sarah. And this grief was not more than he could bear.

The next morning he went back to the routine of his days. Over breakfast he discussed the affairs of the dozen district churches under his control with John Chitole. In the main things were going well but there were two serious problems. In one instance the priest in charge had taken up with the young wife of an old man who was a leading member of his congregation. They agreed that with this one the bishop would him-

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self have to go to the area and deal with the matter if the church in the area were not to be irreparably damaged. It was important to make the people understand that the failings of any one man were not to be seen as the failings of the church, ~~that it was the failing of the man and not of the church.~~

In the second instance the priest had upped and made off with his community's money which had been put into a mothers' union thrift scheme, the earnings from their branch of the coffee co-operative, and the church's rebuilding fund, a total of more than ~~two~~ five thousand shillings in all. The priest had taken a young woman wit him and the young woman's closest friend had said they were going to eGoli - Johannesburg - to savour some of the pleasures they heard black people enjoyed there.

"But how can we turn out priests like these!" Jacob Brown had lamented.

"Dr. Johnson, sir," Chitole said. "Remember."

"Yes," Jacob sighed. He remembered the big, hearty Doctor of Divinity who had come from America by way of Liberia to head Jacob's first theology college. The man had been so anxious to be loved by his long lost brother/Africans and sister that he over-rewarded, over-indulged them to the point of buying their goodwill; and, of course, they, being Africans, had no faults in the eyes of Dr. Johnson. Jacob had endured him for two years and then engineered his recall by threatening headquarters with his own quitting if Johnson was not recalled.

"Were these two Johnson graduates?"

"Yes, sir."

"How many more?"

"He turned out four before he left. They all had perfect records."

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"Where are the other two?"

"Don't you remember one went to the Catholics when you had Dr. Johnson recalled?"

"So that was why. Yes, I remember him, cocky little know-all wasn't he? How's he doing now?"

"Last I saw him in Kampala he was hoping they would send him to a college in Rome. Sees himself as one day becoming the first African Catholic Bishop. He envied you, sir. The position, not the responsibility."

"Will he fool them?"

"I think so. There are more Dr. Johnsons among them than there are where Dr. Johnson comes from. They do not see us as we are but as they want us to be."

"And sometimes we become, or make ourselves into, what they want us to be. And the other one?"

"He's a drunkard and petty thief in Kampala; uses his lesrning to prey on the ignorance of our people. I bailed him out of jail twic The third time I refused to go when he sent word. He was turning himself into our special social cripple."

"So you cut him off. It's hard but I think you did right. So, we have no more problems with Dr. Johnson's graduates."

"No, sir, Just these two. If you approve I'll refer the matter of the embazzlement to the police. It is a police matter."

"Yes. But I think we'll have to make good their losses. Who's there now?"

"I sent the Rev. Michael Odera. He's young but disciplined; you taught him yourself."

"You've done well, John."

"You taught us well, sir. I think you should go back to

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preparing men for service in the church. There are enough of us now, priests and lay people, to take on most of your other work. We can certainly manage the business side. But as you can see, the problem is in the training and preparing of priests."

"What about the college and schools in the areas?"

"We can oversee the work. You will go on being the overall head but we will ~~help~~ carry the burden. It is in the church and preparing people for the church that we need you most now. Let's go over the business books tomorrow and you'll see just how well they are all doing on the business side."

"Allright, John, we'll try it that way."

"I'm glad, sir. Can I prepare a small class to go with you when you go and settle the wife-stealing matter? I'd like to come too."

Jacob's face cracked in a wide grin. "Agreed. And while we're making plans for the future, I want you to prepare yourself to succeed me one day. I don't think we need another foreigner to follow me."

"You're no foreigner," Chitole protested.

"You know what I mean," Jacob said impatiently. "I want you to go to the States for a spell of trainging as soon as possible. You won't learn much from it except the inner politics of our church, and that is important." Jacob leaned back and looked at this young man who had in some ways grown closer to him than David was. "And don't ever forget that the Christian church, in all its infinite variety is the oldest ongoing political movement in the world; and it is, at times, the most revolutionary. The communists call it the opium of the people; it can be; it can also be more revolutionary than any of their communist parties. In its own quiet way our branch of the Christian church is the most revolutionary in the world today because it is closer to the spirit of the teaching of Jesus Christ.

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ever become so big and so successful as to forget that. The origin and the reason for the existence of our ~~chur~~ branch of the Christian Church is so that black folk should worship God as our own God and in our own way, not as the God brought by the Englishman or the Dutchman or the German or the Frenchman or any other white man. They all use their God, which is their perception of God, to sustai and further their own interests. They have used God in their persuit of world power and even in the service of slavery. We must use our God in the service of our freedom and of our insistence on the right to make our own choices, to make our own mistakes and to experience our own failures. You know all that; the important thing is not to get so bogged down by the pomp and the power and the position and the growing responsibilities that they become an end in themselves. Our church must always be and remain the teacher and the servant of our people, ~~the black people,~~ serving their spiritual and economic and social interests just as the best of the white churches do. (...)" Jacob stopped abruptly and smiled apologetically.

"And the state?" John Chitole prompted. "If Africans head the state, if Africans are in charge of government, what then? Do we become part of the power structure? The church of the State as the Anglicans in Britain?"

"That's in the ~~distant~~ future, John. Your generation will have to face that one."

"Which is why I raise it, sir, especially in view of your plans for me."

"You will have to face that one when the time comes. There is no pat prescription, only your basic Christian beliefs and principles as guides."

John Chitole was not satisfied but he held his peace

Mrs. Kilu came into the room and at the same time the telepho on the sideboard rang. Chitole went to the phone; Mrs. Kilu began To clear the table.

"Yes," Chitole said, put his hand over the mouthpiece and called to Jacob: "The Governor's secretary. Says its personal and urgent. " Jacob nodded; Chitole spoke into the mouthpiece, "Hold please, his Lordship is coming."

Jacob crossed the room and took the phone. "Hello, Bishop Brown here."

"Sorry to bother you so early, sir, but a rather delicate matter has come up." Jacob recognised the voice of the cool, self-assured young Englishman.

"It is your son, sir, Dr. David Brown. We only heard about it this morning."

"What about him?" Jacob sounded cold and harsh; he held on to himself.

"He flew in last night piloting his own private plane, actually not his own plane, belongs to some Algerian and he had all the proper authority to fly it."

Jacob relaxed and closed his eyes for a moment. "So?"

"That's it, sir. Our people detained him at the airport overnight. Bit of a mix up. Not used to b---- "

"Not used to black folk piloting private plane," Jacob said drily.

"Especially with the trouble going on next door," the secretary said.

"So?"

"It's all right now, sir. Once we found out an Inspector went out there and apologised and ordered his release. He's on the way

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to you now and we've alerted the people at the airstrip at ~~Jinja~~ Tororo so there shouldn't be any further trouble. We promised to call you to explain and xxx ask you to send somebody to meet him. We offered to lay on transport from Jinja but he was too angry to accept anything from us."

"I'll have someone meet him," Jacob said.

"Sir-----" There was a long pause; Jacob waited; then: "He was fearfully angry. I wasn't there myself but---"

"Wouldn't you be?" Jacob snapped. "Given the circumstances?"

"It was a genuine mistake, my lord. We all regret it. He threatened some legal action. We hope you will be able to make him understand, when he is a little calmer, that no malice or prjudice was involved. He was held when there was no British officer on the spot."

"Was his the only private plane to land at Entebbe last night?"

"I'm not sure but I don't think so." There was a pause while the man at the other end spoke to someone in the backgground then his voice came back, softer, less self-assured. "There were other private landings."

"But no other detentions?"

Again the long pause, then: "No, sir." In a flat voice with a hint of challenge to it.

"Thank you for calling," Jacob said and xxxxxxx put down the phone.

"Where is David now?" John Chitole asked.

"On his way to ~~Jinja~~ Tororo. You got it?"

"Most of it. I'll go for him myself." Chitole looked at his watch and xxf moved to the door. "Miss Batari has a mass of letters and papers for you to see and sign at the office. I'll try and time

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it so that we are back here for lunch." ~~I'll tell~~ Chitole looked at Mrs. Kilu. ~~so she'll prepare something special for him.~~" She smiled and nodded, following him to the door.

"Don't drive too fast," Jacob said as Chitole shut the door, leaving him alone.

Jacob thought: So he ~~had~~ got the message, and he ~~had~~ tried to reach here in time. Would have been too late anyway. But he did make the effort and the knowledge of that is comforting... To work and Miss B tari now. Maragaret would have been ~~so~~ pleased to know the boy cared ehough to make the effort to come home in time.

It was nearly three years since John Chitole had last seen David Brown. That time he had been here for what turned out to be a short and explosive visit after he had completed his internship at some British hospital. One of the intense political arguments he always had with his parents had taken on an ugly personal tinge and ended in a flaming row between father and son, with the son trying to shout the father down, his screaming laced with vulgar obscenities. Chitole had tried to leave when he sensed the developing ugliness. An angry Jacob, angrier than he had ever seen him before or since, had order him to stay. And Missy had withdrawn into herself, agony and desolation on her face, watching the savaging of each other by the two she loved most. He still remembered the end of that most ~~some of the~~ brutal savaging of the father by the son. There was that bit about having met the great Dr. DuBois after the last Pan-African Congress in England. "Your quiet, soft-spoken old brown gentlemen, impeecably dressed and with the patrician air you associate with the European aristocracy. Gentle and refeened he was and just as soft-spoken as you, Dad. Why are you old spades always so soft, so afraid of raising your voices? Why are you so bloody proper alway? Why don't you ever

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scream and shout at them? Why don't you ever get drunk and screw their women as they do yours? Why don't you spit on them as they spit on you? Know why? They've brainwashed you into judging yourselves by their standards! So you all try to live up to the standards they have set for you, the standards by which they judge you because you have accepted their right to sit in judgement of you. Among all of you only Garvey begins to sound like a man. He at least challenges them. And then he spoils it with his damnfool nonsense about dukes and princes and noblemen and all that crap. You're always imitating them! You imitate their churches, imitate their dress, imitate their ways, imitate even their stupidities! How you flatter them! Then you expect us to look up to you as examples of success and follow in your footsteps. "The problems of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour-line." your great man intones. Well, what has he, or you, done about it over these past fifty years and more. To be sure, he's gone from conference to conference making fine speeches and you and your lot have gone from land to land converting black souls; but to what end? To becoming soft-spoken, quiet, well-behaved imitating niggers like yourselves, forever flattering the world's white ego by trying to live up to the standards it's set for you? We've had our bellyful of that crap! We want to vomit it out! And with it all the shame that chokes us when we look at you and listen to you! We will beg and plead for nothing! We will shout and scream and curse and learn to use guns until they learn to respect us and to fear us. But I don't expect you soft-spoken brainwashed handkerchief heads will ever understand that."

It was then that Missy had groaned and wrapped her arms across her stomach as though in great pain.

Jacob, Chitole remembered, had risen from his seat, a towering

pillar of contained rage. David had risen too, just as tall, just as broad and big as his father, but younger, leaner about the middle and looking stronger./For a moment it seemed that Jacob would strike his son. Their eyes locked in mutual anger.

David had warned: "If you hit me, Daddy, I will hit you back." Then, abruptly, David had pushed back his chair and walked out of the room. Missy had given way to her tears then and retreated to her bedroom. Jacob had slumped back in his chair and stared into space.

That was the last they had seen of David for nearly three year Now he was back, more than a day late, for the burial of his mother. But he was back. For his bishop's sake, John Chitole was relieved. David was a wild one, had always been a wild and angry one, and Chitole was convinced David would die young. People like David always died young because they were always in a hurry to solve problems that had been with the world for centuries. David was forever looking for that revolution that would transform the world, forever waiting for the emergence of the great leader whom he could serve loyally in the interest of a great exciting cause. Two great saving graces about David. He did not harbour illusions about himself; and he really cared about people, especially black people because they were oppressed and exploited and he was one of them,

John Chitole raced the big bishop's limousine along the wide smooth dirt road running south with a slight westward veer. The morning air was fresh and clean; a few fleecy clouds drifted high in the sky between the lush green highlands and the pale blue placid sky. There was a gentle downward slope to the land which was dotted with cottonfields and coffee plantations. Between one village and the next, Chitole floating along at between fifty and sixty miles an hour; and the big easy American-made car did indeed float, reducing bumps and ruts to non-existence. One of the rewards of being the Bishops's

private secretary was the joy of driving this smooth/power-boat land across the vast African landscape. As he approached a village or people walking or cycling on the edge of the roadside he slowed the hugh motor to a crawl of between thirty and forty miles. Then, free of the village and the people, he pressed his foot on the accelerator and/~~fxmx~~ joyed in the powerful surge forwerd that pinned him back against the seat. This must be how flying a plane felt.

A little over an hour after he started out from the mission he reached the outskirts of Tororo and the circle of smooth well surfaced roads one of which pointed the way across the border into Kenya and Kitale to the north and Kisumu to the south. He had driven across that border with the bishop a few years back, to Kisumu and a lakeside meeting with some Kenyan CHristians. An arrogant young British D.C. not much older than he was, had summoned the bishop to his office to question him about his business. He had told the bishop that they did not have any time or liking for any kind of black independent churches in Kenya. The local Christians who had invited the bishop had apologised and quietly abandoned their plans to establish a branch of the church. Now the whole place was on fire.

He slowed down to a crawl in the busy town with its hundreds of bicycles; it took him almost half as long to get the the airstrip at the other end of town as it had taken him to make the journey from the Mission to Tororo.

David was outside the aistrip office. Tall, chest thrown out, head erect, in khaki shirt and pants, a suitcase with a leather jacket over it at his feet, dark glasses shading his eyes. Hw towered above a reddish young white man who stood with him. A few black workmen watched from the background. David recognised the limousine and picked up his suitcase and jacket. John Chitole came out of the car. They embraced warmly. The audience in the background showed their

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"John!" David boomed, and reaching the small slender John Chitole in a few giant strides. Momentarily they looked at each other, Chitole tilting his head upward to look into the large brown eyes with their hint of sadness in repose. Now those eyes were laughing with the joy of reunion. David Brown wrapped his arms about Chitole and all but lifted him off the ground. "Long time," he said.

"Welcome home," Chitole said.

David pushed him away to arms-length to examine him again.

"Faithful John, still the same. How's he?"

"He's allright now. He took it very badly but he's over that."

"I tried, John. I really tried."

"I know. You are here now. He needs you."

"Did she suffer?"

"Great toward the end."

"Oh God."

"Come, let's go home."

Chitole turned to the aistrip manager who had drawn near.

"His plane will be allright?"

"Yes, reverend. I'll see to it myself; we'll roll it under shelter."

Chitole used his eyes to send a silent message to David Brown. A flash of stubbornness passed over David's face then vanished; he sighed softly. A smile passed over his face without reaching his eyes. He looked at the reddish young white man.

"Thank you. Appreciate your help; not like at Entebbe."

"That's allright," the white man said. "Did some flying in the war myself; nothing special. My real interest was always in making them fly rather than flying them."

The friendliness reached David's eyes.

"Out here long?" he asked.

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"Coming up to eighteen months."

"Like it?"

The young white man's eyes lit up.

"The most beautiful place I've ever seen! And that lake of your like sailing on an ocean! We love it here, my wife and I. It gave us a chance for a new start. There wasn't much for my kind of mechanic to do at home after the war."

"Planning on staying?"

"Dunno. Too soon to decide, and I'm not sure we'd be welcome when you are independent. May be like over there," he waved vaguely in the direction of Kenya. "I think we missed our chance to make friends."

"Nations don't make friends," Chitole said. "People do."

"And friendships can be earned," David mocked Chitole.

"I'M inclined to think like you," the white man looked soberly at David. "It's not like a job."

"On the other hand he could be right," David said. "You work at courting a girl to gain a wife so why not at gaining a wife?"

"We must go," John Chitole reminded David. He smiled at the white man. "Sorry I don't know your name Mr---"

"Jones, a very Welsh name."

"Thank you Mr. Jones."

"I'll be taking off in a couple of days," David said.

"Want me to check it over for you? Won't cost much and I'll do a good job, even if I say so myself; better than most."

"Allright!" David's smile lit up his eyes now. He pushed his hand into his pocket and took out the plane's keys and gave them to Jones.

Chitole got into the driver's seat of the limousine. David got

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in beside him. On an impulse Jones walked round to the driver's side and leaned down.

"I know you bring a mechanic and his helpers from Kampala regularly to check the bishop's limousine. You don't have to. I can take care of this and you won't have to pay for transport and subsistence and the like. I'm not trying to take anybody's work away but if you want to save on it I am available."

"I'll discuss it with the bishop," Chitole said.

"Wait," David said. "Why do you want to do this?"

The man lowered his voice. "I'm here on a two year contract. About six months left to go. I don't want to renew, and they may not ask me to. If I can work up my own mechanic's shop it might be possible to stay for a while longer."

"Why won't they renew?"

"We don't mix with the bank manager and the estate and factory managers and we're not much on high church so my wife and I go to your local pubs for a beer or a waragi at the weekends and keep ourselves to ourselves. I don't think they like that. Anyway, he turned his eyes to John "if you're interested I could begin buildin, up my own shop for when the contract runs out."

"I'll let you know, " Chitole said.

"I'm sure---" David began.

"I'll let you know," Chitole repeated insistently, starting the car.

Jones nodded and stood back as the big car purred to life and moved off.

As Jones entered his bare little office one of the black onlookers called out: "Bishop's sons like you, Bwana! That's good!"

"I hope so," Jones called back.

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As the bishop's limousine slowly moved through the fairly heavy, mainly bicycle traffic of Tororo there were many waves of recognition, mostly for the car, because it was the bishop's car, but many also for the bishop's secretary who was a know and distinguished young churchman in his own right as far as the people of the small town were concerned. A few of them even recognised the bishop's own son, the one who had gone away. Word of his coming, flying his own plane, was spreading through the little town even then.

David asked: "Why the coyness about Jones' offer? I thought you would jump at it. You've nothing to lose even if it doesn't work. That Kampala Indian importer's mechanic isn't up to much and over-priced."

"I know."

"Then what?"

"We have to work out an arrangement that will pass Jones' skills on to our own people."

David slid down in his seat, closed his eyes, and cursed himself in a soft whisper for the best part of half a minute. He was, he said, a damned stupid smart-arsed-big-mouthed-bird-brained-fart-who-underrated-those-from-whom-he-should-learn-which-was-the-true-hall-mark-of-conceited-shittines.

When he had done John Chitole smiled wickedly and said:

"You know it's worse than that. If you were like that with everybody we could foregive for being what you say you are. You are not that. You've just always under-rated your father. You've refused to learn from him. And there's a lot to learn there, David, believe me, I know."

"I believe you."

"Until you face him. Why?"

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"Probably because he is my father."

"He's my father too; and I learn from him."

"You're not saddled with the damned biological connection."

"That's a copout."

"Yeah," David sighed.

They left the outskirts of the town; Chitole increased the speed of the car; the need to concentrate on the road and the steady hum of the car demanded silence. The green fields flew past; an easy sunny tranquility hung over the fast moving landscape which not even the small dust cloud in the wake of the speeding car could disturb.

David watched the familiar landscape flash by. How often he had taken this road to Tororo, or to Jinja beyond, or to Kampala and its gay and showy highclass nightlife among the Baganda. The road home; the road away from home. Which was it now? A reminder of things past only. It really was no longer the road home because there was no longer the urge to flee from it; so it was no longer the road from home. But always it would be a reminder of things past of childhood and growing up in the high green hills of Africa; of people and faces and sounds that were part of that growing up and of the landscape of the mind and the heart and the imagination. Now his mother lay buried in a cemetary in these African hills; she had come all the way from the New World to die and be buried in the Old World; not in the land from which her ancestors were taken in chains, for they were not brought from this part of Africa: they had been taken from the hot steamy Guinea Coast which was still, today, farther away from here than London or Paris or New York. That is how the masters of the earth had decreed it should be; and until that was broken Africa could not be free. ~~That fellow~~ Nkrumah, who was shaking up the

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Gold Coast and all West Africa, had said that. He'd said it first at the Pan African conference in England where David, in company with a bunch of other students, had seen the legendary DuBois in the flesh for the first time; and he'd said it again when he came out of jail to become the first democratically elected Prime Minister of a British African colony. Till the political and power/centres gravity of Africa are Africanised Africa will not be free. But how to begin to look inward instead of always outward? Will Nkrumah and Padmore and DuBois and their peoples achieve it? Or will Garvey's ideas? And how?

The well-sprung speeding car, almost floating across the rough road, with its steady, low, stifled hum, lulled David into a hazy state between sleeping and waking, between thinking and dreaming, till each was inseparable from the other. After a while, the tension and the weariness of the long solo flight from Algeria, and the overnight detention at Entebbe, eased somewhat and he dozed off...

John Chitole touched him; he woke. They were approaching the Mission. How often had he at this point looked up at the ridge of rolling hills with the clusters of buildings on all of them, spreading in all directions as far as the eye could see, and becoming a series of villages, all based on and sustained by the co-operative industry and productive activity guided and controlled by the Mission. It was almost a town, not much smaller than Tororo with its six thousand plus people. The big difference was that this was a greater hive of productivity. There were canefields on either side of the road by which they travelled now; and further back, on the sloping land, shaded coffee fields streched away for miles. And on one hill were the cotton gins and the sugar mills and the vast flat concrete areas for drying the coffee. These co-operatives his father had started, and the people had taken to so easily and so well had become something

of a missionary showcase. Rich people, usually white Americans, brough here to look on the work being done, nearly always ended up signing large cheques or bequeathing portions of their estates to the church to carry on its missionary work. The other missions in the land, all white controlled, were nonplussed, disturbed, envious of the material success of this mission. A few claimed, in private, that it was because it was a black racist church, fostering black racism and tolerating pagan animist customs. But try as they may, they could not, and did not, inspire their congregations to the levels of co-operative effort achieved by the mission over which Bishop Jacob Brown presided. Only the efforts of the Catholics came within measuring distance of being as successful, especially after they started to entrust more responsibility to their own native clergy. But the Catholics were less interested in running commercially successful farms and factories and bakeries and butcheries and grocery shops, so their missions were not as integrate with the everyday lives of their parishioners as was the mission of Bishop Brown. Indeed, one European member of the Legislative Council had, many years back, asked questions in Legco as to whether this black American mission station should continue to be treated as a religious organisation or as a straight commercial investment venture exploiting the native under the guise of religion. He had called for an enquiry and the expulsion of the mission. For a while back then it looked as though the mission might be closed. The leaders of the white Christian missions maintained a Pontious Pilate-like neutralit Only the times, and the person in the White House at the time, or, more accurately, the wife of that person, made the difference. Jacob had warned his headquarters of what was brewing. They had mounted a powerful lobby in Washington; the support of the lady in the White House had proved decisive. After some exchanges between Washington

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and Whitehall the matter of the closing of the black American Mission was dropped. The terrible war came shortly afterwards and the black American mission, like the entire American nation, gave massive support to the war effort. When that war ended the world had so changed, American power in the world had so grown, that anything American, including black American church missions, ceased to be seen as foreign or targets for expulsion from anywhere.

The car crested the first and second hills, passed the school and dormatories, the huge playground, and climbed the third hill where the great church stood, its tall spire reaching up to the heavens, and near it the small seminary and the office complex, and to the right of that the bishop's residence in vast grounds with many trees and seats and walkways, reminiscent of the peaceful quiet of that campus in faraway Atlanta and as lush and tropically luxuriant as the villages in the hills of Jamaica. The car crawled up to the house.

Remembrances of his childhood in this tranquil place flowed through the mind of David Brown. This, not the hills of Jamaica, or the pine-scented air Atlanta, as for his father, was the beginning, the point of departure for David Brown. This particular piece of earth was the beginning of his connection with the world of men.

The car pulled up. Mrs. Kilu and many others appeared at the door. David felt anxious suddenly.

"Come in with me, John. Just for a minute."

Chitole touched his arm and shook his head. David got out of the car and reached for his bag on the back seat. Someone took it from him . Again he looked imploringly at Chitole; again Chitole shook his head. David turned to the house. Mrs. Kilu opened her arms in welocme. He held her close and murmured:

"Mama Kilu, Mama Kilu."

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She shivered convulsively. "Oh David, you have come."

"Too late," he said.

"No," she said and pushed him away. "Go to your father; he needs you."

"In his study?"

She nodded. He went into the house and made for the bishop's office. The others dispersed to go about their business; Chitole to park the car and clean up while allowing father and son to be together alone; Adina Kilu ~~went back~~ to her ktichen to supervise the very special meal for the return of David.

David opened the study door. Jacob looked up. For a moment they stared silently at each other; then Jacob rose and came round the desk and offered his son his hand, an awkward uncertain gesture of welcome. David brushed the hand aside and wrapped his arms about his father. They held each other in a long silent embrace. Then David said: "I'm so sorry, Dad; so sorry I'm late. I tried."

"Its allright, David. You are here. She will understand."

They stood back, looked at each other, trapped in their shared grief and in the myth that men do not weep; ~~and~~ so they wept inwardly, without tears and without the relief tears bring.

"Can we go up there now?"

"Yes," Jacob said and opened the door and led the way out.

He had taken off his bishop's clothes and wore khaki pants and shirt, short-sleeved and open-necked. They went through the kitchen and told Mrs. Kilu where they were going, and she warned them not to be more than an hour or the food would spoil. Then father and son got into the jeep and drove to the cemetary and the fresh grave of the woman who had been wife and mother to them.

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A man and a boy worked at the graveside, building a headstone a pile of cutstone and a wooden board heaped with mixed mortar their building material. The flowers and the wreaths had been removed from the grave and stacked in a huge mound to the side; most of them had withered, what had not drooped sadly wilted. The man and the boy stopped worked as Jacob and David came up. They bowed to the bishop and withdrew. Some distance away, out of earshot, a group of men were at work digging a fresh grave.

Father and son stood side by side at the head of the grave.

"I wish I had seen her before she died," David said. "Now I can never make peace for the way I left."

Jacob could not find words to comfort him for he too wished the boy had been there for her to look on him for the last time. He knew how much she had wanted that. But he is your son and you have to comfort him.

"We didn't know she was dying until it happened. It looked like a remission three days before."

That would have been the time when she wanted to see me, David thought. Aloud he said: "It often does just before the end."

"They did everything they could," Jacob said. "They were very thoughtful; they spared no effort; Dr. Okello was very good, very compassionate."

"And I wasn't here," David said coldly, harshly. "I'll try to see Okello and thank him myself."

"He's appreciate that."

"And you? Do you forgive me?"

"There is nothing to forgive, my son."

"I know how close you were, Daddy."

Jacob put his arm about his son's shoulders. It was a very

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long time since he had been 'Daddy' to this big grown man who had been both the pride and the pain of Margaret's life, and of his.

Suddenly, unexpectedly, David dropped to his knees and took two fistfuls of earth and clenched them tightly after a while, then, next he opened his hands and let the earth drop, two balls made by the pressure of his grip which collapsed on impact with the ground.

"Some of the desert people pray to the earth," he said, "Like you and John - and Mama before she died - pray to your God."

"Some of the people here, too," Jacob said. "I expect all the people who are close to the earth do."

"You have served your God so well; so has she---"

Jacob sensed the direction of his thoughts. He said: "We won't start a metaphysical argument here, will we?"

"No," David replied softly. "Not here; not now. But I wish your God had taken me instedd."

Jacob felt comforted now, recognising that which was part of his Margaret, and, more dimly remembered, part of his grandma Sarah, in this grieving man who was his son. The passion and the grieving transcended time and death and affirmed the special grace of caring. Jacob thought: perhaps this is the moment for metaphysical argument; but I won't tell him so.

He laid his hand on his son's bowed head; briefly, fleetingly, there was the illusion of David as the little boy, of Margaret warning them not to be late for Mrs. Kilu's special lunch.

"Time to go," Jacob said, and walked away, leaving David to have his moment alone with his dead. There was all the time in the world for Jacob to come up here to visit. Not for David; his life was elsewhere, had been elsewhere for sometime now.

He got into the jeep and waited; and after a while David came and joined him and they drove back to the house in silence.

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The people they passed stopped what they were doing, bowed their heads in show of respect, or waved, or called out. For David this had always been part of the problem of growing up here. It was never private; everywhere he went, everything he did, everything he said, was measured against the reality of being the bishop's son; he was always under scrutiny, always being measured against what the bishop said and did. He was never allowed to be just himself; he resented it, and the resentment grew with time till it became part of the anger he vented against his parents, part of the anger that grew, ultimately, into the alienation that drove him from this beautiful place. A man needs to belong to himself; a man needs to feel judged for himself and for what he is rather than as the appendage of another. Here, no matter what happened, he was always the bishop's son, his personhood reduced to that. The resentment of it became destructive. Now, in the moment of their grief, that resentment was absent and he responded to the people they passed, acknowledging their show of sympathy.

John Chitole met Jacob and David at the front door. He quickly sensed the peace between them; he relaxed inwardly as they went in.

"I took the liberty of bring Michael Odera to lunch."

Jacob nodded; David smiled and took up his suitcase from under the table near the door.

"My old room?"

"Expect so," Jacob said and went to his own quarters.

When his father was out of earshot, David said to Chitole:

"Don't worry, there won't be any fireworks."

"I'm glad. He needs peace now."

"He'll have it, with or without Michael Odera's presence."

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"Trust you to read my motive."

"He did too; you didn't try to hide it."

"Peace at any price," Chitole said teasingly. Then, seriously "You all right?"

"Yes; hurting but all right. We're all hurting, aren't we. See you soon."

David went to his room and Chitole went to the dining room where Michael Odera waited. Odera was another of the many neat small-boned bright young men from all over Uganda, and further afield, who had, over the years, gravitated to Jacob Brown's mission because it was known far and wide as a place managed by black people where ambitious young black men could work their way through school and college. Jacob had not found another woman with the drive and determination of Mrs. Willis so the young women here had not fared as well. Medical facilities here were much better than they had been in Liberia so the mission had a clinic and dispensary and regular nurse but no hospital and no resident doctor as it had in Liberia. But the flow of bright and eager young men, full of dreams and high hopes, to the mission was greater than ever it had been in West Africa. All the mission's many enterprises were managed by the young men who had been trained in business management by a bright young Chicagoan, now dead. at the mission. A few of the brightest ones had been sent abroad for further training. Some had become priests, some doctors, some were rising in the public service as opportunties for Africans opened. It was easier for them here than in Kenya, or further down to the south, where white settlers communties were particularly resentful of the mission-trained Africans, competing for their jobs, especially those with the kind of pride and self-respect and self-assurance associated with the mission headed by the black bishop from America. Michael

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Odera had, at age fifteen, made the long journey from his village on the western shore of Lake Victoria where it bordered on Tanganyika. It had taken him many weeks and he had arrived thin and hungry, but he had arrived and told the bishop in a mixture of broken English and his own tribal tongue that he had come to learn to be a doctor. That was more than a dozen years ago, and on the way he had become one of the small corps of Jacob Brown's bright young priests who, under the leadership of John Chitole, would take over the work of Jacob Brown when he could no longer carry on. When the time came for Chitole to go to America to learn the ~~church~~ 'politics' of the church of which Jacob had talked, Michael Odera would become the bishop's secretary, the effective administrative officers running the day-to-day affairs of the church and its outposts.

"There will be peace between them," Chitole told Odera.

"Then you do not need an inhibiting presence."

Chitole sipped at his cool banana beer and smiled. "Am I really that obvious. The bishop, David, now you, all see through my little scheme."

Odera threw back his head laughed. "You wanted us, to, Mr. Schemer "Why?"

"To create other points and issues for thought and attention. To distract from the main issue. So they ask; what's he up to? Why's he doing this in such an obvious way; and they think about that for a while. Its a little distraction but it helps."

"So I can go and eat in peace."

"Stay and learn. Peace does not mean an absence of challenge and stimulation. Not with these two. Don't you want to know what David's doing, whose plane he's flying, what his plans are? Stay and learn."

"Learn what?" Jacob entered, wearing a clean shirt fresh and

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"What David's been doing," Chitole said.

"Whose plane he's flying," Odera said. "I didn't know he could fly a plane."

"Neither did I," Jacob mused. He took a bottle of chilled beer from the ice bucket on the side table, opened it and poured the sparking liquid into a tall thin glass. He took a sip and pursed his lips appreciatively; this banana beer, pombe, had become his favourite 'strong' drink over the years; it was almost as cooling and refreshing as he remembered his grandma Sarah's fruit concoctions were in the distant days of his youth. So much here to remind him of Jamaica: the tranquil green world of lush fruit trees, and the sudden riot of flaming colours , and the cool breeze blowing across the hills , muting the fierce heat of the blazing sun, so that you need sweaters sometimes , as you do in Jamaica, and you need warm blankets on your bed at night sometimes. It would be lonely lying in a bed alone after all these years Each passing night would make it lonelier than the one before. Death condemns the living to loneliness...Stop being sorry for yourself! He caught John Chitole's eye and moved quickly to his seat at the head of the table; Chitole seemed to have read his mind as grandma Sarah used to do.

Mrs. Kilu and one of her helpers wheeled the big trolley into the room. David came in hard on their heels and joined Michael Odera at the side-table while Mrs. Kilu and the others transferred the food from the trolley to the long table. The room grew suffused with the rich aroma of highly seasoned food. Mrs. Kilu had used her considerable cooking skills to their utmost to conjure up the kind of meal Missy used to prepare for her family on high days and holiday. There was crisply golden 'jerk pork' , friesassee chicken, Jamaican-

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American-style, floating in a rich coconut sauce; a large dish of mixed green vegetables, prepared as a savoury in the style of the American blacks of the Southern States at the time when meat was rarely available to them; and there were yam and sweet potatoes and a huge dish of rice, prepared Indian style, with each individual grai swollen to its maximum, fat, dry, translucent.

"A wonderful feast, Mama Kilu!" David exclaimed.

She glowed when the young man put his arm about her. Then she left the room hurriedly, overcome by the frsh realisation of the absence of Missy who had always presided at such events. Her seat at the other end of the long table was empty; no plate where hers usually was. The four men knew what had passed through Mrs. Kilu's mind and for a moment they were silent. Then David raised his glass and turned to the empty chair and the empty place.

"To the absent one."

"The absent one," they echoed, each in his own individual way.

Jacob said grace, then gestured to them to help themselves.

As was the custom at this house, the talk began near the end of the main dish. Jacob looked at Michael Odera and said: "Michael wants to know about your plane, David."

"And when you learnt to fly," Odera added.

"And all about what you're doing, of course," Chitole grinned, "every little secret like 'Are you married yet? Or courting'. You know, everything."

David leaned back, looked at his father, raised one eyebrow:

"And you, Dad? No questions from you?"

"Those will do, for starters."

"O.k. The plane belongs to the hospital where I work; it's on on the edge of the dessrt. It's a very small, Arab-owned hospital

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ill-equipped and always short of drugs. So why a plane? Because our patents are in the desert and the desert is like a vast ocean, many, many times the size of your nearly 27,000 square miles Lake Victoria; you can drop the great lake into the desert and lose it; I'm not sure it would even wet much of the desert. But the desert is one reason for the plane. The doctors, there are usually four or fiv all learn to fly. That's how I learnt to fly. Oh, the pay is good. Anything else?"

"You say the desert is one reason---?" Chitole said.

"The other is political," David said. "I don't think that will interest you."

"Since when?" Jacob asked.

David hesitated for a long time, then, apparently making up his mind, he looked at the others in turn, his father last of all so that they were staring at each other when he said:

"A war is coming. Not the white settler agitation you hear about in the news; the Algerians themselves are preparing for war."

"Against France?" Jacob said.

"No; for their freedom. Against colonialism and the settlers. The settlers have got wind of something coming which is why they're agitating to break away from France and become like South Africa. If DeGaulle resists them for another year the Algerians will be ready."

"And you're involved in that?" Chitole asked. "More than in just being a doctor there?"

"Yes," David said quietly.

"Why?" Jacob demanded. "Why there? They're not even black."

"Black, brown, yellow; what difference does it make, Dad! They are getting ready to fight colonialism in the only way open to them. They are doing what the black people of South Africa should have done

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years ago before the British gave independence to the whites there. I know the times were different and the circumstances harder but now, after the settlers have consolidated their power, the black people are going to suffer much more grievously when they do rise against the whites. The settler-opppressor is always more brutal when he's in control. It's happening right next door. They're not yet in full control and look at what they're doing to the Kikuyu.

"Then why not join the Kikuyu?" Jacob murmured.

"Come ,Dad! Outsiders can't get involved in a tribal war."

"But in an Arab war?" Jacob pressed. "If it's anti-colonialism then the Kikuyu uprising is of the same quality as your Arab friends!

"You're over-simplifying, Dad. Of course the Kikuyu rising is qualitatively the same in the sense that its a struggle to reclaim stolen land. But what is it beyond that? When they have regained their land,what will they stand for?"

"What will your Algeria stand for?"

"For socialism, for equality for all ther people, including their women; they will not go on mutilating their women and call it circumcision. I still remember the horror with which Mama found out about this and told us./ Do you remember?" ...

Jacob nodded. "But their women are behind the veil; just another, more psychological,form of subjugation."

"The emancipation of their women is part of the declared objectives of their struggle. I know; I've seen the draft of their independence constitution. I've met and talked to the leaders."

"Allright," Jacob conceded. "So they will free their women and inaugurate an age of equality."

"More than that, Dad. They are going to reach outward to all exploited colonial people everywhere. Nasser of Egypt, in spite of his own difficulties, has already made contact with Nkrumah in the

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Gold Coast."

Jacob nodded again. "And as usual, all anybody has to do is offer friendship and black brother falls all over himself to seize on it; without question; without examining motive; always ready to sell his own for the illusion of a wider friendship. Always reaching outward to others, putting ourselves at their disposal, looking to others for our salvation."

"You don't see," David tried to suppress his mounting anger. "This is an alliance that is being forged; an alliance of the exploited of the earth. The only alternative to such an alliance through which we will take what is ours by force is your slow, painstaking turn-the-other-cheek way. They make alliance for their wars, why shouldn't we?"

"But David ---" Chitole began.

David brushed the interruption aside. "I know you don't like to talk of war and violence but that's the only thing they understand. You may think Gandhi's non-violent morality changed the British Raj. Well, if the Japanese didn't humiliate them and put the scare of their lives into them none of old Ghandi's high-mindedness would have meant a damn. They're only a little shrewder than the others and know how to let go while the going is good and still a little profitable. The French are going to hold on too long because they believe their own propaganda."

"But David --" Chitole persisted. "These alliances for war you talk of, they are alliances of one group of whites against another group of whites. They're not alliances of whites against the rest."

"Oh John! Aren't they? They are fighting among themselves for the spoils of their earlier alliance which was an alliance of whites against all the rest. They first conquered the rest in one great

alliance of whites which gave them dominion of the whole eaerth."

Chitole raised his hand. "Now we must make a matching alliance of black and brown -- "

"And yellow."

"--- and yellow. We must make such an alliance to conquer---"

"Repossess; not conquer."

"-----allright, reposses. To reposess, using their own methods, what they had taken from us. Then what, David? What is to prevent us from then splitting up into black against black, black against brown, black against yellow, and every possible variations on these, to do what they just did in their so-called second great war. Is this what we really want? Is this the freedom to which we are heading?"

David closed his eyes and held himself in check.

"He's really taught you well!"

Chitole raised his voice a little. "Rudeness to your father is no answer, David. And you're showing the contempt that you say only Europeans have for us. I resent that; I am sure Michael does too; but put it down to the heat of the moment. We respect and admire and love your father. He is our religious father; but we think for ourselves."

"Through his perspective," David said softly, refusing to be put on the defensive. "And you of all people, John, know I hold no contempt. How could I?"

Jacob began to say something but again Chitole raised his hand

"Please sir... The question David: Is this the freedom you want for us? To be like them? To end up in alliances against each other for the spoils after we've won?"

"You worry about after we've won when the battle's not even

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begun. Let's worry about after when we've won, or, at least, when the battle has been carried to a point where victory is in sight."

"No, David," Jacob said. "What you fight for determines how you fight, and how you fight determines how you win, and all these, together, determines what comes after."

"That is your way," David said slowly, quietly. "I've not always shown it but I do respect you for it the manner in which you have stuck to your way. It is good and noble but oh, Lord, it is so slow! It will take hundreds of years and they will go on resisting you, subtly and with shows of friendship and concern for as long as they can, but brutally and savagely if they have to. They will not allow your independent Christian communities to really prevail today any more than they were prepared to allow your grandfather's church to prevail independently. They'll find a way of burning yours down just as they burned his down. They'll find a way of making your own people do it for them. And I and my generation cannot bear to wait for that and to watch that. The only thing they really understand and respect is power and force. How a great technological civilisation can be based on the use of raw and naked power, on violence and the threat of violence, is something for you highminded Christians to explore and lay bare. We, my generation, are going to meet it on its own terms. When I go into parts of the desert where the early fighting has already begun, I carry a machine gun slung over my shoulders and my doctor's bag of healing tricks in my free hand. All the doctors at that little hospital do. And we all know how to use those guns."

Chitole said: "You must think of what comes after. Using the gun is easy. You kill or are killed; but life is not as simple as that, for life goes on after you kill or are killed; your life is

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part of the whole process of life, of the lives of all the people who live, who ever lived, and who will live in the future; and how each one of us lives and dies contributes to the texture of the quality of the whole stream of all life. You know this so you must think of what comes after."

"What could be more important than that we should reclaim our personhood?" David demanded. "They will not concede it; so you claim it by whatever method necessary, Their commitment to force and violence dictates your method. Their 'gentle-Jesus-meek-and-mild' religion inhibits, as it is intended to, your use of that method. Oh, I concede that your church is exposing and countering their blatant use of the teachings of Christ. Your Christ is a revolutionary; I accept that. But he walked the earth when the power equation was rather simpler than it now is. And his teachings were always open to the kind of manipulation we are now so familiar with. I don't think your Christ would be against my carrying a machine-gun. I think he would be sad at the need for it, sad at the lives to be lost, but I don't think he would oppose it. Do you?"

"I'm inclined to agree with you," Chitole said. "But he would be concerned with what comes after. Of that I'm certain." Chitole looked quickly at his bishop. The expression in Jacobs's eyes reassured him.

"What comes after is important and is determined by how you fight," Jacob said. "If you fight and are defeated, what happens to the cause of black folk? That is part of what comes after. If you are victorious, will the Arabs, later on, come to the aid of the black folk as you now go their aid? That too is part of what comes after."

"You've overlooked one part to it," David said. "What your

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question implies is a one-way street is not. I - and there are quite a few others like me -am not going to 'their' aid. I, and we, are going to our aid. I had never used a machine-gun before, I had never even used an ordinary gun before; I had never handled grenades before; I had never assembled bombs before; I had never been able to disable a strong man with one blow before; I had never flown a plane before. I can do all these things now; they have taught me to do these things and, as I say, I am not the only black person working and learning with them. So it isn't a one-way street. They are sharing their knowledge of the skills of war with us; they are teaching us to speak eloquently and with deadly skill in the only language they respect. That's how another black man up there, a fellow from the French West Indies who's also a doctor, described it. Bit like you, John, small, quiet, brainy man; bit sickly, though; but you should see the skill and speed with which he can use a machine gun!"

"And what comes after this deadly skill?" Jacob wondered aloud. "If you become so good at it that you see it in this admiring beautiful language, if killing in itself becomes an act of purification, will you be able to stop killing when this particular reason for it is all over, after you have won your independence? The Europeans seem unable to stop; their history in the last few centuries has become an endless bloodletting with occassional pauses for rebuilding their manpower needs and rearming themselves. Is this where we are going? Is this what you want?"

"Of course not; you know that!"

"Not consciously, perhaps," Jacob said. "I'm sure they didn't want to be trapped in an endless cycle of wars; but it happened."

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"So how do you avoid it?" Chitole asked.

Jacob said: "They talked once of beating their swords into ploughshares. Now they use bombs and tanks; how do you beat those into ploughshares?

And the atom bombs they dropped on those Japanese cities; into what can they talk of beating them? The Japanese are not white; the next targets will be; the white communists, perhaps; or the white capitalists, or the white this or the white that. It began with the 'little yellow guys'. It won't end there. Are you saying we are so superior in understanding and feeling that we can step on to this same path of force and violence and the use of the gun and somehow avoid coming out at the other end just like them?"

"Of course not." David felt trapped.

"Then how do you avoid it?" Chitole repeated.

"We take our chance. We learn from their mistakes and try not to repeat them. What you are suggesting, following your line of thinking, would condemn us to another century or more of colonialism and domination. That is the alternative to not taking up the gun against them."

"We are not saying you must not take up the gun," Chitole said. Then, looking quickly at Jacob, he went on: "At least I'm not saying that. I don't think your father is either. What I am saying is that if you do not think of it, if you are not coscious of it, if it is not part of your planning, you have no hope of avoiding ending up where they now are, in an endless cycle of wars and prparations for war."

"I would go further, John," Jacob said. "I would say that unless those who have to use the gun hate what they have to do, unless there is a burning and sustained anger at what they have to

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do, they will, sooner or later, come to joy in the use of the gun for its self, and then they will become like the enemy they fight. There can be no greater moral defeat than ending up perpetuating that which you fight against. To fight against tyranny to become a tyrant yourself, to fight against violence, repression and be violent and repress in your turn, that is the ultimate moral defeat."

"What the heck are you two saying!" David exploded. "War as a decent Christian moral affair! Killing with compassion! Hating what you have to do because it is right! We'll never win if we use our guns on your highminded terms! I think you're wrong! I love you both for your highmindedness but you are wrong! We can never win like that! We must risk your fears and hope that when the war is over when we are free, there will be people like you around to remind us of the evils of war and why we had to fight in the first place, and point us in another direction. Now, we must fight them on the only terms they respect; and that we will do, whatever the price."

Chitole began to reply but Jacob held up his hand with the commanding air of his bishop; so Chitole sat back and held his peace.

"That is as much as we can hope for, John. For him to hope we will be around, or some of us, when their fighting is over. The hope and the promise is that they would heed our pointing them in another direction."

"Will they listen," Chitole pondered aloud.

"I think so," David said; then, more uncertainly: "I hope they do."

"We cannot ask for me," Jacob said, as Mrs. Kilu and her helpers came in to clear the table.

Michael Odera thanked Chitole with his eyes, chatted with David for a while, then slipped away to tend to the mission's busines A strong mood of goodwill flowed between Jacob, Chitole and David

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making them unwilling to break up the little gathering. The pressure and intensity had gone out of it; an atmosphere of calm geniality prevailed. They wandered on to the verendah/then on to the sprawling lawn with its broad-bladed grass that clung low to the earth and hardly ever needed to be cut. It was as though the grass had discovered, through trial and error, a way of looking cropped without having to suffer the damage of being chopped.

David had spent his first years playing in these sprawling grounds, first with his mother and father, then with the little boys and girls of the mission population who became his friends. He rememberd his first treehouse in the old Flame Tree to which they were now strolling. Margaret had planted the tree at that spot because it was a very narrow wind channel, a spot through which a gentle cool breeze blew no matter what the time of day, no matter what the season of year. If the nights were hot and sticky they went and sat in the cool breeze under the Flame Tree; when the sun was at its hottest there was the balm of the cool breeze under the Flame Tree. So Jacob and David had, with their own hands, and without any help from anyone else, built a special bench and table on the spot where the shade of the Flame Tree remained longest. Then they had grown ambitious and built the treehouse for David and hung up the strong sisal hammock for Marggaret. The righthand side of the bench had a special bookrest so Jacob could go out there for an afternoon's reading. Before they reached the Flame Tree one of Mrs. Kilu's young helpers reached the Flame Tree and left them a large jug of fruit juice and tumblers. David slipped one arm through his father's and the other through Chitole's.

They were all acutely conscious of the absence of Margaret.

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"I've only got tomorrow," David said, thinking of all the special things he had shared with his mother, "Can we make a ~~sa~~ safari to the mountain?"

"Yes," Jacob said. "Allright with you,John?"

"Yes," Chitole said. "We'll start at dawn."

"Good," David said. "I'm eager to see it again."

Jacob and Chitole knew why. A Safari to the slopes of Mount Elgon had always been a special holiday treat Margaret laid on for him whenever David returned from college or universtiy or, later, from further travels about which he did not always want to talk.

At its base the mountain is over 4,ooo feet above sea level, so when they were two thousand feet up its slope they were over 6,oo feet above sea level and there was a sharp chill to the morning air. It was an easy, steady climb with the clouds backing off and retreating higher up the mountain as they advanced. They had hired two villagers from the settlement at the foot of the mountain to carry their hamper and for any heavy clearing and that might be needed. Now was,and the familiar path was only slightly overgrown. The two villagers marched ahead, the hamper between them, casually swinging their machetes, called pangas here, at the occasional vine hanging over the path. When they were 3,000 feet up, or over 7,000 feet above sea level, the climate changed. The rich smell of wood and leaf decay gave way to a sharp driness in the air which took on a cold wintery bite. The carriers loosened the blanket each had carried slung across his shoulder; each blanket became a thick warm enveloping cloak. David put on his long-sleeved airman's leather jacket; Jacob and Chitole pulled on thick long sleeved sweaters.

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The earth below, from this vantage point, was a thing of unutterable green beauty. Far to the west, sunlight struck one of the many small rivers that were part of the many offshoots of the great lake and which all finally converged at a point to start the great Nile on its way through the lowlands of Egypt. and the water made At certain angles, the sun/ flashing lights, as if someone were signalling.

At 3,500 feet, or/7,500 above seal level, they all relaxed. over Wild creatures, leopards, and lions were not likely to be this high up; and the big apes of the high mountains would avoid men as long as men let them be. They were not aggressive, would not attack unless threatened.

The mountain path veered to the right in a long upward arc and brought them to a narrow ledge, and the dry northern plains of Kenya lay below them, an enormous desolate stretch of parched earth in the far distance, dropping down to the great Rift Valley running all the way up to Ehtiopia and the Sudan, with Lake Rudolph too far away for the naked eye to see. Near the mountain and to the south-east the Kenyan land was more inviting and fertile. The Kenyan town of Kitale was a misty dot in the clear morning light.

They had all stopped to look. This had always been one of Margaret's favourite lookout points. Looking south and east from this point Maragaret had always seen this stretch of Kenya, as the beginning of life: the great Rift Valley as the cradle of it, and the rich green land leading out of it as the Garden of Eden. And ~~The findings of the Leakey had~~ the Leakeys of Kenya more lately reinforced her in this view.

"Hard to think of all the killings going on there," Jacob said. "Hard to believe it."

"That's the ugly reality," David said.

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One of the carriers said "Bwana," between a cry and a whisper which made them all turn.

And there in front of them, on the narrow pathway, were two tall gaunt, wild-eyed men, dressed in rags, training modern rifles on them.

"Don't anyone move," David said softly. Then, loudly, in Swahili he ~~said~~ "Greetings warriors of Kenya. We come in peace. You are far from your battlefield."

"Then go in peeee," one of them said. "Go and speak not of this."

In Kikuyu, which none of Jacob's party understood, the other said: "They must die or we will all be discovered. Our sick will be discovered."

"No," the first one said in Kikuyu. "We do not kill senselessly." In Swahili he said to David: "Why are you here?"

"We visit a shrine," David said. "A shrine for my mother. I am a ~~father~~ sister too and I may not return."

"Then go before we kill you."

"Not till I have seen the shrine. Listen! I am a doctor, a healer. I see you have a bullet wound that has mended itself with the bullet still inside your body. You will die if it is not removed."

"We will all die," the second one cut in. "You will die now."

"No!" the first one said as the second raised his rifle.

"Not yet!" a third voice snapped in Swahili. The second one lowered his rifle.

A tall thin man, leaning on two stout sticks, an officer's cap of the type worn by the British military brass, at an angle on his head, an officer's handgun dangling on his fore finger, hobbled

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painfully into view.

"Who are you?" he demanded in English

"Not enemies," David said.

"What do you want?"

"I told him we ---"

"There is no sign of any burial place. You lie about your shrine."

They've found the place, David thought, to himself. Aloud he said: "That place is our shrine. You found some tins of food there. You also found two bottles of waragi. That is the shrine because some of the best days of my life were spent here. My mother, who has just died, parted from me in peace for the last time at this place."

"You are a doctor?"

"Yes; and you need one badly."

David moved forward.

"Stop!" the man raised the handgun. The second of the two soldiers put his rifle to his shoulder.

David kept going forward till he was close to the man. Close up there was an awful stench about the man.

"You need my help."

"Don't shoot," the man ordered, lowering his gun. He turned and hobbled back to the shallow cave which, till this moment, David had remember as a shrine of peace. Now it seemed to be a shelter for some Mau Mau wounded.

It was when they reached the cave that they discovered that it had become the hiding place for a badly wounded and much wanted general of the Mau Mau on whom the Kenyan authorities had placed a high price. Another healthier-looking though

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foul smelling
equally/fixxhy and younger-looking man armed with a snub-nosed automatic rifle, stood guard over the general. The young guard seemed ready to let go a volley at the intruders till the man on crutches snapped at him in Kikuyu; he relaxed, stepped back.

David said: "Stay back," to his father and Chitole, took a deep breath and went into the cave and pulled back the pile of smelly rags and skins that cover the general's body. The man was far gone, his eyes dulled, a consciousness of his surrounds coming and going. David choked back the waves of nausea as he examined the man.

"We need medicine," David said at last, "as quickly as possible or he'll die."

"How quickly's that?" Chitole asked.

"I don't know. It may be too late already but we must try."

"Then I'll go and get what you want. If he doesn't the others will need the help."

"Is it safe?" the man on crutches asked. "Will he come back?"

"He won't betray you," David said. "He'll come back."

The man pointed at the two bearers with his gun. "They must stay or everyone in their village will know."

"If they do not return the men of the village will climb the mountain to find them. Better to let them go down." Chitole gazed steadily into the young officer's eyes.

"They will surely betray us," the officer insisted.

"They will not," Chitole said. "They are of our church. They will promise the bishop."

"Yes," Jacob said. "I am the bishop. I hear you hate missionaries. These men will promise, if I ask them to, and keep their promise."

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"The bishop," the ragged officer mused. "The one from America?

"Yes."

"The one they refused to start a church and school in our country?"

"Yes."

"I remember it. I was a teacher then; in our independent schools."

Jacob knew about the network of indepedent Kikuyu schools the colonial authorities were so bitterly opposed to. Who teaches now, he wondered, with the teachers turned bush warriors.

"Teacher turned soldier," Jacob said. "Who teaches now?"

"They ordered ths schools closed. Make your men promise."

"And make haste," David added.

Jacob spoke to the two carriers who understand some English; but to make sure Chitole translated into their dialect.

"These, as you know, are some of the warriors fighting for their land over there. They are, as you can see, wounded, and the one there is a high officer. My son, the doctor will help to try and heal them; but he needs medicine. There is no wrong in a man fighting for what he has been robbed of. We are for peace always;but there are times when peace is not possible. One such time is when a people are robbed of their land; at such a time they either fight or give up their manhood. These have chosen to fight; it is their choice and their decision; it is not our choice or our decision. But it is a choice and a decision we must respect for these are of our people. So my son, the doctor, must try to heal them; and you must keep silent about what you have seen here this day. I wish you to tell no one about it for a very long time, not even the mother of your children when you lie with her. Not for a long time."

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"Do you understand?" Chitole ended. "Do you understand clearly what the bishop wishes? Will you give him this promise?"

The men bowed their heads in front of their bishop and made the promise.

David and the others moved away from the entrance to the cave and the stench of festering wounds. He quickly wrote a list of his needs and gave it to Chitole. They discussed the timing of getting down and returning with the medicine. If they moved fast they could get to the foot of the mountain in a little over an hour; another hour and a half to get to the mission; half an hour to get what was needed. Three hours there and three hours back; six hours, not allowing any margin for any unexpected delays or hold ups. So make it seven hours. It was near on eleven in the morning now. So Chitole should be back with the needed supplies between five and six in the vening. David reminded him that the bearers would be needed again to carry the supplies up.

Jacob said: "I'll stay here and help David till you return."

"I don't think that's wise," Chitole said. "All sorts of people would be curious about a daylong absence of the bishop."

"We're on safari; everyone will know that."

"And your secretary returns without you, and gathers up supplies and goes back somewhere again. That is bound to make them ask; where? If you're back at the mission what I take and where I go has less significance."

"John's right," David said.

"Allright," Jacob nodded. "You take care."

"Don't worry. Hurry back, John."

They left the hamper of food and drink and water with David

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and hurried down the mountain in the clear bracing morning air, the Kenyan Rift Valley to the left of them and running all the way to the Sudan, gently the rolling highlands, far below to the right of them.

David opened the well-stocked hamper and fed the four Kikuyu who were on their feet; they were desperately hungry and wanted to gobble down all the food they saw. Indeed, the youngster with the automatic rifle wanted forcibly to take what he wanted and even defied the orders from the former teacher to desist. There was a difficult moment when there was a scuffle between David and the youngster over the food till David relieved him of the gun. The other two instinctively wanted to help their fellow fight; the handgun of the ex-teacher held them at bay long enough for David to do the disarming. Disarmed, the young man became peaceful and co-operative; he remained peaceful and co-operative even after the automatic rifle was returned to him. He was, after all, the designated body-guard of the wounded general and the special gun was the badge of authority which went with his special responsibility. The demonstration of his ability to relieve an armed man of his gun established David's authority and they obeyed his orders when he told them to get bush and sweep out the cave, make a fire to smoke out the insects and move the general out into the sunlight, and air his foul-smelling bedding.

They made a small fire and David diced up bits of chicken and tomatoe and lettuce to make a broth which he fed the general in small sips. Then, very carefully, since all he had was a knife and some pieces of cloth, he bagn to attend to their wounds, dealing with the easier ones first, those that needed to be opened to drain off the puss. He extracted two bullets near the surface of the skin; one from in one man's shoulderp the other from high up in another's

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thigh. The worse wounds had to await the return of Chitole with the needed medicines. The ex-teacher hobbled away and returned ten minutes later with a fat catus-type aloe which smelled of stewed beef and dripped a thick transparent gum.

He offered it to David: "It seals cuts."

David sniffed it, tasted it, applied a bit to his own skin and felt it dry into a firm flexible coating.

"We used it whenever a student got cut; it stops the bleeding and it heals. If I did not put this on the general's wounds he would have died of bleeding."

So David used the gum from the bitter aloe as bandage and tackled some of the more serious wounds.

About noon a plane appeared in the Kenyan skies coming from the direction of Kitale. They put out the fires, spread bush over it, moved the general and all their supplies into the shelter of the cave and took cover themselves. As it neared the mountain the plane climbed, to about twenty thousand feet, David judged, then swung north-eastward, up the Rift Valley, as though in the direction of Lake Rudolph in the far north; but then, just where the main road from Kitale to the north crossed briefly over into Uganda, the plane, a tiny dot now, banked sharply and made an eastward and then south-eastward curve that would carry it down to the White Highlands of Kenya.

"It comes this time and just before sunset," the ex-teacher said. "Every day."

"It flies too high to really see," David said. "You don't see much at that height."

"That's better for us," the ex-teacher smiled for the first time.

"What's your name?" David asked, adding: "I'm David."

"I am Wathugu. You can call me Joe."

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"I prefer Wathugu," David said.

"And you can say it!" Wathugu laughed.

David thought:
And just a couple of hours ago they were wild animals ready to kill. Now I know a Kikuyu called Wathugu, not a Mau Mau, a man who had been a teacher/now compelled to fight. He turned to Wathugu.

"If they didn't close your schools would you have fought?"

"I don't know. They did close the schools I did fight."

"All the teachers?"

"No. Some joined the British and we killed them."

"Why?" David asked, knowing the answer.

"As a warning to others. You know about the chief we had to kill. We had to kill him or many people would have co-operated."

"And you personally? Is that why you fight?"

"Yes. Unless you are assigned another task you must fight. That is how it is. I cannot stay home with my wife and four children while others fight. They will not allow it; and I will not agree to another man staying home while I fight. We must all do it or do the assigned task."

A tribe at war, David thought; the only issue at stake, the only principle, ownership of the land: the land is the life of the tribe.

"And after you've won?"

"The land will be ours."

"And what then?"

"What do you mean? When the land is ours it will be over."

"Nothing more?"

"We will own the land; we will work the land; we will be free.

"You'll be the tribe that won the war," David murmured. "But I don't think it will be over, my friend, Wathugu."

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"For us, it will be," Wathugu insisted. "For me it will be."

"I will go home to my village" the youngster who had first spoken to Jacob's party said. "It is near Fort Hall and my mother is looking after the one who will be my wife."

So very human now, David thought and wondered if the British ever saw them thus.

"It may be a long time," he said. "The Englishman is a fierce fighter and they want to hold your land."

"No matter how long," the teacher said. "We will win; they have hurt us too much; we cannot make peace now till we win."

"Many will die," David said

"Many have died," Wathugu said. He rolled on his side and stretched himself out at the mouth of the cave. The two with the rifle went some distance down the narrow mountain xxxxx path and made themselves comfortable on the ground. The young xxxxx bodygurard with the special xx autmatic rifle propped himself up against the wall of the entrance to the cave, on duty even as he dozed off in the midday sun.

They've not asked me a single thing, David thought. They're not interested in anything outside their own special world...

David made himself comfortable under a shade tree and immediately fell asleep. The past few days had been hectic, emotionally exhausting; there had been stress even in sleep. Now, body and mind relaxed completely; he slept deeply, restoring the balance and calm of good health. The sun was all over the land now, over the mountain too. There was no breeze and, seemingly, very little cool air even up here. A heat haze hung over the world, rendering man and beast and plant limp and listless. The special bodyguard aroused himself sufficiently to remove the covering from the general when the heat

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was at its greatest and the air at its stillest. Even the flies and the agile and very thin mosquitoes who dwell in the cool dark places at this height seemed to have become limp and listless.

The stillness in the atmosphere lasted a little over an hour; then it was gone. The air moved again; tree leaves danced gently; a cool freshness came over the mountain and all things on it; the sound of insects, the whispering silence of the world - all returned. The people on the mountainside woke as from a trance. The bodyguard replaced the covering over his general. David got up and made it a little lighter. Wathugu hobbled over to the place where they had used big broad leaves and vines to fashion a watercourse which channelled drips of water from the higher vegetation into a big calabash; the calabash was half full. He dipped both hands into the water, scooped out some, drank and dashed the remains over his face.

David followed him and said: "It is safer and healthier to use a utensil." Then he saw the hollowed-out dried nut beside the calabash. "I see you have one. You should use it. Your hands and fingernails can carry germs."

"We used it at the start," Wathugu said.

"Use it again. All the time. See that everybody does."

Wathugu nodded and turned away.

I've offended him, David thought. But they must be clean if they are to survive. He went back to the cave mouth, called them together and lectured them on the importance of cleanliness for survival. They were not interested till he said: "That is the only way you will grow well and strong enough to fight again." They paid close attention after that. When it was over he asked Wathugu about the heat and listlessness that had come over them.

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"It is always like that," Wathugu said. "Except when there is rain; then it is very cold. But if you go higher up, or lower down, it is not the same. It is only at this point that you go to sleep."

"Same time every day?"

"When there is no rain. And there is a point at Mount Kenya where the same thing happens. About as high as here and the place there feels just like this."

How do you explain this, David wondered; this tranquilising power of high mountains.

The day dragged on; a long day; one of the longest David had ever lived through. Longer even than that terrible day he had spent in the stinking fetid jail cell in Algiers when he was picked up with a group of Arab revolutionaries by the Algiers political police. Only his stubborn bluff that he was an American tourist and the fact that somebody at the American consulate knew of Bishop Jacob Brown had saved him. That and the American passport his mother had insisted he should have. So the son of the bishop, with his American passport was released on the insistence of the American consulate. He never saw any of those Arab revolutionaries again. Until this day, that had been the longest day of his life. Then, there was waiting charged with fear, the fear of not knowing what would happen, the fear that you may not be able to stand up to what might happen. There had been reports of brutal torturing. Now there was no fear to charge the long day with tension, and now you were more sure of yourself than you were then. The absence of tension and of pressure made this long day tediously, boringly, doubly longer than that other.···

They heard them coming from a long way down as the sun was setting. Each word spoken, no matter how softly, rose up to them.

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Each sound - each time a small stone was dislodged and rolled against another, each time a dry twig snapped underfoot - carried up to them in the clear still air. This is how the small band of Kikuyu must have heard them when they came up in the morning, David thought. He made a mental note to tell others how well sound travels, especially upward, in high altitudes; could make all the difference between life and death.

The four Kikuyu were tense and alert now; the first two separating and moving lightfootedly, half-crouching, to meet the newcomers.

"No!" David whispered. "Those are my people."

"Not sure," Wathugu said softly. "Must be on guard."

"Give me your gun."

Wathugu hesitated. David held out his hand. The two covering the path stopped and turned their heads to see. The young bodyguard caressed his automatic rifle nervously. Wathugu closed his eyes then opened them and handed David his gun. David signalled the other two back. They stood their ground, but passively now, without any sign of hostility. He went past them, down the path, lightly, looking at the ground each time before putting down his foot.

"You gave him your gun," the second Kikuyu, the one who had been all for killing the intruders that morning, accused Wathugu.

"He could have taken it," the bodyguard said. "He's a fighter, that one; remember how he took my gun?"

"There are four of us!" the other snapped back.

"And he could have killed us all when he had my gun," the bodyguard whispered.

"And he didn't not," Wathugu said.

"He is not our enemy," the first soldier said. "Listen..."

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The sounds from the bottom drew nearer, and grew less so that they had to strain to hear them. There was no sound of David. Wathugu went into the cave and returned with the general's gun in his hand. He was sure he could trust David, at least he thought he was sure, but they had to be prepared, just in case: just in case they were enemies and got the better of David.

"On guard!" he whispered.

The two soldiers seemed to fade into the bush. The bodyguard went down on one knee. Wathugu leaned his back against the cave wall entrance, let go of his righthand support and waited relaxed, gun hanging down in his hand, finger on the trigger.

Then the voice rose to them, softly, urgently, tinged with tension

"David! David!"

Then David's voice, nearer but a goodly distance down:

"John! Everything allright?"

Then Chitole's voice, more at ease: "Yes."

"You hear, Kikuyu warriors!" David's voice floated up to them.

"We hear, my brother," Wathugu called out.

They relaxed and waited for John Chitole with his two bearers and the supplies. Nightfall was an hour, or slightly more, away.

David went to work immediately Chitole reached. He pumped a massive dose of antibiotics into the general, then he opened the biggest and most serious of his wounds. He was lucky and got out the two bullets in the man's side and shoulder with relative ease. He cleaned and sterilised the wounds and bound them. The general should be allright. Then he attended to the others, removing bullets, cleaning out the wounds, binding them up. It looked as though they had all received their wounds at the same time in a very close encounter. Night fell and David completed his task an hour after dark

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by the light of a torch held by John Chitole. At last it was all over. In three or four or five weeks, this group of five Kikuyu warri would, if their hunters did not catch up with them before then, return to their bush army to carry on the war.

At parting, Wathugu said:

"Will you come back to change the bandages, as they do in hospital?"

"No," David said. "I must leave in the morning to go to my war A bigger war than yours though it has not yet started properly."

"No war is bigger than any other," Wathugu said. "Men die in wars. There are no bigger or smaller deaths."

"True, but the reasons are different. Some fight and die for land and ~~fxxxxxx~~ to take back what has been taken from them, as you are doing. Others fight for king and country and empire. Yet others fight for a vision, for an idea that would make the world a better place."

"What kind of idea," Wathugu asked. "The world is what the world is. How can you make it a better place? Or a worse place?"

Listening, Chitole smiled to himself in the dark.

"Time to go, David. You haven't got the time to settle this one."

"Yes," David sighed and offered his hand.

Wathugu took it. Then the other three each shook David's hand, each calling out his own name as he did so. The general had gone into a deep drugged sleep. David looked at him for the last time, feeling him for fever. "He should feel better in the morning," he told Wathugu.

"We are grateful," Wathugu said. "I hope we meeting again when the land is ours. If we do, I will make a great feast for you."

"I would like that," David said.

"Come, David," Chitole called and led the way down the dark

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path, the still apprehensive bearers close on his heels. For them an ordinary day's safari which would earn them a few shillings had turned into a nightmare experience about which their bishop had ordered them not to talk; their friendly mountain had changed to a sinister place harbouring the fierce Kikuyu who were at war with the white men of their country.

The Kikuyu warriors watched till David and his companions faded into the darkness. Then they listened until the sound of their going too, was at an end, until the mountain was shrouded in its own silence again.

Wathugu said: "One will watch till moonrise while the others rest. When the light is clear enough we will leave this place. It is no longer safe. We will find another, higher place. We have enough to eat and drink, enough medicine to last till we are ready to return, if we use it with care. That is how it will be."

They agreed among themselves who should take the first watch. The rest went to sleep, each with his weapon in his hand.

It was pitch dark when Chitole, David and the bearers, reached the foot of the mountain. They were glad to be down safely, without having encountered any of the night prowlers, especially the silent leopard. They had no weapon other than the bearers' pangas; David had given back Wathugu's gun, and even though there were four of them the darkness would give a leopard an overwhelming advantage; so the sight of the bishop's limousine brought great relief. They dropped the bearers on the edge of their village. Chitole counted out ten East African shillings for each and each protested that it was too much, too great a fortune for a small work.

"Then share it with your church," Chitole advised. "But remember your promise not to speak of this thing."

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The bearers repeated their promise not to speak of this thing, saluted, and slipped away to the security of their village and their homes. Chitole started the car again, put on its bright lights and took the long road to the Mission.

"They will talk," Chitole said, half-turning his head to David. "Not now, not immediately, not because they intend to but they will talk."

"I know," David said. "I expect our friends up there are already moving. It is one of the rules of survival."

"I thought they trusted you."

"I think they do."

"Of course you're not the only one they have to worry about."

"They would have moved even if I were."

"Then why the request for you to return?"

"For information mainly; and even if I'd said yes they would have moved. Someone would have met me at some unexpected point and taken me to their new hiding place. It wouln't have been too far away if they expected me to come back. I would have treated them and they would have moved as soon as I had gone."

"Rules of survival?"

"Yes."

"And human trust? And community of interest? And the unity of the freedom fighters of which you boasted?" There was a bitter teasing edge to Chitole's voice.

"Think, John!" David exploded. "Just think for a moment! Use your imagination! Supposing we had come down into the waiting arms of a bunch of the King's African Rifles for whom there are still no territorial boundaries in East Africa, I'm not sure that you and I

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and our bearers would have been able to indefinitely resist the pressure to tell where we had come from and who was up there." Nothing to do with trust; just a matter of survival. You say/'If so and so happens?' and you act accordingly; you do not say'I trust so-and-so so I will not worry! Trust is not a factor in the survival business."

"That what all of you are taught in these political-military schools of yours?"

"Ours is just a variation of what is taught to all men who have to kill or be killed. Our friends up there know it. That's why they're probably moving now, or will be as soon as they can see. That's why I wanted you to bring all that food and drink."

"Will they make it?"

"I think so. The scouting plane that came today flew too high to ever see them. They say it always does and it's regular."

Chitole said, as though to himself: "It frightens me. Its all so cold and calculated; without feeling."

"It has to be," David said, sinking down deeper into the comfortable seat. He closed his eyes, relaxed mind and body.

"Sleep" Chitole said, and stepped on the accelarator, making the big car surge forward and streak through the dark night. The road was straight and wide and Chitole knew it well. The powerful headlights lit it up brightly for miles ahead. Night was the best time of all to travel across the vast African upland spaces if you were in a big, well upholstered, superbly sprung airconditioned car with enough thrust and power to seem to float purring across the earth. Chitole turned on the shortwave radio and a voice in London told him what was going on in the rest of the world.

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...The Kabaka, whom the British called King Freddie, had started his exile in London...There were mass arrests of blacks in South Africa as theanti-Apartheid Defiance campaign moved to a climax. And there was trouble between the French government and the white settlers of Algeria and the first stirrings of the coming war in which David was involved...

He switched the dial nearer home and a voice on Kenya's radio, in Swahili, invited members of the Mau Mau to lay down their arms and surrender and turn away from the evil customs into which they have been misled before they are destroyed, as they surely would be; they ways of evil would not be allowed to prevail; and those who laid down their arms and turned themselves in would be rewarded with many shillings. He switched the dial again and picked up soft French music from Radio Brazzaville. He left it there as the car sped through the night. A huge continent of black people and the only sounds in the African air were the sounds made by whites. He would talk to the bishop about this. Perhaps they should experiment with a private Mission radio station. He would get young Odera to look into the laws about broadcasting.

The land, meanwhile, was changing. The darkness eased so that Chitole began to see shapes flashing past, blurred at first, but gradually becoming sharper, more clearly defined till he could identify trees, an isolated homestead, a circular cluster of huts signifying a circular village. Then the moon rose and the African earth lay bathed, all its details mutedly visible, in the soft cold light. Chitole felt tranquil and at peace. He dipped the very bright light and slowed down as he entered the village which lay at the foot of the string of hills on which the mission stood. There were people about, the noises of people. The sounds coming from

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a dance they passed woke David who sat up, instantly alert. Chitole remembered the times he and David and a few of the other senior boys had slipped away of an evening, with the tacit approval of the bishop, to spend a few hours at some village dance. Missy and the other priests and teacher had always frowned on these outings, charging the bishop with too much permissiveness. Part of Chitole had been inclined to agree with the critics then. Now, looking back, he realised there was more to it than permissiveness. The bishop had put them on their honour and it had inhibited their wilder impulses, subjecting them to a discipline of their own and each other's supervising: so they drank within reason and were careful in their flirtations with women. If it had not been for that tacit approval of the bishop they, or some of them at least, might have been more self indulgent.

"We're home," David said.

That was it; that was what someone had almost invariably said when they returned from one such jaunt.

"You don't say," Chitole said.

They both laughed happy in recognition of a rare, brief, glorious arresting and reversal of time. They were, had been, for that brief moment, back in those student days. Then it was over and only the nostalgia of it remained.

Jacob was waiting for them for supper. They washed and changed quickly and joined him. Mrs. Kilu supervised the bringing of the food then left to take care of her own family.

When they were alone Jacob asked: "Are they allright?"

"Yes," David said.

"The leader too? The one you thought might die?"

"Once the stench and filth were removed he wasn't as bad as he seemed. The wounds had festered badly but the anitbiotics w[illegible]

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"Then why can't you do your fighting here? As you did up there in the mountain. Why not have a secret hospital for the wounded Mau Mau?"

"Would you support that?" David stared at his father.

Jacob looked at Chitole, a small smile tugged at his lips.

"No. Not officially. The mission will not be able to do that without risking expulsion and that is something we cannot do."

"But we can find medical supplies and raise money and ppovide food," Chitole said.

David continued staring at his father.

"And you Bishop Jacob Brown, and you, John Chitole, the most powerful bureaucrat in this mission, you two would do that?"

"If we have to," Chitole said.

"You heard the man," Jacob said. "Some people have weird notio about Christianity. I've told you all again and again and still you wontt believe it: my Lord is the greatest and the finest revolutionar who ever lived. I learned that at the knee of my grandma Sarah who had been a slave."

"Oh yes," David said. "Great grandma Sarah."

He raised his glass of sparkling banana beer, first offering a silent toast to his father, then to John Chitole. Then, eyes turned skyward, only half in jest, to great-grandma Sarah.

Chitole felt enveloped by the warm wave of affection and admiration which flowed, now, between father and son. Another moment to remember after all the turbulence between them.

"So will you try that hospital here?" Jacob pressed.

David shook his head. "It is only up there that we are going to learn the skills and the tactics which we must use if we are ever to fight and defeat the South African racists. Only there, Daddy

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will take care of that."

"David says they'll be gone from that place by now. Just in case we or the bearers talk. Nothing to do with trust, he said."

"And you?" Jacob was surprised at the absence of any sign of tiredness or tension in David. Chitole was clearly and obviously tired. Jacob had never seen David at work, never thought of David in any other way than as his and Margaret's son. Today, on that mountain he had seen David for the first time as separate and unrelated to him as he would see any other man. And this man, this doctor man who dealt calmly and firmly with armed men, was wholely admirable and made him feel proud to have anything to do with him. "Still leaving tomorrow?"

"I have to," David said. "That was the condition on which I was allowed to come."

"How near is this war of yours?" Chitole asked.

"Almost too near. They - our side - cannot allow the settlers to win power from France. If they do it would be as bad as in South Africa and may get worse. So we have to preempt any white Algerian independence. They know it and they are pressing hard."

"Why 'almost too near'?"

"We are not sufficiently prepared to avoid taking heavy losses, especially in the beginning."

"And you will go into the fighting line?" Jacob asked, trying to hide his anxiety.

"There'll be no lines, Daddy. No battle lines or rear positions. Its the kind of war they are fighting in Vietnam; the only kind of war the peoples of our world can hope to win against the armies of the rich imperial powers. The frontline is everywhere and nowhere."

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"I have to," David said. "That was the condition on which I was allowed to come."

"How near is this war of yours?" Chitole asked.

"Almost too near. They - our side - cannot allow the settlers to win power from France. If they do it would be as bad as in South Africa and may get worse. So we have to preempt any white Algerian independence. They know it and they are pressing hard."

"Why 'almost too near'?"

"We are not sufficiently prepared to avoid taking heavy losses, especially in the beginning."

"And you will go into the fighting line?" Jacob asked, trying to hide his anxiety.

"There'll be no lines, Daddy. No battle lines or rear positions. Its the kind of war they are fighting in Vietnam; the only kind of war the peoples of our world can hope to win against the armies of the rich imperial powers. The frontline is everywhere and nowhere."

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can we learn for Africa what Vietnam ~~taught~~ is teaching the people of Asia about fighting for freedom. Do you see?"

"Allright David. If you must, you must."

"I'm still worried about what comes after." Chitole said.

"And still you'd help," David mused.

"We have to," Chitole said. "However unhappily. I thought on the way of something," Chitole spoke to Jacob now. "I thought: wouldn't it be good if the Mission could have its own private radio station?"

"They won't let us, John," Jacob said.

"No harm in trying," Chitole said. "I thought I'd get young Odera to look into it. What's wrong with our having a good Christian radio station on which people can hear ~~our~~ their own voices?"

"Try it," Jacob said.

David threw back his head and roared with laughter, caught between awe and despair at the simple directness with which these two approached complex and difficult problems. Here they were proposing as no big thing a drastic breakthrough in imperial control of subject minds.

"Better for you to set up a secret transmitter on the mountain He suggested, more in jest than earnest. "They'll never allow a mission radio station."

"The fact that we tried might in itself be good news," Chitole said. "So we'll try."

"It's a waste of time, but good luck," David said.

Jacob pushed back his chair and got up. He always took a strol after dinner; to settle his meal, he said.

"Anybody for a walk?" he invited.

"Yes," David said.

"I'll turn in," Chitole said. Since Maragaret's death he had

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moved into the guest-room so that Jacob should not be completely alone in the house at night. There were things the household helpers who stayed overnight could not be expected to do, places they could not enter, decisions they could not make in emergencies. So he had not slept in his own cottage since Maraget's death. Things were stabilising now and he would soon be able to return to his own place. And these two needed to be alone now; they needed to cement the new-found mutual affection that had been reborn out of their shared loss. So he watched them go out of the french-windows and walk away into the moonlit night.

"Crack of dawn tomorrow!" David called called back.

Chitole rang the little bell for the night helper and went to bed.

They reached the Tororo airstrip before dawn but the Welshman, Jones, was there already. He had filled the tanks and warmed the engine and taxied the plane to the runway.

"It's a little beauty!" the Welshman exclaimed. "And what power! Bit like our wartime Spitfires. I've done everything. Here's your checklist."

David took the list and he and Jones went over the plane once more, checking everything Jones had already checked and serviced. Chitole stood back and watched, wondering how he would feel if someone went over work he had done in such painstaking detail, as though they did not trust him. Then he remembered David's remark about survival. Jones, who had been through a war would, no doubt, accept it as part of the survival routine. But what is left if all trust is gone?

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At last they were done with their checking and their checklist and Chitole felt the young Welshman glow when David expressed his satisfaction and appreciation. The bill, when David gave it to Chitole, looked enormous, but David seemed pleased with it, ~~say~~ said it was much less than he hae expected. He handed Chitole a fat wad of U.S. dollar bills of high denomination, ~~to cover the bill.~~

" A last chore, dear John. Convert and pay and put up the rest. Okay? Time to go now...Thanks again, Jones. You're a firstclass man."

"Any time," Jones said, walking some distance away so the friends could part in privacy.

David and Chitole looked at each other in the dawn light, solemn now in the moment of parting, not knowing when they would meet again, not knowing if they would meet again.

"Take care of yourself," Chitole said. "You're all he has now.

"No. He has you, John; you and all the others who love him so deeply."

"Yes; but there's nothing quite like farily, blood family. So you take care. I'll write regularly. I'll let you know everything important. He wants me to go to America; Michael would have to keep in touch then till I return. You know I want him to stay here even if I succeed him."

"He won't be happy anywhere else. I'm not sure even Jamaica could replace this now. His roots have gone too deep; his child was born here, his woman is buried here, and he has served most of his life here. That is the world for a man like him."

"Then we are agreed," Chitole said.

"Did you doubt it?"

"No. But it had to be spoken. A man changes, can change."

"Very little, dear John. Very little. Perhaps, if I'm lucky,

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I'll return Too for this is my home too."

"That would be very good, David. Now I can dream of a small mission hospital rising at the foot of the mountain one day."

"Not all that small! I don't believe in small."

"Big or small, the important thing is for you to return."

"I don't like fighting any more than you/~~xxx~~ or he does. Your way is so terribly slow and if we are to hasten the process then some of us must fight. I see no other way."

We will not argue now, Chitole decided.

"Please try to be lucky and come back to us...That address will reach you always?"

"Always; remind Michael all letters that pass through have to be opened."

"I will."

"And take care of him, John. I'll try to be lucky. I want to see him again and talk to him again. We were only just beginning to talk again. It took my mother's death to bring us together again. Look after him for me." And get him a puppy from me for Christmas. He loved dogs as a boy in Jamaica. A female puppy, a bitch."

"We will."

The time of parting had come. Big David Brown, towering over neat and trim little John Chitole, leaned down and wrapped his arms about Chitole, almost lifting him from the ground. They held each other in tight embrace. Then they separatated. David Brown swung about climbed into the small plane. Chitole moved back from the runway to the point where Jones waited. Suddenly, the plane roared into life; it moved forward, slowly at first, then it gathered speed as though chased by some terrible force, then it rose from the earth, ceased to be earthbound, and soared into the sky going northward, quickly

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as some creature in great haste.

"Please be lucky," Chitole murmured as the plane faded ~~inxo~~ and blended into the sky.

"Beg your pardon?" Jones asked.

"Nothing," Chitole said. "Just a thought and a prayer. Will the mission cheque be allright, Mr. Jones?"

"Yes, sir."

They walked to the little office.

"And we will use that mechanic's shop of yours if you will agree to train some of our young boys. I mean really train. You could have all the mission's work."

"That would be wonderful!"

"Good. ~~xxx~~ Mr. Odera, the reverend Michael Odera, will come and discuss the details with you one day soon. Remember the condition is that you really train our young people. You don't have to pay them We'll pay you for the training as well as giving you our work."

Chitole wrote a cheque to cover David's bill then he got into the limousine and headed back to the mission. There was much to do, much to be reviewed. David had taken up most of his time over the past two days. Now things had to be pulled together again. There were those two trips to be made to deal with the problems left by the defaulting priests in those outstations. And there was the preparation for when he had to leave for America. Young Odera would have to be very carerully rehearsed so that not too much detail had to be referred to the bishop. The bishop had to spend more time preparing the young men for the priesthood if the work of the church is to continue to bear fruit in the difficult days ahead. Only his wisdom and deep love and understanding, and his patience, and his way of seeing past the immediate to the long-term good for God and man, could shape the good priests the land and people need.

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Back at the mission, Jacob Brown sat at his big mission office desk writing a letter to his old friend Dr. Daniel Lee, Medical Director of the Mission Hospital in Liberia. The outer office was quiet. Miss Batari and her two clerical assistants had not yet arrived ~~for work~~. The wall clock showed that it was a little before seven. He ignored his little portable typewriter and wrote by hand:

"Dwar Dan, It was good to get your cable. Your words of comfort, and those of so many others from all over the world, made the grief a little more bearable. And David came back, which also helped greatly. I will put it all down for you in ~~greater~~ detail in our regular once-a-year letter which is not so far away now as Christmas is just around the corner. I wish you were here to comfort an old friend in his hour of greatest need. But as I write it I realise the selfishness of the wish. I should really be grateful and happy instead of miserable and depressed. We have shared many wonderful years and I think we have built something good and lasting and Christian here, though I had to nip in the bud what could easily have developed into a Nine-Nights orgy. The women loved her so very much (they all called her Missy, her childhood American nickname) and I gather there is a move afoot to call the church women's guild the Missy Guild! I'm going to have to squelch that one pretty firmly. Oh, David came in flying a plane; I'll tell you more about that later. Something happened that surprised me and made me see him in a totally different light. He is a man, Dan! And there's nothing romantic about what he's doing. When somebody can handcarry it, I will write you the details. He left today, early this morning and I don't know when I'll see him next. There is harmony between us now and I know Margaret is happy about that. I'm sure now that John Chitole is my logical successor and am planning accordingly. So we move. Peace and love..."

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Emma Batari, John Chitole thought; and the thought startled him. He turned his head slowly to look at the bishop beside him. Jacob was fast asleep, his head carefully wedged into the corner ~~of the~~ where the backrest of the seat curved into the upholstered side, a soft pillow against the back of his neck ensuring a ~~more~~ relatively comfortable and relaxed sleep. His long legs were stretched out, a pillow supported the curve of his back, his hands were on his lap, holding in place the book he had been reading before he dozed off. Chitole knew the bishop would wake if he tried to remove the book; he slept lightly on long journeys, and woke instantly at any disturbance. So Chitole let him be as the limousine moved at an even pace along the comparatively smooth stretch of road, across the green and rolling and very fertile-looking landscape. Let him rest, Chitole though; he had sorted out the problems of the two out-stations, settled the money issues involved, installed a new priest at each station and then conducted two stirring services; he deserves his rest.

Emma Batari would be the answer, would solve the problem... If she were agreeable, that is. It made sense to him. Ever since the bishop had told him, this matter had worried him. He knew the bishop's own marriage to Missy had been managed by the church in America; a bishop of the church had to have an acceptable partner to work with him. The choice of Missy for the bishop had obviously been absolutely right, and there would be no problem if they were to help him find a wife here in his own country. But they were there and obviously would not be able to; they could only find a wife for him from the church women there. This was not what he wanted, if it could be avoided; it may have to come to that; there may be no other choice. But if it could be avoided...Emma Batari could be the

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answer, unless the bishop felt her problems of the past would harm church interests. Never thought of her in this light until just now, yet it seems such a logical solution once the thought occurred.

He reached out and gently eased the book out of Jacob's fingers, and Jacob woke, as Chitole knew he would, and wanted him to. Jacob sat up and moved the pillows from his back and the back of his neck; he had sweated at the points where the pillows pressed against his body despite the airconditioning in the car. Chitole looked at his bishop and smiled wryly.

"Emma Batari," he said.

"What about her?" Jacob asked.

"Would she make an acceptable wife for a bishop of the church?"

Jacob thought for a long time, face calm and expressionless. At last he said: "Do you love her?"

"I like her. We get on well. She's a good person and works well

"Do you love her, John?"

"Di you love Missy when you first met? When your marriage was arranged?"

"You've got it wrong, John. Sure it was arranged but not like that. The church elders introduced me to a number of acceptable young women and I chose Margaret. They didn't choose her for me."

"But were you in love with her when you chose her?"

"Its a long time ago; I don't know..." Jacob tried to remember. "I remember I felt more at ease with her than any of the others; I was more myself with her and she laughed easily."

"Love grew," Chitole suggested.

"Yes; I suppose." Jacob remembered some of it, and suppressed the sudden tinge of yearning. She had often made these trips with him and John, sitting between them as the soft green landscape slipped

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by. He closed his eyes briefly and the smell and feel of her, and the sound of her voice were everywhere inside his head. He opened his eyes: "Yes, love grew...What was it you wanted to know?"

"The church, and her past."

"Yes. Talk to her, my son; and if it goes well then we will deal with her past."

"But, sir. What if..."

"Trust me, John. Margaret was very fond of Miss Batari."

"I don't want her to be hurt again."

"Talk to her and if it is allright we will deal with it."

"Do you really know all about her - what happened to her?"

"Oh John!" Jacob protested.

And John Chitole was shamed into silence which lasted until they reached home. The group of young theology students who had accompanied them, travelling in the mission van, had driven much faster and were waiting when they got back. Chitole cussed out the driver of the van for going too fast, ordered the young theology students to each prepare a written report on how the bishop had handled the two problems, and dismissed them.

In the late afternoon, one week later, when the day's work was done and workers in field and factory and office and classroom stopped their labours and prepared to go to their homes, John Chitole, who had been away from his own office all afternoon, returned just in time to catch Emma Batari and her two assistants on the point of locking up the office. The bishop had gone off to a late afternoon class at the seminary.

"Could I talk with you, please," Chitole said and was surprised by his own calmness.

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Emma Batari inclined her head slightly and waited.

"It is private," Chitole said.

Batari sent a message with her eyes to her two assistants, and they walked away.

"We will wait for you," one of them called back.

"No need," Chitole said. "It may be a while. You go."

Batari reached into her handbag, brought out the key and began to insert it in the door.

"No need for that either," Chitole said quietly.

It was only then that she turned a curiously searching look on his face, and some of his calm deserted him under the intensity of her stare.

"What is it?" she asked in her quiet controlled voice.

...It was always controlled, even when she was angry over bad work or some foolishness on the part of one of her assistants, or anyone else. Once he had listened, unbeknownst to her, as she gave a couple of senior male students a scathing tongue-lashing for trying to make a pass at her assistants and distracting them from their work. It had been quiet and controlled and the young men had gone off like a couple of whipped puppies...

You must be quiet and controlled, too, he told himself. Aloud, he said: "It is a personal problem on which I would like your advice. Shall we walk?"

Again she inclined her head. He indicated the way to the bishop's house and they walked in that direction slowly. Chitole was small; Emma Batari was smaller; but whereas Chitole seemed made of a series of lines shaped and bent to make the human frame, Batari seemed shaped and bent from a series of circles, made neat, tiny, trim and very feminine. Widely-spaced dark eyes in a round bronze

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face with strong undertones of yellow pigment in the smooth skin, and tightly curled black hair, cut short, made her seem younger than her twenty-~~eight~~ two years. Only the eyes belied the youthful appearance; they were the eyes of an animal which had been bruised and wounded, and which had, through pain, grown wise to the ways of the world, and which had learned to keep that world at bay. Those eyes, now, were expressionless, on guard, waiting to hear what John Chitole had to say. She had worked for him, for the bishop really, for ~~eight~~ four years now, and she trusted him as much as she was able to trust anybody other than the bishop and his wife. Those were the only two she had been willing to trust completely. There had been no outward sign of the utter devastation she had suffered with Missy's death. Missy was the one who had brought her to this place when her own people would have no part of her. Missy was the one who had helped her through her trouble. And the bishop had supported everything Missy did and had not sat in judgement. Now there was only the bishop and he had his own grief and she would do anything in the world to ease that grief.

"The bishop, he's allright?" Emma Batari asked.

"He's allright," Chitole said. "I need to find a young dog for him for Christmas. David asked me to do it. You saw him?"

"Yes. I saw him for a little. He told me what he's doing. I think he's right; I think it is right for him. I'll look about for a puppy and let you know. That all?"

"No. There's something more. I find difficult to talk about...

They entered the grounds of the bishop's home and took the path that led to Missy's favourite tree at the back of the house. The sun was far to the west now and the shadows were lengthening. Mrs.

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Kiku waved from a window as they walked past the back of the house.

"Is he going to leave us?" Batari asked.

"No," Chitole said. "I don't think so. This is his home now."

"I know he plans for you to succeed him," Batari said, trying to make it easier for him if this was what he wanted to talk about. "And he wouldn't do it unless he's certain it is right. Is that what's worrying you?"

"Yes; in part. If I am to succeed him I have to find a wife; I have to be married; we have no unmarried bishops."

"Of course; I had not thought of it. But they'll find you a wife. They found Missy for the bishop and it was a wonderful marriage." Batari smiled, a rare occurrance that made her look very young. "She told me how they were brought together ~~once~~; she made it sound such fun."

"He came from that part of the world," Chitole was serious. "And so did she. I don't. If they find someone for me it would be someone from that part, not from here. I don't want that; I want someone from here."

Emma Batari stopped dead in her tracks. It came as a blinding flash: He means me! Oh God! He means me!

Chitole stopped and waited for her; when she remained on the same spot he walked back to her.

"So you see what's on my mind," he said softly.

"I must go back," she said. "I must go home."

"Please, hear me first."

"No! There is nothing to talk about. Nothing I can help you with."

"I talked to the bishop today and he said I should talk to you. Let's go and sit down and talked for a little while at least."

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Her face was drawn and ashen now, and she looked older than her years.

"I can do nothing to help you." Her voice was low and firm. "I have no experience of these things; my experiences are uglier."

"At least hear me," Chitole insisted. Then, as an inspiration, the sight of Missy's spot put the idea in his mind. "Do you think Missy would have brought you here if she thought you had done wrong? You had sinned? Think! Was she that kind of person? Would the bishop have you here if he thought so? You have done no wrong. You have not sinned. You were sinned against! Wrong was done against you. Now, if you do not like me, if you are not interested in me, then the matter is over. But if it is only because of what happened then I suggest you hear what the bishop has to say."

They walked to Missy place and sate in the shadows of the Flam tree and felt the cool breeze.

After a long time Batari said: "You told him it was me you were thinking of?"

"Yes."

"And he didn't tell you how impossible it was?"

"No."

"It is impossible!"

"He didn't think so."

"I don't believe you."

"I'm not a liar!" Chitole snapped, angry suddenly at the irrational stubbornness of this woman. "I don't tell lies! You wait here!" He stalked away toward the house.

Batari sat as though in shock, trying to think but unable to be calm and rational. The only clear thing was that she would have to

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leave this place that had become her home and her sanctuary, leave the people who had become her people, and go out into that cruel jungle world again. What would she do? Where would she go? Shouldn't be difficult to find work. Missy had trained her well and she would be able to manage in any government office. But the old problems may come up again. The thought of the violence of men struck terror into her, made it impossible for her to think beyond that terror.

One of Mrs. Kilu's young helpers came across the grass carrying a tray of fruit juice. On her way back the young helper passed Chitole and the bishop. Emma Batari cleared her mind, tried to make it a blank; she tried to relax her body and waited for the men, like someone trying to diminish the pain of the punishment by trying to absob it rather than resist it, trying to bend with the pain rather than be broken by it. They seemed a long time coming, a long time for her to hold on.

The bishop's voice came to her from a great distance, familiar, quiet, understanding.

"He did talk to me, Miss Batari..."

"I did not really doubt it."

"Then why..."

"Please leave us now, John," Jacob ~~said and~~ sat beside the woman.

Chitole hesitated for a moment then left them.

Jacob filled two glasses with juice and gave one to Batari.

He said: "You understand his problem. He must either marry here or marry there..."

...And I must go, she told herself...

"And whether it is here or there, the church has to be involve

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to some extent in the kind of person who is to be his partner. If he were already married then whether he is chosen or not will not only depend on the kind of man he is but also on the kind of person his partner is. If he is not married the church will want to have some influence in the kind of partner he chooses. These are the restrictions and limitations on all of us who would be elders of the church; we either accept them or we forggo being leaders of our flock. That is how it fs for all of us. I do not think I have to explain to you why a bishop of our church has to be a man with a stable family life which can be a living example to all his congregation and all the people outside who look and judge the way of our church. John knows all this, so he had to talk to me when he thought of you. Now, if you are not interested in him then the matter is over There is no way anyone here can or will force you to do what you do not want to do. Understand that clearly."

"I understand," she murmured, head down. "And now I must leave here."

"You do not understand, my dear; if you think you must leave here then you do not understand."

"But how could I stay?"

"Simply by staying; if you want to."

"But he will remember. And if he comes back and I'm still here it will be difficult; it will be more difficult if he is married."

"Then you are not interested at all?"

Her voice sank lower: "I can't be. You know that."

"Because of what happened all those years ago?"

She seemed to grow even smaller, to shrivel up: "Yes." It was a whisper.

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"How old is the child now? ~~Eight? Nine~~ Five? Six?"

"~~Nine~~ Five," she whispered.

"Where's it? Can't remember anymore whether its a boy or girl."

"She is boarding with some people in Rhodesia, people like her, Coloureds, near Salisbury."

"Suppose I would be called Coloured if I were born there, only just, though!" The attempt at lightness fell flat. "Keep in touch?"

"I send them a money order every month."

"Do they look after her well? Does she go school?"

"Yes. They have five other children and she's treated as one of them. My friend - the one who helped me when it happened - "

Jacob felt cruel but he felt it should all come out for her sake: "Wasn't that the friend who tried to help you get rid of it at the time?"

Batari's voice grew faint and weak: "Yes. She found these people and she writes from time to time and tells me how the child is. She says they are kind people who treat the child as one of their own."

"Will they adopt her?"

"I think they prefer the money. They are very poor."

"And the money might stop coming if the child were legally theirs?"

"That is what they think, I'm sure."

"What if they were reassured or received a lump sum?"

"I don't know. I think they want the money desperately but from what my friend writes I think they will go on caring for the child even if I stopped sending it."

"So they may be willing to adopt? Especially if it means no

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loss."

"I don't know; I can ask my friend."

"I think you should. As soon as possible. Tell me, have you seen the child? What's her name?"

Batari let out a soft low moan. And her posture now, reminded Jacob of another time, way back in the distant past, when he had been witness to the spiritual agony of another young woman in distress. Then, he was too young, too involed himself, to know what to do or how to give comfort. Now, many lifetimes older, he put his arm about the woman and drew her to him. He felt the convulsive shaking of her body; he held her and remained silent, waiting for the moment to pass.

At last Batari said, her voice under tight control ~~once more~~:"I've not seen her for almost five ~~the past eight~~ years and I do not want to know her name." Then she wept.

When the weeping died down Jacob pulled away so that there was distance between them. He refilled their glasses with juice.

He said: "I was in love with a girl once. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ younger than you are now and very bright. I remember she was nearly raped by a couple of young whites on her way into Atlanta with a fellow male student/~~xxxxx~~. The whites beat up the young man/~~xxxxx~~ cruelly and she only escaped being raped by the appearance of an older white man on horseback who seemed to know the young whites and drove them off. I was very angry when I heard of this and my strongest impulse was to go out and do harm to the first white person I saw. They calmed me down, those black Americans, and they made me understand how commonplace was the raping of our women by white men, and they made me understand why. Under slavery, and this I knew from my great-grandmother, our women were

common possessions to be used at the whims and fancies of whites. Their menfolk could do nothing. A man and a woman may be committed to each other, may have brought a child into the world, but the slave owner or overseer could command that woman to lie down for him and her man could do nothing or risk a cruel death. Think of the humiliation. After slavery it was a little different in the island where I came from; there were so many of us they couldn't use force and rape our women. But they could buy them with things we couldn't give them. For the women this was not the brutal humiliation of being used as somebody's thing; there was a semblance of choice now, corrupting but a semblance of choice. But not so in America. There, almost to this day, the rape of our women is the other, and in some ways more cruel, side to the lynching of our men. Instead of hanging a black man by the neck and then dousing his body with kerosene and setting it alight so that he is dead and gone, you have the raped black woman, and often what results from it, as the permanent and living symbol of the brutal humiliation of a race. There is nothing I can think of as brutal and savage as the violence of the rape of any woman by any man, even one of her own race and colour. When that particular savagery becomes racial, when it is used deliberately to inflict racial pain and racial humiliation, there are no words strong enough to condemn it. Yet this is what they have done to our ~~xxxxx~~ women, and they call themselves followers of Christ. Now you say to me that because they have done this to you, because they have made you the victim of the ugliest and meanest form of racial violence, we must cast you out. We cannot do that and call ourselves followers of Jesus Christ. You were wronged, you have done no wrong; you were sinned against, you have not sinned."

"I should not have been where they could find me," Batari said

~~"That is part of their message. 'Stay in your ghetto'."~~

"In your own land? In the land of your birth? No, child. Africa is the land of your birth and if you cannot move freely and without fear here, if strangers can come among you and force you into hiding from them to avoid rape, then you are back in slavery and emancipation and our great western Christian civilisation is one great big fraud. Do not let them ever put your mind in a ghetto. You have done no wrong; you have been used brutally to try to degrade and humiliate your people. They feel comfortable when we ourselves come to accept and to see ourselves as they see us and want us to be seen. You know, simple, literal minded children, with no sense of right and wrong until they instruct us; with no imagination, no capacity for higher thought and feeling unless guided by them; always close to the animal state, loose and licentious, corrupt or easily corruptible; creatures of contempt, in short. And Lord how they've worked at it till they themselves believe it and many of us have accepted their evaluation of us! Lord, the self denigration and the self-contempt they've inculcated! I find that hardest of all to forgive..." Jacob lapsed into silence.

The evening breeze stirred the flame tree leaves, making them sway and shimmer in the fading light. The world, in this green place seemed tranquil. Only the man seemed distressed and disturbed by the thoughts he had spoken. Batari forgot her own distress in her concern for him. He seemed more humanly fallible now than in all the years she had known him and worked for him, more fallible even than under the stress and pain of the death of his wife. She reached out and touched his hand.

"I'm sorry I've upset you."

"Not you, Miss Batari."

Not his child now, she thought; not even his dear. He'll soon

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be in control again, benign and remote and wise and kind. But for a moment here he was an angry man, a very angry black man and she would always remember that. How comforting to think of her bishop as an angry black man voicing the deep hurt and resentments she had thought a kind of sin against Christian charity, and giving it all this special and terrible meaning. If he's right...Oh Lord that would make them so bad! As though divining her thought, he said:

"I do not think they do this out of wickedness or a special malice against us. It is the persuit of power, the power of wealth, the power of authority, the power of control over others, and the most terrible power of all which is to do anything to hold on to the power you have, no matter how you came by it. This reaching for power is a sickness which seems to have afflicted them more deeply than any other people in our age. For they would kill and enslave each other quite as easily as they would kill and enslave us. What gives them this lust for power? It cannot be in their nature, for their nature is really no different from our nature..."

Batari felt on safe ground now, her interest engaged on a matter you could think and reason about, not some high spiritual or ecclesiastical matter.

"All people are like that," she said. "Even here the Baganda are stronger than the other people so they assert their power, and as they assert their power their sense of importance and self-importance grows." A hint of laughter crept into her voice. "Even your John Chitole. He holds himself up so straight and he has this air of authority because he's a Muganda, a member of the ruling kingdom. All the rest of us, except Michael Odera and a few students, are from lesser kingdoms."

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"Me too," Jacob teased. "I'm not even from a kingdom."

"You're different," Emma Batari protested.

"How very familiar," Jacob laughed.

"You're the bishop," Batari insisted.

"Being different has a very special meaning where I come from. But no matter. So you think John a stiff-necked Muganda."

"I don't think he's conscious of it; just born to it."

"Oh dear; is this what you have against him?"

"So you're back to that." She was more at ease now. "No. I don't hold that against him. I just never thought of marriage; not after what happened."

"Think about it now."

"I can't think about it. I feel cold inside. Even if you and the church forgive me it is hard for me to forgive or forget what happened."

"You don't have to forgive or forget; just think about it."

"I don't think I can be a wife to any man."

"Mon Chitole is not any man; he's a special man."

"All the more reason he should have a special woman for wife."

"He thinks you are that woman. So do I."

"I have no feeling left. I cannot sleep with a man. It would be the nightmare all over again."

"Please think about it. Then tell him about it. Will you do that for me?"

She nodded, a world of doubt in her movement. He touched her hand and got up.

"Let us go in. Please stay for dinner. Just you and I. No John. And I will play some of Marggret's records of Negro Spritуals for you...As she used to do for you." He offered her his hand. She rose and tucked he tucked her hand under his and they went to the house.

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Emma Batari felt safe and comforted and at peace. This was the kind of father she would have loved to grow up with, a father who was sensitive and paid attention even to little girls.

And, in spite of herself, Emma Batari began to think about marriage...

7

Emma Batari thought about marriage for nearly ~~one whole month.~~ three weeks. During that time she avoided all social contact with both John Chitole and the bishop. At work she took their instructions, fulfilled their requests, then went to work, not noting, or not appearing to note, the usual personal pleasantries and courtesies which were, and had been, part of the office routine over the years. There was a new remoteness to her; she was at once withdrawn and more sharply alert than those who knew her remembered. She did not, after work, go to the usual small gatherings of friends at this or that person's home for an evening of talking or listening to music. She did not go, as she had regularly done / in the past, to the bishop's Thursday evening Open House with its stimulating and provocative flow of ideas. She did not attend the weekly student debates, held each Saturday night, as the climax of a week's activity. For more than three weeks she went home from work and stayed there, politely rebuffing all efforts to draw her out. And because people noticed that she was most withdrawn and most sharply alert whenever John Chitole was present they concluded, and shared the conclusion among themselves, that Emma Batari's new strangeness was because of John Chitole. In their search for confirmation of this conclusion they made Emma Batari and John Chitole so self-conscious that they avoided each other whenever they could, and had difficulty controlling their awkwardness when they could not.

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All this time Emma Batari thought about marriage, as coldly, as dispassionately as she could. She wrote a long, careful, letter to the dear friend in faraway Salisbury. When she received the reply she read it then put it into a mission envelope, sealed it, addressed it to the bishop and took it into his office and handed it to him personally.

They had not really spoken to each other for nearly all those three weeks, not since that evening under the Flame tree and the later listening to Margaret's music. Now, having given him the letter about her little girl, she turned to leave him. It was the end of a working day and time to go home to her two rooms and her thoughts. But this time he would not let her go; this time he said:

"It's a long time, Emma. Time for us to talk again. John must go soon. We can't give you any more time."

She turned back and took the seat opposite his great desk.

"Can it wait till he comes back?"

"Without knowing you decision?"

"I don't know if I can be a wife."

"Do you want to be a wife? Do you want to be a wife to him? If he goes without knowing that he may come back married."

"I know."

"So?"

"What if I can't ---" She choked on the words.

"What if you can't have normal sexual relations with him?"

"Yes."

"Do you want to? No; don't answer that. Do you want to be his wife?"

"I think so."

Jacob let out a sigh of relief.

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"One thing at a time," Jacob murmured, half to himself, half to Emma. "Will ycu tell him so? Will you tell him tonight? And will you come out of that isolation of yours now. " He looked tenderly at her bowed head. "We've all ben hurting for you; and stiff-necked John Chitole most of all. He feels personally responsible for your misery and isolation. Now we are going to have a good Christmas after all! Off you go now, and I want to see you at my house for dinner. That an order, young lady!"

Suddenly, unexpectedly, Emma Batari felt the tears flowing down her cheeks; there was nothing she could do to stem them, they just kept flowing unbidden, inexplicably, and seeming to wash a burden from her heart. She rose quickly, averting her head to try and hide the tears. She tried to will them to stop flowing. The front of her dress was damp now. She wanted to flee and she wanted to hug Jacob all at once. She hurried to the door and rushed out of the office and out of the building into the late afternoon sun. Across the cool air, coming from the great assembley hall, voices raised in song, rehearsing Christmas Carols, filled the air and seemed to wrap the world in distilled ~~tranquility~~ peace.

Emma Batari hurried home, letting the tears flow, feeling the weight of her burdens easing now that she had relaxed the tight control. Through blurred eyes she noticed how bright red the Christmas flowers were. But then, it was almost Chritsmas eve; and she had almost forgotten it.

Later that night, scrubbed fresh and clean and in a pretty dress, she sat at the bishop's dining table facing John Chitole. Her eyes were still swollen from the weeping, but she did not mind now. There were only the three of them, the bishop at his place at

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the head of the table;Missy's chair empty and unoccupied,a turned down glass the bishop's small sign of remembrance.They had finished eating.Jacob seemed preoccupied.Batari,once she realised how nervous Chitole was,had relaxed and even ended up telling a story that brought a brief smile to his face,her own nervousness more under control .

"You two go into the garden."Jacob ordered."I want to sit here a while.You have things to talk about so that I can get things moving.And try not to fight.There is no stronger or weaker Kingdom in these matters.And stiff-necks have to bend if they are to kiss ladies",He exchanged conspiritorial looks with Batari then smiled disarmingly at Chitole."If you take too long you'll have to come and wake me in Margaret's garden..."

They left.him.He poured himself a glass of wine and looked across the table to the empty seat and the turned down glass.

"I know you're pleased with this,"he whispered."You always thought she was special.Well,he is special too.They need to be. I think it will be alright.I think she'll come alive again and give him wonderful children.And those old fellows in America will understand. They understand the world better than the young do.They know all about racial brutality.I've decided to escort him personally and take her along as my secretary so that she can be formally introduced. It should inhibit anybody with designs and ambitions of their own finding him a wife over there.She and I will only be away for a week or so.He'll probably be there for three years,that's the usual time,but you know that ...I wish you were here in person to share this moment with me.Our first native African bishop! Is it vanity that I should be so proud to be the first to have done it?

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If it is I hope the Lord will understand and forgive. I am proud to be the first to have done it, and it will make others easier. For if we don't do it, if the native Africans do not take over the affairs of the church in Africa then we will be doing the same thing we fought against. We will become the religious new/imperialists, black faces and all. And the worst defeat that can befall any man, any cause, is for him to become the same as his enemy and for his cause and the moral and spiritual underpinnings of his cause to become the same as those of his enemy. When we do like them, we end up becoming like them. So I'm bursting with pride over John. And now there is your Emma too. How I wish you were here!"

He closed his eyes and leaned back and the presence and the feel of his Maragaret grew till it filled the romm as it had done in life. The voice, the footsteps, the soft, almost silent swish of her movements and faint personal smell of her, as the smell of no other human - these were all in the room now, making it seem that if he opened his eyss he would look straight into her own liquid brown eyes with their faintly questioning expression and the air of detachment which was part of her nature. Almost he could see the strongly accentuated cheekbones which made her face seem wider than it was long. They'd had a silly argument about it once and he had measured it to confirm, as she insisted, that it was really longer than it was wide. Almost, he heard the cool caress in her voice. And his physical desire for her, after his recent lonely night, seemed stronger than ever...The only woman who moved him, through all their years together, to a physical passion that was forever frssh..

Jacob opened his eyes and the room was empty and silent and he was alone. He relaxed his body and allowed the terrible pain of loss to wash over him.

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Mrs. Kilu came in to supervise the clearing of the table. She sensed his mood and waved away the young person behind her.

"Allright, sir?"

Jacob looked up and thanked her with his eyes.

"Yes, Mam' Kilu...Just remembrances."

She looked at the open french window. "The young people?"

"I think it will be well now," Jacob said, then added, "But it will take time and it may still be difficult. It is not easy for her."

"It will be easier in time as she learns to open her heart."

"Let us pray for that," Jacob said.

"We pray for you, too, sir; all of us."

"Thank you, Adina." He got up and touched her shoulder as he went out, passing the young helper waiting at the door.

"Come!" Adina Kilu's voice ordered the xxxx helper as Jacob went to to his rooms and what he once thought of as Margaret's very private rooms.

He would rest a while before preparing for the midnight service. John and Emma needed to be alone to work out their problems.

Chitole said: "I'm sorry for the pain I caused you."

She said: "The bishop says the church says I have done no wrong."

"He's right."

"But I knew that all along. It does not end the shame."

"The shame is theirs, not yours."

"The shame was committed against my body."

"By force. Against your will."

"Are you sure? Will you be sure if a time comes when you are

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vexed with me and we quarrel and shout at each other and try to hurt each other: will you be sure then? Or will you remind me?"

"I don't know; I know I don't want to. If I do I will be wrong."

"Honest John," she said softly.

"Heh?"

"And if I cannot come to you, John? If I cannot be your wife with my body?"

"If you don't want to ---"

"Not want, John. Touch me and see."

They were alone under the tree, shrouded by the darkness. She willed herself to lean toward him, and as she did so her body shrank away instinctively.

A flood of understanding washed over Chitole. He turned to her and put his hands on her shoulders. He was not nervous or worried, not anxious or eager, no passion in him, only a great concern to help her cross the terrible chasm of dark fear that had been forced on her. He drew her body, stiff, resisting, to him and held her for a long, long time, in a calm, relaxed embrace, not speaking, trying to let the stillness that was in him flow into her.

After what seemed an endless silence and quiet, her body relaxed slightly. He felt it and released her. It seemed she emerged from a trance.

He took her hand and they resumed their walk in the cool quiet garden with all its familiar land marks, all its reminders of another woman who had made and supervised its making and who had been happy in this place And for Emma Batari other things than the lonely life she had foreseen for herself now began to seem possible.

"There is nothing between us to fight," Chitole said.

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"There is my shame," she said.

"It is not yours, but even so, we will share it and wash it away."

"I would want to come to you clean."

"You are clean! Your own body has cleansed itself over and over again. It is only your mind that holds on to it. Count the number of mens s you've had since! That is the number of times you have washed out whatever shame they tried to put in your body."

"The shame in the mind is not as easily washed away."

"Yes," he said softly, "But will you try, for me, with me?"

"If you will help me; if you will learn to love me."

"Then you want me!"

"Yes."

He looked at her, he began to reach for her and sensed her tensing. He let go of her hand, stared at her, then turned abruptly and ran laughing away from her, taking a huge leap every few steps; he kept up the running and the jumping and the laughing, moving in a wide circle round the garden.

After a while Emma Batari realised what was going on. The Reverend John Chitole, protege of Bishop Jacob Brown, his righthand man who will one day succeed him as bishop here, was doing an African dance of victory and celebration! He ran and leapt and twirled and laughed. Emma Batari started laughing, softly at first, almost under her breath, then more loudly, more relaxedly, picking up the rhythm of his movement and the subtle timing of his laughter. Then she joined him and they did one large circular joyous victory dance together. Then she collapsed into the chair under the flame tree and waited for him to play out the dance of joy by himself.

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The dance ended when John Chitole was exhausted and his shirt soaked in sweat. He collapsed into a chair beside her, breathing heavily. It was a long time since he had done this dance, a long, long time.

"You must change before you catch cold."

"It should be done without clothes," he gasped. "In true primitive native style! Did I shock you?"

"Ill never call you stiff-necked John again. Did he tell you."

"Good. He told me. He would not be shocked."

"No, he wouldn't be. Come; change into dry clothes and take me home."

Chitole rose, took her hand and pulled her up. Briefly, he put put a damp arm about her waist, and because there was no hint of sexuality in the move, she did not stiffen or pull away.

When they neared the house he said: "May I tell him/you now will marry me?"

"He knows," she smiled. "He gave me an ultimatum earlier today. Saim if you left without knowing you would come back with an American wife."

"So he forced your hand---"

"He did indeed!"

"I still have to tell him formally."

"I'd like to be there. After all, he did most of your courting for you, John Chitole."

"Then we'll do it right now. I'll wake him if he's alseep."

"After you've washed and changed."

Jacob was not alseep. He invited them into Maragaret's private garden where a bottle of wine was chilling on ice.

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"I see," Emma Batari said, a hint of mockery to her voice. "More good Christian celebration."

"Hush woman, Chitole said. "Bishop's wine is good stuff, not like waragi."

"Yes," Jacob said drily, his eyes glowing. "I heard the other celebration and took a peep. Savage business! And you, Miss Emma Batari, I saw you in it too!"

"He's not really stiff-necked," she said.

"I tried to tell you," Jacob said.

"I am too!" Chitole insisted, pulling himself up to his full slim five-foot-five-and-a-half; then he grew serious: It is settled, sir; she has agreed--- she had agreed to be my wife."

"I'm very happy for you," Jacob Brown leaned down and casuall wrapped his huge arms about Emma Batari and lifted her a couple of feet off the ground in a warm embrace.

There was no stiffening there, Chitole noticed; it was not the physical contact, it was physical contact with sexual implication When Jacob reached for him, holding Emma in his one arm, Chitole retreated quickly and offered his hand at long distance.

"....And for the church," Jacob Brown said, putting Emma down.

He poured the wine and they drank a silent toast.

It was a good Christmas to round off a very good and profitable year for the Mission and for the country. There were blemishes of course, but on balance the good, here in the heart of Africa, still outweighed the blemishes that Christmas. The country, and much of Africa, was making steady progress. The economy was flourishing. The price of coffee and cotton were good on the world market and the small farmers were doing as well as the Mission.

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There was enough land here for everybody who wanted to work the land; none of it was alienated to foreigners or settlers or foreign giant international agricultural enterprises or mining companies as was the case in most of the countries bordering Uganda; Tanganyika, Kenya, Ruanda-Urundi and, above all, the massive Congo whose name had now become firmly prefixed with a European nation's identity, the Belgian Congo; not Africa's Congo but the Belgian Congo, like the White Highlands and White Africa and White South Africa, vast portions of a continent alienated - such a pretty word for robbery - from the children of that continent. In this part of Africa, as in the south of the neighbouring Sudan to the north, the land was still the common right of the people, the shared heritage of all who were born here. In Kenya they had taken up arms to recover the alienated land. In the Rhodesias and further south the day of battle seemed far-off and the prospects of success even further off.

The rays of hope for the liberation of a continent and its peoples shone brightest from the far western coastal strip of the continent where an angry, explosive, visionary man with vast continental dreams was dragging the British colony of the Gold Coast at helter-skelter pace toward political independence.

But in Uganda, despite the restlessness among the upper stratum of his own people at the forcible removal of the Kabaka from his throne, things were relatively quiet and prosperous. The great dam at Owen Falls to harness the power of the Nile where it began its journey was near completion. Thousands of young men from all over Uganda and further afield had found work and earned many hundreds of shillings.

All this had gone into making for a particularly prosperous

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and happy and tranquil Christmas in the most stable, orderly and peaceful country in Africa.

7

Very early that Christmas morning John Chitole and Emma Batari brought David's present to Jacob. It was a golden brown, soft-coated puppy, perhaps seven or eight weeks old, with long floppy ears in a small and beautiful pointed face, wide-spaced eyes with a bright child's curiosity, the head tilted sideways in question as though trying hard to understand the sounds made by the strange two-legged creatures.

"This is from David," Chitole said. "He said it had to be a she."

Jacob held the warm little budle of fur against his chest in his left hand and stroked it gently with the index finger of his right hand. The name for it came to him instantly, as though it had always been there, waiting for this little bit of life.

"Hi, Jane," he murmured.

The pup raised solemn eyes to the big face above her; she liked what she saw and tried to show it by attempting to lick the huge hand in which she was cupped. Her pink little tongue could not quite make it. Then, suddenly tired of all the excitement she had been through, and sure of being safe now, Jane closed her eyes and fell asleep. Jacob remembered his first young pup in the hills of Jamaica and the man was, for an instant, boy again. There was the complete gratitude of the boy when Christmas morning brings his heart's desire. Thank you, David. Thank you for remembering. And thank you for Jane. Just what I wanted; didn't know it, but just what I wanted. [Later, at the end of the day, when all the visitors had come and gone and all the work was done he and Jane would spend a little time at Margaret's grave and David would be with them in spiri

[Not such a lonely Christmas after all.

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David Brown stood a little distance ~~away~~ from the official mourning party that was clustered about the President; and even here, in the place of death, the place of burial, the President's bodyguard - young men with restless roving eyes and nervous hands which periodically patted the guns under their jackets for reassurance - stood out. No idle show of power this; two attempts had already been made on the President's life, and there was talk of another in the making whose origins were far from West Africa. Indeed, it was beginning to slowly come out that the man they were burying today had not been overthrown by a straightforward popular army end police coup as had seemed the case six years earlier. It was beginning to appear that in that case too the true origins of the coup had been far away from West Africa, across the ocean. It was the age, now, not of direct conquest but of what they called covert operations, and destabilisation, and disinformation; the true hand, the true design, now, was hidden. The agents of the new conquest came as bright and cleancut and immensely friendly and generous young men with university degrees and large sums of the most desireable currencies, and, quite often, with impeccable diplomatic or business or academic or journalistic or even missionary credentials. And where they passed governments or leaders who were considered unfriendly or dangerous usually collapsed under sudden outbreaks of crises, instability, unrest and, often, ~~brand new forms of~~ subtly coordinated and sophisticated and well-financed forms of protest by the opponents of the particular governments or leaders. Often, too, the agents of the new conquest carefully cultivated the key people in the security system of the targeted country or leader. ~~The~~ Third World leaders had been

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painfully slow to recognise this new form of conquest; they had paid a bitter price for that slowness. The victims often did not know what had hit them; what had gone wrong. The beneficiaries were in no mood to tell. And so the great African dream of freedom, which flowered so brightly and brilliantly after the man they were now burying had set the pace, saw, in one single year, nearly a score of African countries gaining their political independence. Nothing like that had ever happened in the history of any other continent; but then, no other continent in the history of the world had been as greedily dismembered. There had been talk, in that year of the rush to independence, of the African Decade. The times were heady and it seemed that all things were possible to Africans and to black folk everywhere on earth. At last, the time had come for the Africans to put their own imprint on the pages of world history as had other people in other ages. They seemed, for a time, to dominate the United Nations and to make an irrelevance of the bitter power rivalry between the great power groupings. And this man who had been the quintessential symbol of that great African dream of freedom was now being buried in exile. The African dream was turning into a thing of ashes, as was the companion dream of a great movement of the dark folk of the earth influencing the shape of the world by the moral quality of their leadership. He had shared in the shaping of that wider dream too with the likes of Nehru of India, and Nasser of Egypt and Ben Bella of Algeria who had the vision of all of us dying a little that all of Africa may be free. What a dream! What a vision those men had held before us!

"Why had it gone wrong?" David whispered, unconsciously, as though demanding that the man whose body was being lowered into the ground

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give answer before his casket disappeared from sight.

It could not be blamed on the external interference, no matter how clever and devilish that had been. One precondition to that brand of subversion is susceptibility, and susceptibility comes in many guises; but first there has to be the susceptibility. A bit like seduction; the most skilful seducer will get nowhere if the lady really is unwilling. No temptation can overcome the simple determination not to be tempted. But that requires a very high level of self-knowledge and firmness of puppose.

...The priest finished speaking the stark words of the earth reclaiming what had been of it. Dust to dust; ashes to ashes... His fistful of earth thudded on the casket. Then the President, who had, symbolically shared his Presidency with the dead man after his overthrow, shovelled in the first spadeful of earth. The President signalled to David and someone brought him the special shovel. And now it was all very real and he felt the tightness in his throat. He had known this man alive and in power; a complicated man with a confusion of motives and impulses but totally committed to African freedom. Not in the clear and starkly simple way of Ben Bella, or the visionary and almost religious way of Nasser, but totally committed. Of the four who had shaped the Third World vision and the non-aligned dream, Nehru had been the only one he had not known personally. There of course two others among the dream-makers, the venerable Dr. DuBois who had nurtured the dream longest of all, and George Padmore the steady, methodical organiser... He shovelled the earth on the casket and listened to the heavy thud of damp earth on a box containing small pockets of air...Kwame dead in exile at sixty-three and his dream in ashes all about us. DuBois gone too at the ripe old age of 95, and Padmore. And Nehru a

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year after DuBois; and Nasser two years ago. Only Ben Bella left and he and his dreams under house arrest by men of a more practical turn of mind, more concerned with consolidating the gains of their own national revolution than with the Pan-African dream and the need to die a little for the rest of Africa to live in freedom. ~~They were~~ These had been the dream-makers, the visionaries who saw and sought a good world for their peoples and, by extension, for all mankind. They're all gone now, even Ben Bella, though still bodily alive. DuBois must have died happiest of all. He certainly was happy when David saw him at the Charter meeting that brought the Organisation of African Unity into being. African freedom and unity still seemed to be spreading and deepening then, even though there was a perceptible withdrawing from Nkrumah's strong vision and urge to move forward in haste. But to DuBois the hard and bitter problem with which he had grappled all his life seemed to be ~~reaching~~ moving to a successful conclusion. And he was home in Africa, a venerated elder among the leaders of a continent. Yes, perhaps he was the greatest of the dream-keepers because he was not also involved with the politics of power...Must say this to Dad; it might wipe out that lingering memory of my stupid remarks about DuBois and handkerchief heads at that last argument before Mother's death. How memories haunt! How you wish you hadn't said certain things. Nothing is ever cancelled, really; and regret is a lifetime thing.

At last it was over. Kwame Nkrumah's grave was not in his beloved Ghana which he had led to freedom. But David was certain, even then, that one day he would be returned to Ghana: no reason for it; just a certainty.

The President came over to him. They knew David as the fighter-physician who had, at one time or another, looked after the health of Ben Bella, Nkrumah, Nasser, and had occasionally flown with them to meetings and conferences.

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The President touched his arm lightly and murmured, "A tragedy for Africa, for him to die thus and without honour. They all fawned on him when he had power; they forgot him when he fell."

David thought, feeling unkind and not caring: And you expect me to say 'Except you'. Then he said it anyway. This one deserved it. He had reached out after things became awkward in Egypt.

"You will come back with us," the President suggested. "Dine this evening with me/and let us talk. There is much to discuss."

"I regret, your Excellency. I have to arrange to move out immediately. I am worried about my father. I think you know he is a missionary bishop in Uganda. Reports are the Nubian is turning against Christians and I fear he may see my father's mission as a desirable target."

The President clicked his tongue. "He's not a true Moslem, that one. He uses Islam. I've tried to warn my Arab brothers but he speaks anti-Zionism so they support him. The unity our friend -" his eyes swept over the grave and the fresh mound of earth - "strove so hard to fashion is rapidly falling apart. A great pity."

David thought: And you French-speaking blacks helped frustrate it. Aloud, he echoed; "Yes, a great pity."

"About your father..."

"I plan to fly to Addis/as soon as I can get a flight. I have some connections at the Secretariat. I will try to get my father out."

"Not to worry," the President said."You will get your seat on the first plane to Addis. I will see to it." He signalled to one of his aides who hurried to them. The President instructed that arrangments be made for the doctor to be on the first plane to

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Addis. The aide nodded and hurried away. "I will write a lette to the Secretary-General. It may be useful."

"And it may get you into trouble," David suggested.

"Oh...?"

"If I'm caught, sir. You may be accused of complicity and therefore of interfering in the internal affairs of a member country which goes against the Charter."

"I see...Is it then your intention to attempt a coup? To overthrow the government there?"

"No, sir."

"There you are! How can I be interfering by asking the Secretary-General to facilitate your attempt to get your father, the venerable bishop, out of a country where he might be in danger?"

"I thought I should warn you of the possibility."

"So you have done, doctor. So you have done. And when your mission is over, could we persuade you to return here? We need doctors,and I need a doctor whose politics are beyond question. There are fewer risks. You are a man known for his strong commitments. We shall not betray that trust; I shall not."

David began to search for a way of answering graciously without committing himself. The President raised his hand and stopped the reply before it was formed.

"Do not answer now; you do not know what lies ahead. Just remember there is the offer and it is open as long as I am here." Au'Voir, my friend." The President walked away abruptly.

You could have been more gracious, but, David thought. He's a good man, a caring man who did not have to do this for another, fallen, leader; he did it because of the kind of person he is. But he had grown tired of the 'star' quality political

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leaders acquired, almost unconsciously, with the inevitable loneliness that came with power. The moment they found anybody they thought they could trust they tended to let down their guard and performed and performed to the point of exhausting the trusted one; then, afterwards, they were self-conscious and embarrassed at having shown their vulnerability and demanded endless reassurance. He had experienced the process several times over; one day he had decided he had had enough. Since then he had avoided all attempts at close personal friendships with politicians in power. But this one had comforted and sheltered Nkrumah in his hour of greatest need; of them all, he alone had lived up to the idea of a compassionate humanity in whose name we claim to be making this African revolution, now so beleaguered as to be under seige from its enemies.

He resisted the powerful impulse to go after the President and tell he would be happy to spend the evening with him! He knew he would not be. So he watched the President go, tightly flanked by the bodyguards, unable to move freely in the land he had led to political independence. Then he too walked from the graveside, limping slightly as he moved. A bullet in the left foot had caused that limp; a small price. Others, in their thousands, above and below the great desert, had paid with their lives for the African freedom now so deeply embattled, a little over a decade after its great flowering... Where had we gone wrong?...

The smiling young fellow waited leaning against his rusty, run-down taxi on the other side of the security cordon thrown up around the burial site. There had been more security than mourners: a small cluster of Ghanians who had been the exiled President's staff;

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a solitary veiled woman, apart from all the rest, who hurried away after the burial; and the Presidential party, also bristling with security: more security than mourners...This really what our struggl has come to?...

He got into the back of the taxi, avoiding the broad smile and the bright eyes.

"Back to the hotel?" the driver asked in his very clearly enuciated West African French.

"Drive along the coast for a while," David said. He sensed the beaming smile grow bigger without seeing it.

The taxi lurched forward and settled down to an even pace, travelling through the once-fashionable residential section where civil servants from France lived in the days of imperial glory. They had built their villas on the coast of tropical West Africa as if they were villas on the French Mediterranean. Conakry was not quite as completly French as Dakar, but the district where the French had once lived was every bit as French as was Dakar. And the sea air, and the constant breeze that blew in from the sea, made it cool and invigorating. Inland, it had all the scars and blemishes of a small industrial French town fallen on hard times. When the French had withdrawn because this President chose complete political independence rather than a looser form of association, as some of its other colonies had done at independence, they had taken everything away with them; some claimed they had even taken inkwells from offices and school classrooms. Some of the French were back now, as the new experts, and some of the villas were again occupied by young French families. Once again, pale golden youngsters were on the beaches or sporting in private swimming pools. Things were not going as we had planned, David told himself again: but it was nice to see golden children at play,

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mingling with a few very dark bronze ones. Probably the children of the new black elite, he thought, and cursed himself for the harsh ~~thoughts~~ feelings behind the thought. He looked out to sea, westward. The far islands of the West Indies lay out there beyond this vast expanse of water: Jamaica was out there somewhere, the place where his father and father's people were born and called home though their forebears ~~they~~ had most likely come from somewhere along this Guinea Coast. From what he'd been told his great-grandma Sarah was probably taken from here as a child. If places could tell their tales what a story this Guinea Coast would tell. Then he began to worry about his father and ordered the cheerful taximan to drive back to the hotel.

The stern and proper and very black young man at the reception desk had no message from the airline office yet. Too early, M'sieur much too early; but they will call, have no fear. Then he leaned forward across the desk, David's room key dangling from his long tapering fingers. "A lady attends you," he inclined his head in the direction of the darkest corner of the lobby, where a woman sat.

It was the women who had stood by herself at the burial. What now, David wondered, walking across the long narrow hallway. Too early at four in the afternoon! The lunch break here must be the longest in the world.

The woman rose; "Dr. Brown - I'm sorry to bother you - if you can spare me a minute --"

He recognised the accent; she was a South African; he had encountered many such exiles in many parts of Africa. A woman in her thirties with a figure of a fashion model and a face made noticeable by the very coarseness of the light brown skin; but for the coarsenes

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of the skin she would have been a most attractive looking person; as it was, her face seemed harsh, remote, at once withdrawn and forbidding.

"I was his secretary," she said.

Better sit, he thought and gestured for her to do so. He sat facing her across the little table.

"Something to drink? A glass of wine? Coffee?"

She settled for coffee. David signalled the receptionist who sent over a young boy in a white jacket to take the order. The receptionist watched intently as though straining to lip-read and hear every word, though David knew he spoke no English.

"How can I help?"

"I would like to get out," the woman said. She was trying to sound calm but David felt the tension in her. She was under strain. "Now that he's gone they're all going to help each other but not me. They resented me because I wasn't one of them - not a Ghanaian - so they put out some awful stories about me. Even said I was his mistress ---"

Could be true, David thought but held his peace.

"---I know they will not want me around. In any case those who can go back safely are planning to do so---"

"Why not try for a job here?"

"I don't speak their language, and the men in the governmen who will hire me will have other ideas in mind. They don't really want a secretary---" She turned her hard eyes intently on him. "---I'm a good secretary; I really am, even if I say so myself---"

"Then what's the problem? Money?"

"No. I have enough for now. The problem is papers. I have

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no travel documents, no passport, nothing. While he was alive it didn't matter; nobody stopped you or questioned you when you travelled with him. They know you; they will let me travel with. Please. There are some South Africans in Addis and elsewhere in East Africa. If I could there I'll be allright. Please---"

David thought for a long while then shook his head. The coarse face crumbled/ but the woman held on to herself by force of will.

"Let me try something," David said, overwhelmed by a sudden wave of compassion. "What's your name?

"Martha Arends."

"Wait here." He hurried to the receptionist. "Your telephone please...Not this one, inside your office. I want to call the President."

The receptionist jerked up to his full slender height, a fraction shorter than David but appearing taller because of his beanstalk thinness. He had known M'sieur le doctor was important anyone with a diplomatic passport is important; but to be able to speak to the President on the telephone! That meant special importance. He ushered David into the little office, found the Presidential number and dialled. Then, when somebody answered, he pushed out his chest and told them to hold on for M'sieur Le Doctor Brown who wished to have speech with the President; then, grandly, he passed the receiver to David and waited. They kept David waiting a long while, passing him from one person to another, each wanting to know who he was, where he was from, why he wanted to speak to His Excellency. At last, after the third person, a fresh and young-sounding female voice said: "Dr. Brown? His Excellency."

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"Your Excellency," David said. They exchanged pleasantries. David waved the receptionist to the door in a gesture of dismissal. The man left reluctantly. David turned serious. "Mr. President, our deceased friend's secretary called on me."

"Oh so?"

"She's in some distress. There appears to have been some resentment because she's not Ghanaian, which could do her no harm as long as her employer was alive."

"They are very clannish, some of these people. There was talk of some sort of an affair..."

"Isn't there always? About every leader?"

"Touché! Even I have been a victim of it and madam nearly believed it! But what of this one?"

"You know she's a South African."

"Yes. So I heard."

"She has no papers. And they will not help her, or she thinks they will not help her, which is the same thing."

"She wishes to remain here?"

"She asked to come with me to Addis."

"Oh so. And you need travel documents?"

"No, sir. I travel alone. What I may have to do requires that.

"Oh, my letter is on the way to you now; and I understand the plane seat is secured though you will have to make two changes. Now this lady, what is her name? What do you wish me to do about her?"

"Miss ~~Harriet~~ Martha Arends. I would appreciate it if she could be afforded a private/~~xxxxxx~~ person's one-way travel document to Addis."

"You do not trust her?"

"I do not know her; but we must remember our dead friend trusted her."

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"Is she a good secretary? Can she be trusted? Do you know."

"I have reason to believe so. She speaks no French; I don't think she's young enough to learn easily and quickly."

"Good, my careful friend. We will help as you suggest. Tell her to ask for my personal assistant. I will brief him now. Good luck on your mission; have a good journey and my respects to you revered father when you see him." And remember my invitation. It stands." The phone went dead.

David found a scrap of paper and wrote the name of the Presidential Personal Assistant on it. Then he went out to where Miss Harriet Arends, one of the latest ~~batch~~ of a growing number of wandering exiles without papers roaming a continent, waited for him. He had many things to do, many letters and cables to dispatch to many places and people, before he boarded that plane in something over two hours' ~~time~~. So he dealt with ~~Harriet~~ Martha Arends with a brusque off-handedness he did not really feel. She seemed eager to show her gratitude and her face crumbled again when he refused her offer to cook supper for him and dismissed her with cold casualness. No way he could tell her what was on his mind. Perhaps, if they met again ~~xx~~ another time, in other circumstances, he would tell her why he had to be as he was this time. Now, he left her abruptly there in the lobby of the little hotel in Conakry and went to his room. From his window he watched her walk away alone the dusty West African street in the late afternoon, trim body erect, head held high, an African exile, a long way from home on her own African continent. The occupiers were still in possession in some parts of Africa and Ben Bella's dream of us all dying a little to end it was under house arrest.

David Brown settled down to his letters and cables.

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He worked for the best part of an hours and was about to try the airline office again when they themselves phoned him. They had arranged his flight; could he please come in person to collect his tickets and pay for them? Could he make it immediately? The airline manager would be glad to receive him.

David hurried out to where his smiling taximan was playing dominoes with another driver, also hired for the day and awaiting the pleasure of his customer. David's driver hurriedly put on cap and hot-looking jacket though the afternoon was sweltering, and opened the door for his customer.

"The airlines office, please."

After a few blocks the driver looked back at David.

"M'sieur departs tonight? A pity. I planned to take you to a club in our quarter. Good wine and friendly people, nice women too; all proper. Perhaps another time, if M'sieur returns."

"Perhaps," David murmured, wondering what he was going to miss. Would it be any different from the intimate little drinking and talking clubs he had known in other places: in Algiers and other nightclubs along the Mediterranean coast where only the 'natives' foregathered, occasionally letting in the rare outsider with whom they felt at ease? Or the dry drinks places on the fringes of the desert? Probably all the same: dimly lit and tinselly, hiding the daytime drabness with their low lights and cheap shiny bits of decor And young men and women escaping into an imaginery make-belief world they really did not want. Yes, the place would be the same. Only the people would be different. Not intense and serious and engaged and ready to die, as we were; not forever questioning everything defiantly, even the will and intent and reality of God, as we did. We had something we thought worth arguing and fighting and dying for. Would have been interest-

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ing to see what they have, what is important to them. Long time since he had last been in that kind of cafe. And he would have liked to get the feel of the 'native' quarter of this still very French West African coastal town.

"We are there, M'sieur."

Instead of being dealt with at the counter where two pretty young brown misses, and one white and two black young men, were in attendance, David was ushered into the manager's office. A sauve young gentleman in a beautifully tailored charcoal black suit, a white shirt that shone dazzlingly against his equally charcoal black face, and a red flower in his buttonhole, rose from a huge desk to receive David. He came round his desk and led David to a settee beneath a big modern French painting which dominated the room.

"M'sieur l'doctor...Everything is arranged I am happy to report..." his voice, deep and musical, assumed a note of injured protest..." But there was no need to involve M'sieur Le Presidente! It would have been done without that! No need at all. Your own distinction is known to us, M'sieur."

"I did not appeal to the President," Daniel ~~Jacob~~ said. "He acted of his own volition. I was appreciative, of course. But I assure you I did not complain. I have no reason to complain."

The airline office manager sighed and made an elaborate show of relief. "I am reassured, M'sieur." He rose with grace and touched a buzzer on his desk. One of the pretty brown misses appeared almost instantly from a side door, ~~not the door to the reception desk,~~ with a small tray with two glasses of white wine; she made a pretty dimpled smile for David and withdrew.

"Your good health, M'sieur; and a good journey."

With the pleasantries over the busness was quickly settled.

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The manager checked his conversion into francs of David's American ~~dollar~~ travellers cheques three times before he was satisfied that he had received the right amount; then, for good measure, he telephoned a friend at the bank to ensure that he had used the right conversion rate and that his calculation was correct. At last it was all done; the tickets were checked, the times of departures and ~~xx~~connections rechecked, and the manager ushered David out and walked with him to his taxi, making it the ritual painful parting of dear friends. Not the way the Arabs did it, David thought; all grace and mercenary artifice, very occidental in character: the French had it right. They really had turned their African colonies into Occidental Africa, and acknowledged their failure to do the same with the Arabs by seeing their colonies north of the desert as Oriental Africa: black Africa, where they had conquered it, had been made French Africa; Arab Africa had remained Arab Africa, conquest notwithstanding.

The messenger with the President's letter was waiting for him at the hotel. A nondescript type, this one, whom you would forget immediately after parting and not recognise when you met again. The ideal political operative moving in the shadows of power. David noted the respectful, almost fearful, alertness of the receptionist in his dealing with this one. The man ~~xxx~~ waited at the same shadowy hidden table where the South African woman had earlier. He came forward as David asked for his key, and the receptionist opened the door into his little back office. The man handed David ~~the~~ a large envelope with the Presidential Palace heading on the outside and the official seal on the back. It was addressed to David. He followed the man into the office and broke the seal. Inside was another, smaller envelope addressed, this time, ~~xxx~~ to the Secretary-General

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by name and in the President's own handwriting, and marked personal and confidential. It had not been sealed. The man produced the Prediential seal from the small brief case he carried. David waited for him to speak but he held his peace, waiting, so David pulled the letter itself from the envelope. As the President had promised, it was a request to his dear friend to facilitate the good doctor in the purely family and humanitarian enterprise which he himself would explain, and which could in no way be regarded as political in any sense. A son was concerned for his father and was doing what any good son, you or I, would want to do if our father were in a similar situation. The salutations and good wishes were flowery and flourishing, then the scrawled personal, non-official signature.

David returned the letter to its envelope, looked at the man, then stuck down the flap. The man took it from him, made sure it was properly closed, then carefully put the Presidential seal on it. He returned the letter to David, made a small formal bow, put away his official seal and left. They had not exchanged a word. Outside at the desk the receptionist seemed awestruck and petrified as he watched the nondescript man walk out of the hotel.

It was time to leave so David paid his bill before going to his room. He packed quickly, gathered up the letters and telegrams, examined the room for the last time then went out. He order his taxi-man to pass the post office on the way to the airport, and dispatched his cables and posted his letters; then to the plane which would take him to Accra where he would join another for Kano, then another on the long cross continetal hop to Khartoum on the eastern end of Africa. With a little luck he should be able to get down to Uganda before the Nubian had time to give full rein to his murderous impulses. ~~He had already started.~~

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The airport at Accra depressed David and he was glad the delay and change of plane was a short one. The place was almost deserted, not bustling with the coloureful exhuberant crowds of the Nkrumah days. Then there was an air of freedom about the place and young folk were about in small groups, watching the planes come in and take-off, at all sorts of hours, night and day. Indeed, night life in Accra was something he had, in common with most visitors, found exhilerating. But Accra then was the political nerve-centre of Pan-Africanism and the dream-centre for all black folk aspiring to be free. It was here that the first manifestations of a reborn Africa, free of foreign domination, was, for a startling historical moment, a glowing reality. Because of it, the world will never again be the same for black folk, will never again look at black folk in quite the same way as they did before Nkrumah's revolution. Now the military and police who had seized power, and seized and re-seized it again and again, changing one soldiers name for another, the name of one committee or council for another, while the land sank deeper and deeper into pointless confusion, were the only ones out to watch the planes coming and going. Yet what a place it had once been! What a coming and going there had been in those heady days.

Even though he was intransit, not disembarking or meeting anyone, the young policeman-immigration-inspector hurried into a private office with his passport and was sometime returning it. When he did get it back it was obviously with suspicion and reluctantly. Then it was time to go and David was glad. One day these people would have to come to terms with what Nkrumah represented for them, and for Africa; till that day the chaos and confusion would remain. But one man's death, no matter how sad the circumstance

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no matter how unjust and unkind the ciricumstances of that death, is never quite the same as the sadness of witnessing a people who have lost their way and who move from one confusion to another. For it is then that they are at their most vulnerable; and Lord, how the adventurers will use them!

And yet we need the soldiers, David told himself. Without them to defend it no freedom, no political system, no ideal state, can survive the first onslaught of a determined enemy. Yet the soldiers are, in this present context, counter-revolutionary by tradition and training. That is a factor the dreamers overlooked, many of them, like Nkrumah earlier and now the former leaders of Uganda, to their bitter cost. How to safeguard against this in the future without being at the mercy of some determined enemy. "That must be high on the agenda for tomorrow."

"Sir?" The young soldier-immigration-inspector was startled.

"Sorry," David murmured; "Bad habit, thinking aloud."

This only made the young man watch David with greater suspicion until it was time for the flight to Kano.

7

The airport at Kano was charged with life and activity, even though it was nearly midnight. This was black Africa with a difference. Even the French would not dare to talk or think of this as Occidental Africa, as they did of all the rest of black Africa below the desert. Black Africa, here, had profound oriental overtones which showed everywhere: in the buildings dimly seen, in people's dress, in people's bearing, in their speech. Islam dominated here, and all about were the black Moslems of Africa on the south-western edge of the great desert. Kano could be any north African.

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city on the edge of the desert, except that there are few its size, and none with its peculiar combination of peoples - all the way from the short and squat and very black, with the bluntest of features, to the tall and thin long-fingered, long-legged, long-toed, ~~thinly~~ chisseled features and pale gray and even blue eyes set in light-brown smooth-skinned faces. These long, thin, pale and elegantly chiseled people of the Nigerian north are the Fulani, the descendant of the invaders from ~~xxx~~ across the northern desert who in the mists of the hidden centuries of the past had swept down and conquered in the name of Islam and established an empire which had survived for three centuries and more; and which survived, in modified form, even the coming of European empire. And like the descendants of all conquerors, the Fulani, and those they had assimlated through early religious conques held all ~~xxx~~ other Nigerians in veiled contempt. But they needed these other Nigerians, because of their better schooling, to be the clerks and the teachers and the managers and the civil servants to run things for them; and those who ran thing in the end became the controllers and the wielders of power. So it was a quiet, self-assured Ibo gentleman who supervised the hustle and bustle of the airport at Kano. He was still at work when David's plane landed and a young immigration officer, another Ibo, bright-eyed and young, singled David out and led him away to the airport manager's office, past the constantly moving mass of beturbaned people waiting to catch the plane to Khartoum on their way to ~~xxxxxxxx~~ the holy pilgrimage at Mecca.

The young immigration officer opened the door, announced: "Dr. Brown, Sah" And went back to his duties.

A thickset man, in his early forties ~~or very early fifties~~, rose from a couch in the brightly lit office, and came forward, hand

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outstretch; a beaming smile of welcome lit up his round face.

"I thought it had to be you! Anything else would have been too much of a coincidence! I think you won't remember me! I dropped out of med school becauwe I couldn't stand the blood and the pain... Remember the first year student who passed out at that operation you performed!"

David looked blank, trying hard to remember. The man's face fell.

"You don't remember. Never mind; it was a long time ago and you've been doing many things."

"Let me think," David said; his mind just would not function. Then, suddenly, out of nowhere, a name flashed across his mind; he said it aloud: "Mike Adibo."

"That's it! You do remember!" Mike Adibo let out a joyous laugh and shook David's hand again. "Sit down, man; sit down. Let me get you a drink. Have you had food?"

"I need to rest," David said. "The Khartoum leg looks like being crowded."

"It always is; it's on the road to Mecca and our busiest route all year round and nobody ever gives trouble or claims for lost luggage or anything else: very good business, the Mecca route. But we'll make you comfortable. I know you're a flier yourself. I'll introduce you to the pilot. Oh, I had that special flash from Conakry." He looked away from David, suddenly serious. "Must be something important..."

"It is," David said.

Adibo waited a while then said; "What'll it be? Scotch?"

David nodded. Adibo poured and passed the drink to David.

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"I hope you didn't stay up here for me," David said.

Adibo raised his glass. "I wanted to. I thought it was you when I got ~~the special~~ that flash and saw the name; I hoped it was. You've been in touch with all these things - with the leaders - with everything - I wanted to ask you what's happening? What is happening to us? What is happening to Africa? I hoped we could talk a little before you moved on; nobody here knows what's going on or what is going to happen ---"

David sighed inwardly. So its here too; up here in remote ~~Kano~~ and politically backward Kano on the edge of the desert. It was, somehow, encouraging that there should be one person, waiting up in the middle of the night to express his concern and to ask hopefully for answers, or, at least, for comfort. But how do you answer?

Adibo said: "It's another ~~three~~ couple of hours to your plane time. Come home with me and have a bathe and something to eat and we can talk a little. Its not far from here..."

"Thank you," David nodded and put down his glass.

"Come; don't worry about your luggage; it'll be taken care of."

Adibo led the way and was clearly pleased for David to see the deference everyone showed the airport manager as they passed; even the masses of pilgrims seemed to know who he was and showed it by bowing as he passed.

For David it was good to get out of the oppressive airport and the fetid smell of sweat-stained human garments. No matter how often a person washee and changed, the sweat kept coming; sooner or later the garments were stained; sooner rather than later, the fetid smell returned, especially in confined areas, airconditioning not-withstanding. The journey to Adibo's sprawling walled-in house was

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ten minutes' drive away and David was soon luxuriating under a fast-flowing refreshing shower. Then Adibo led him to an outside dining area of the walled-in compound and young men in white brought food. Adibo's wife, a tall, willowy, and utterly beautiful Fulani woman, came and served the food and then withdrew without saying a word...Small snatches of the distant past came back to David in momentary flashes that were gone almost as soon as they appeared. This same Adibo as a young man with a big and rather florid and very bright English girlfriend arguing the merits and demerits of Troksyism and the notion of the permanent revolution...

In a worried voice Adibo asked: "What's happening? What's going to happen? Everything looked so good in 1960. Now we've had a Prime Minister killed, and the man who succeeded him also killed, and we've had a civil war. Why are things not as they should be? Tell me."

"I don't think anyone can tell you," David said.

"But why did these things happen? We all told ourselves that once we got rid of imperialism things would be fine and we would make Africa a great and glorious place for all its people. Instead we slaughtered each other."

"Not only here," David said. "Perhaps our notion of progress was at fault. Perhaps we tried too hard to move too fast."

"I sometimes wonder," Adibo lapsed into a long silence.

"Whether we really can manage our own affairs," David suggested softly.

Adibo looked at him, startled. "Yes."

"I think we can," David said. "What do you think?"

"I don't know," Adibo sounded unhappy. "I want to; I want to think so. I know we have the ability. We are able. But when you look

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at what's happened and what's happening ----"

"You doubt our ability? It leads to that?"

"No; not our ability; just that everything seems to go wrong."

"Have you asked why?" To himself, David repeated the question: Have you asked why, David Brown. Aloud, he said: "I think we want to ask why and then go back and question all the assumptions on which our actions were based..." Oh, lord, how do you do this in the early hours of the morning as you pause on an aerial journey between one spot and another? But we must go back and question all the old assumptions.

"How far back?" Adibo wondered aloud; and answered himself: "As far back as you have to go to find an answer. Yes. I think I like that. But what if you don't find the answer?"

"You don't begin your questioning," David suggested, "expecting not to find an answer. If you don't expect an answer it is foolish to start the questioning; if you start the questioning you must expect it to lead to an answer."

"Yes," Adibo ~~said, also~~ was showing signs of weariness now. It had been a long day, made longer by his waiting up for this man from the more optimistic past when everything seemd simpler and so much more clearcut, and people always had answers. Now, after all the disasters, not even the great doctor David Brown who had walked with Africans leaders and travelled ~~on~~ one diplomatic passport, could give him any answers. Only more questions to ask. But give him his due, his questions might lead to answers. So I'll ask them, and ask them, and keep on asking them.

He's regretting all the effort he's laid out, David thought and wanted to apologise.

"I'm glad it was you and I saw you," Adibo said warmly.

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But it was all rather unsatisfactory and anticlimatic for Michael Adibo; not what he had expected, though he was not clear on what it was he had expected; something reassuring perhaps; a restoring, perhaps, of a little of the lost assurance and confidence of those earlier years; a futile hope to roll back the years for an hour or two and be and feel as he was and felt in those days he now remembered so often with nostalgia. Nostalgia for being a colonial student in the nerve centre of that colonialism. God, what an irony!

When they got back to the airport they were told the flight to Khartoum would be delayed for another hour. Adibo offered to stay with David in his airconditioned private office; the gesture was half-hearted and both of them knew it. So David declined it and elected to wait in the uncrowded V.I.P. Lounge which was also airconditioned, though not as effectively as Adibo's office. David urged Adibo to go back home and get some rest for the hard day that lay a head. "After all, I'll spend most of the day sleeping on the plane while you have to work."

Adibo tried not to show how relieved he was to be going as he shook David's hand. His face lit up , warm and generous as at their meeting some two hours earlier. David thought, This is something we have that few others have; we still have it, this radiance from within at the meeting and the parting with those on whom we look as friends.

"When you find some of the answers," Adibo said, "please let me know. Just address it to me care of Kano airport Northern Nigeria; I'll get it, no matter where I am."

"I will," David said, knowing he would do no such thing; knowing Michael Adibo knew he would do no such thing.

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Adibo turned and walked away, home, to a comfortable bed for what little remained of the night, his stride and carriage declaring him an important personage quite as clearly as did the deferential manner with which people made way for him and bowed their heads.

There were five people in the V.I.P. lounge: a man in the company of two women, a man alone sitting by himself, and a white man dozing, or seeming to doze, in the farthest corner. David Brown recognised the white man immediately. He was a famous journalistic Africa hand. He was one of the two or three current ranking experts on Africa. He knew everything about Africa: its history, its politics, its problems; he knew nearly all its leaders personally, and spoke knowingly and intimately about them on his frequent and highly publicised and very lucrative lecture tours to the United States. His articles in a leading British newspaper were syndicated throughout the world. David had met him at three major Pan-African conferences after the great upsurge of the 1960s. The man had hardly noticed him then; he had been concerned with the leaders, and talking to the leaders, and being seen talking to the leaders by the other leaders, rather than with the people about the leaders whose job it was to look after the leaders or minister to their need. Now, David hoped, the man would not recognise him. He had had his bellyful of white experts on Africa, and this one had grown more authoritative, more oracular, more pontifical as Africa's problems deepened. He knew all the answers; he had clever, well-reasoned explanations for every setback, every defeat. For him, Africa was still the white man's game and the white man's burden and could still be won for the West if everybody, black and white alike, inside and outside Africa, pursued the moderate and sensible and enlightened policies ~~the great~~

he advocated in a steady stream of books and artcles and lectures and radio broadcasts. He was a good businessman and Africa was his business and he had turned it into a very ~~successful~~ rewarding business. ~~venture~~ And I don't want to talk to him, David told himself. He sensed that the apparentely sleeping man was examining him. We don't all look alike to this one; he might remember and I might have to brush him off. We'll see. The man apparently did not place David; he moved his head slightly as though in sleep, and the sense of being closely examined left David. He settled down to wait for the flight call, relatively comfortable compared with the teeming mob outside.

...We'll have to think deeply about people like that man; good people who want what is best for Africa and who know what is best for Africa. These people know the answers when the Africans themselves do not. They do the defining for us: they tell us what we want and what we should want; and they lay out the rules of how we should go about what we want. When someone else assumes to think for you, to articulate moral and social values for you, they are preempting your own right to think for yourself, or else, which is almost the same thing, they are setting the parameters within which your thought processes must go on. That was the big thing Fanon tumbled to. But even he did not point a way out beyond that of rejection and rethinking. If you are not to be a black-faced European or American, what are you to be? And, most important of all, how do you go about the business of discovering what it is you want to be? What methodology do you use. Marxism is as much theirs as/is capitalism. What young Mboya called African socialism is no more than a grafting act. We have to dig further back than that. And in order to do that we have to somehow unshackle our minds from the indoctrination of people like that good man over there who is so sure he knows Africa and what is best for Africa + Africans...

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(2)

Enid Kagwa, Bishop's secretary, knocked at the door, came in and shut it firmly behind her. John Chitole looked up from his papers.

"An officer from the barracks at Tororo, to see you, my Lord."

"What about?"

"He won't say. I tried to make an appointment but he insists on seeing you now."

"These are the days of the soldiers," Chitole murmured.

"I pressed the alert buzzer so help should be outside by now."

"No," Chitole said. "Let him in. I'll see him."

Miss Kagwa's face took on a doubtful expression but she opened the door and announced: "Captain Musaka of the Tororo barracks, my lord."

The soldier marched briskly into the room and saluted. Chitole waved him to a chair. Then he looked at Miss Kagwa. "It's allright, Enid." She left unwillingly.

"She's suspicious," the Captain said, a hint of accusation to i

Chitole looked at him, at the tilt of his head, the bearing of his body, the beginning of a bulge to his belly for all his youth. Not much more than ~~thirty~~ twenty-three or four, if that much, but clearly enjoying the good life of an officer under the military rule of the Nubian.

"Should she be?" Chitole asked softly.

"Of me? Captain Musaka showed his teeth. "No, my Lord."

"I'm glad to hear it; I'll tell her. Now, what can I do for you

"Don't you need your ---" Musaka paused deliberately "----your superior here too?."

Chitole smiled. "I can see you don't understand our church, Captain."

"I was a Christian once!" Musaka snapped, "Before I saw it for

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what it was and is."

"Now you're a Moslem, like the President."

"That's right!"

"But that is not what you came to see me about."

Musaka calmed himself deliberately. "In a way it is. I speak for the officers of the barracks. We would like to have collaboration between your church and our barracks. We know yours is the only truly black foreign church. The others have black bishops but white faces are in control in the back. We are told no whites control your churches anywhere but it is a foreign church; and that is the part we do not like."

"So?"

"So we want to see how independent you are. Your are the bishop but the American stays here; why? To watch you?"

Chitole chose his words carefully, weighing each sentence for possible misinterpretation. He touched the hidden button on his desk making it possible for Enid Kagwa to hear and take notes of what was said.

"Bishop Brown stays here because this is his home. He's a Ugandan citizen who has been here longer than you have been alive, Captain. He loves this land, Captain; and we want him to go on staying here because it is his home and because we love him and because we want him to stay here. Please understand that very clearly; and please understand he is not an American. He was born in Jamaica in the West Indies, and Jamaica is part of the Commonwealth and the non-aligned movement."

"But not of the OAU!" Captain Musaka was getting angry; the interview was not going as he had planned.

"Only because Jamaica is not part of the African continent."

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"There you are! It is a foreign place! And nobody knows who is in charge of your church: you or this man from a foreign place That is what I'm talking about!"

This one is looking for something to quarrel about, Chitole decided and wondered why. Should he let him have that quarrel and find out? He decided against it.

"My dear, Captain; the church, not even the white controlled church, is not run like an army or a civil service department or even a government where all authority and decision-making reaches its ultimate/final point with one person -- a Prime Minister or a President or a --- "Chitole did not say the word dictator aloud; he changed it instead to ---" any head of government having the last word. So when you talk about who is in charge it is rather difficult. I am in charge of the running of the church; but then, the church is in charge of the running of me; the church is the congregation and the congregation is the church; and we are all subject to and guided by the divine will of God. Perhaps the best way for you to think of Bishop Brown is that he is the retired servant of the church who has been pensioned off and we are keeping him here , as you do an honoured old father, so that he can live out his days in peace and happiness among those he has served and who love him dearly. That is not so hard to understand, Captain. He is like your father grown old, or mine, or anyone's."

In spite of himself the Captain understood. ~~this one;~~ to honour your father; to take care of your old, went deeper than his new militarism. And he was certain the other officers at the barracks would see it in the same light. But was this one really in control?

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"Then it is you who get the instructions," Musaka accused.

Chitole floundered for while, utterly confused by the notion of instructions. Musaka misread the confusion and felt elated at having trapped the bishop. Got him! he glowed inwardly.

"What instructions?"

"Come, bishop; you know. Instructions from your headquarters in America."

"I see ---" Chitole tried not to show the scorn that welled up inside him. "So that's what you think of us, of your own people. -- You see us as anybody's tool. Oh, my son; how could you? Must even our own see us always as somebody else's tool? Can't we ever be our own tools? Can't we ever belong to ourselves and do what we do because we do it for ourselves --- ?"

Something about the bishop's quiet contained rage, something in his voice, the look of his eyes, disturbed Captain Musaka more deeply than he could recall ~~ever~~ being disturbed before. It made him feel small, embarrassed and guilty and ashamed all at once. He jumped from the chair, waved his swagger stick and took two turns about the office; then he set his face in an expression of rage, lips pushed out.

"I'm an officer of the Ugandan army!" Musaka snapped. "I do my duty as an officer. I have no other business with you! You have not answered my question! Do not be impertinent with an officer of the Ugandan army!"

For answer Chitole reached forward and deliberately depressed a key on the little intercom box on his desk: "Miss Kagwa, please bring me the current file of communications from our headquarters."

They waited for about a minute, the Captain pacing the floor,

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the bishop watching him, till Miss Kagwa brought the thick bulging file. The bishop received it, thanked and dismissed her with his eyes, and placed the file on the side of the desk where Cptain Muska had ~~sat~~ sat.

"This is the file," Chitole said. "Examine it for yourself."

Musaka hesitated for a second then sat down abruptly and opene the file. He was suspicious but you can't refuse to look at documents when a suspect offers them to you. They wouldn't offer it if it had anything incriminating. He read the first document. It was a long and detailed account of happenings in the various sections of the church all over the world, where things were going wrong and why, ~~and~~ where things were going right and why; it was a sort of progress report and it seemed that all the branches of the church, worldwide, received exactly the same report every quarter. This was followed by a lengthy business document which dealt specifically with the amounts of coffee, cotton, tea that had been shipped by the local church for sale on the American market. The volume and price of each item sold, and to whom, were listed, and the price received. All deductions were itemised and explained. The money realised, less the cost of whatever the local church had ordered, was then remitted to the church's account with its Ugandan bankers. From the figures, Musaka realised that this church was doing very profitable business. He looked up at the bishop.

"And all this money you have earned? Who gets it?"

"Those who earned," Chitole said. "Our business, our farms, our gins, everything belong to those who do the work. Everything is owned co-operatively. I'm sure you know that. Our co-operatives are all registered and legal business entities."

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"I know," Musaka sounded impatient. His mind was on the money The army could do with some of this money; the army could always do with money. He said aloud: "Then you could help the army with some of this money."

"In what way?" Here it comes, Chitole thought.

"Give us some of it for food and arms and ammunition."

"We already do that through our taxes. Do you want to see how much taxes we all pay? It is quite a sum."

"I don't mean like that. I mean as a personal show of your love for the army for the special protection your mission will enjoy

He has the grace not to look at me, Chitole noted. "We would have to put it to the entire membership of the co-operative; we would have to have a special meeting, a public meeting. And I do not think the members would agree just to give money away. Everybody here works for whatever they want. But if the army wants to do some work with the co-operatives to earn --- "

"Don't you have some sort of special fund?" Musaka cut in quickly, still not looking up.

"No." Chitole said and waited for the Captain to look up.

It took some time, but at last he did; a quick, sidelong furtive glance that slid over Chitole's face and was gone. The Captain pushed the file away and got up .

"So you have nothing for us: nothing to tell us and nothing to give us. Is that what I must tell my superiors?"

Chitole got up and offered his hand. "We have work, Captain, and goodwill and friendship. You and your fellow officers and men will always be welcome to our church in any other part of the countr

"They want you to send the American home, if you are really in charge."

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Suddenly, Chitole resumed his seat and gestured for the Captain to do the same. Musaka ignored the gesture.

"Tell me, Captain, why this sudden concern with a retired old churchman who can do you no harm and who has lived most of his life here?"

"He's an American," Musaka snapped. "The President has warned the army to look out for spying Americans who come as teachers or missionaries or journalists and try to destroy our nation's freedom and unity. What will you do if the President orders them all out?"

"He's a Ugandan citizen," Chitole said.

"Will you defy the President?"

"Nobody does that and it is not my intention or the church's."

"Everybody's a Ugandan - when it suits them. Americans, Englishmen, everybody. Even the Asians."

Chitole rose again. "Is there anything else, Captain."

"We will let you know, bishop." Musaka clicked his heels, swung about and stalked out of the room.

Chitole let out a long sigh. "Got it all, Enid?"

"Yes, sir." Enid's voice came clear from the other room. "I don't like it, sir. There's talk about the Asians everywhere. They say the two missing Americans are dead."

"Who are they, Enid?"

"People everywhere, my lord, everywhere."

"Transcribe your notes, please."

"yes, sir."

What now, Chitole wondered; what is that dangerous and unpredictable man up to now? How did we get into this mess? How did a nation of sensible people allow this to happen? Oh Lord, help us and guide us against this dangerous man...

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Later that evening, as they prepared for the light evening meal they usually shared with ~~xxxxxx~~Jacob, Chitole told Emma of Captain Musaka's visit and what had transpired. Emma realised that Chitole was more worried than he let on. You get to know a man after living with him this long; you get to know the little tell-tale signs of anxiety; and he was showing all of them now. There was that little muscle on the right side of the lwer jaw, near the lower lip, that showed up more sharply than usual, making his lips seem thinner and tightly pressed together. The eyes seemed only partly aware of his surrounds, as though their seeing parts were elsewhere looking at something else. The usually mobile tapering long-fingered hands were too relaxed.

"How serious is it?" She asked.

"We'll know when next he, or another one, comes."

"You expect that?"

"I'm sure of it."

"Then why are you so worried? Why not just forget it until we see what happens next?"

"Because by then it may be too late. Enid says the talk is that the two missing American journalists are dead. If he has decided on a campaign against Americans we may have to act before it reaches here."

"He wouldn't dare touch Grandpa," Emma spoke with heat. They had taken to calling Jacob grandpa, for the sake of the children to begin with, but it had stuck and everybody now called him grandpa or, when they wanted to be formal, The Old One, which also meant the wise one, the father.

"Wouldn't he?" Chitole said softly. "He bombed the Kabaka's

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Palace; he ~~th~~ seized power from the man who in his foolish arrogance made him commander of the army; he used the Jews then threw them out; he orders murder and plunder without hesitation; and you say he wouldn't dare touch grandpa - when are we going to understand the wickedness of this man, my dear? What is an old missionary bishop to him? He would dare, my dear. My hope was that he wouldn't notice us for a long time and that during that time things might change. Now it seems he has noticed us, and he would dare anything."

"Perhaps it is still only the people at the barracks," Emma suggested. "They sometimes do these things without authority."

"I hope so," Chitole said thoughtfully. "That would give us a little time. But this young man also said something about the Asian but then he acted as though he had said something he should not have. And then Enid said there is talk about the Asians everywhere."

"They have behaved badly," Emma said. "They have exploited and discriminated."

"We've known that for a long time so that can't be the reason for the sudden upsurge of interest. Think, Emma: he ordered out the Jews when he couldn't get anything more from them. They had thought they were using him; it turned out he was using them. He quarrelled with the British because they wouldn't give him a ~~kind of~~ blank chequ type of aid and there are few people left to work up credible aid programmes for him. So he's gone to Libya for free gifts. What is to stop him just taking over everything the Asians have?"

"It's illegal."

"So is seizing power. Did that stop him?"

Emma realised the measure of Chitole's concern and stopped arguing. The was good reason for his anxiety. It disturbed her deeply to

entertain the possibility that the inviolability of the church, her church, could be challenged. She had come to it for sanctuary, and she had found that sanctuary; and she had worked for it and seen others come and find sanctuary; and all the governments of Uganda, before and since independence, had always respected the inviolability of the church, all the churches of the land, whether they liked what went on or not. The British, when in control, had been suspicious of this church, mainly because it was a black church over which they had no influence. When the Kabaka returned and later became President of an independent republic of Uganda, there had been moments of friction and tension because the church would not be accomodating about what it saw as wrong, and the messages read out in all the churches on Sundays condemning corruption and thievery in high places often provoked angry reaction from those quarters; but nobody had challenged the right of the church to speak or threatened to violate it. Now, it seemed, he husband John Chitole, bishop of the church, saw and feared the possibility of such violation. And even as she wondered why the usurper-President would do this, she knew the answer: this man had to control or destroy. He had to rule or ruin what he could not rule. Once she opened her mind to it, she realised how wise Chitole was not to wait till something happened.

"What will you do? What can we do? What can the church do?"

"I must talk to Grandpa about it."

"He'll want to leave to save the church. Where will he go?"

"Will his leaving save the church?"

She thought about it for a long while, then she ecclaimed:

"Oh, John! As bad as that?"

"I could be wrong. Let's talk to grandpa."

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Jacob was not in his study so they tried his private quarters. There was no reply to Chitole's knock but the door, as usual, was unlocked so they went in. The bedroom door was open, and so was the french-window leading to the private little garden. They knew he was not home. If he had been Jane would have announced their coming with a welcome bark; and Jacab and Jane had become inseparable over the years. The old man and the aging dog were always within hailing diatnce of each other, night or day.

They went back to the living room and out to the bigger garden. The old man and his dog could be taking an evening walked in the great garden his Margaret had planned all those many years ago. Emma had made sure that the garden and, indeed, the house, remained exactly as Margaret had conceived it. When they added a new wing as their own family quarters Emma had got Margagret's original building plan from Jacob to make sure it would be an integral part of the whole: with the passage of time, now, the whole house, new wing and all, was as the single whole conceived by Margaret.

"He's not here," Emma said. "Let me go and ask Mama Kilu." She went back into the house and in the direction of the kitchen, leaving Chitole by the window.

In the kitchen, Mama Kilu sat in her great rocking chair at the table in the centre of her kingdom. She had grown heavy and seamy with time but she had firmly refused to retire as long as her bishop lived in this house. This, she had told Jacob and Chitole when they had tried to persuade her to give up, was what she had promised her Missy and she would not break that promise. So one of her grandsons who drove one of the co-op trucks, brought her

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to work every morning and came for her every evening. And from her rocking chair she supervised the work of the household: the cleaning and the polishing and the cooking, and the teaching the younger women who were to succeed her one day how to prepare the bishop's food in the same manner Missy had taught her. For to Mama Kilu, her bishop, the agent on earth of her God and the holy man Missy loved, would always be here, needing to be cared for till it was time for him to join his Missy in heaven, and only the Great One knew when that would be.

Emma touched the old lady's shoulder; she seemed to have drifted off, as the old sometimes do. Now, at the touch, she came to with a startled little jerk.

"Heh? Oh... Ma'am, Miss Emma."

"Grandpa is not here; know where he is?"

"Should be back by now," Mama Kilu mumbled. "Said he'd be."

"Where's he gone?"

"To visit Missy. The dog's with him; he'll be allright."

"Alone?"

"I tell you the dog's with him."

"Walking this time of night."

"No. He's driving the jeep."

"But Mama! He doesn't see so well at night. Why did you let him go."

"He'll be allright. I tell you the dog's with him."

Exasperation tinged with affection swept over Emma.

"The dog can't help him drive, Mama!"

"Must be about the only thing that dog can't do," Mam Kilu snapped. They had, all of them, turned that dog into a person by treating it as person and talking to it as to a person. And Mama Kilu had heredly seen that dog put her head to one side and listen and

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understand and think things out; and she had herself seen the dog speak to grandpa in an odd language when the two of them were alone; and grandpa understood and the dog understood. If anything like this had happened in the village where she grew up as a child long ago the villagers would have said the dog was possessed by evil spirits and had taken control of the man, and they would have stoned them both, driving them out or killing them. Things were terribly wrong in those old days. This dog turned human loves him, that is all. "He'll be all right," Mam Kilu mumbled again. "The dog's with him."

"Allright," Emma murmured ~~with warmth~~. The old lady was in one of her drifting spells. Emma left her, rocking easily. One day she will not come out of one of these drifting spells and she would return to being a child again. We will make sure that second childhood is a happy one Emma promised herself.

Emma returned to the living room; Chitole was still at the open window, his bearing more alert now than when she had left him.

"Mama says he went ---"

"I hear the jeep," Chitole cut in, a world of relief in his voice.

Emma thought: You really feel for him like a son for a father. Then she said it aloud.

"Let's go and meet him," Chitole said, taking her arm and pulling her along. They waited at the front steps as the jeep approached.

Emma thought: Yes; and our own two children are so blessed for having him as their grandfather. And so are we. And so are we.

Then she was scolding him before he was properly out of the jeep. "You know you should not be driving in the dark. The doctor told you that. We were worried." He was like a great shadow looming

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over her.

"Allright, Emma," Chitole murmured.

She put her arm about Jacob and held him tight for a few seconds

"She's right," Jacob said. "I thought we'd be back before dark but you know how time can pass unnoticed in a tranquil place. I'm sorry."

"Mama Kilu wasn't worried," Emma said. "She said Jane was with you which made everything allright as far as she was concerned."

At the mention of her name the dog let out a small sound but stayed close to the left heel of her master. They went into the house and Mama Kilu, all there now, came into the living to take her leave for the evening. She moved slowly but strongly, unaided, a helper a little behind her.

"There you are," Mama Kilu looked down at the golden dog. "Told Miss Emma you were allright; not to worry. And you are. Your supper is ready in the kitchen; go." The dog tilted her head up to Jacob. He nodded imperceptibly. Jane walked in the direction of the kitchen, paused beside Mama Kilu just long enough to brush her lips against the back of the old lady's hand, then she went in to her dinner. Mama Kilu looked at Emma and not all the folds of her face and around her eyes could quite hide the slightly wicked, mocking expression as she said: "Sure she can't drive?" Then her expression changed and she touched her bishop's arm. "I must leave you for another night, old friend. If it is His will I will be here in the morning. Goodnight." She looked at Chitole, then Emma. "And you, my childen."

"Goodnight, Mama," Jacob said.

"Goodnight, Mama," Chitole said.

"Goodnight, Mama," Emma murmured, adding: "Who knows."

The old lady chuckled as she turned and moved away heavily.

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"I must try Jane at the wheel sometime," Jacob said drily and led the way into the dining room. A woman pushed in the food trolley.

Chitole went to the bar and prepared three drinks. This was part of the evening ritual and he knew what each wanted; he had been doing this for years. Emma went to the end of the table which had for years been Missy's place and started to serve the food; she too knew what and how much each person wanted. Jacob seated himself at the head of the table. The family circle was complete. Only the two young ones were not present. They had eaten earlier, in the big kitchen, under Mama Kilu's supervision, and then gone to their rooms. School days began early for them so they went to bed early. Jane, slow and looking very well fed, saunter into the room and crawled carefully under Jacob's chair, and slithered forward until her face fitted snugly between the insides of her master's two soft leather shoes. Jacob's feet moved slightly, instinctively, acknowledging the contact. Jane let out an audible sigh and relaxed completely. Chitole brought the drinks to the table; Emma passed the food. Chitole took his seat on the righthand of Jacob. They bowed their heads and Jacob said grace. As if on divine que, the instant grace had ended, the telephone rang. Chitole got up and answered. It was Michael Odera, Bishop's Secretary and the most senior administrator of the day-to-day affairs of the church. After a while Chitole said: "Yes. Come over." He returned to the table and they commenced the meal.

"Michael?" Jacob asked.

"Yes. I'm glad he's back. I think he should hear what I have to tell you. He's worried too about something out in the country."

Michael Odera arrived halfway through the meal. The once bright young man had matured into a balding, slightly tubby, brillian

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administrator with an enormous gift for organisation and a matching capacity for hard work. Thanks to Odera's organisation over the past decade the church had more than doubled its out-districts and its membership and its business ventures were flourishing everywhere. The farmers' co-operatives had grown and grown rich and the very success of the church and of the churches members had attracted others to joining, and Michael Odera was at the administrative centre of this prosperous co-operative business empire of small farmers and producers and retailers of crops and food and, increasingly, services. His latest trip into the distant western border area had been both to oversea church affairs and to launch a pioneering co-operative house building venture of village self-help. The trip had gone well but what he had heard had brought him hurrying back full of deep concern.

Now, between eating, Odera told his bishops the cause for his concern.

"At first I didn't notice it. All it was to begin with was a passing reference to this or that Asian shop or house or land, mostly by people outside the church. Then, in one small town near Lake Albert I passed a shop and heard a man quarrelling with the Asian owner for not giving him credit. He shouted at the Asian that he, the one seeking credit, would soon be the owner of that shop; as soon as the President gave the word. I went in after the man had left and spoke to the Asian. It was difficult. I think he thought I was another trying to get something for nothing from him. And you know how they are with their prejudice which tells them that we are all alike, we're all thieves or liars or lazy or whatever. It was there even though he was clearly worried about what the man had said. But I was another black one so he couldn't help showing the

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prejudice. But in the end it came out. They had heard the President was going to give the word for all Asian property to be seized."

"With compensation, surely," Jacob said.

"Not as I heard it," Odera said.

"Could be just talk," Chitole suggested without conviction.

"I thought so at first," Odera said. "But then I asked our church people. They had all heard it; the priests the deacons, everybody. At first they had not paid it much mind. The idea of frightening the Asians is not unattractive to people who have been the victims of their prejudice. Seeing the new nervousness in Asian eyes was a welcome change from the old arrogance. The talk persisted and was always the same: Asians would be ordered to leave and leave their possessions and property behind. And thw word was the people were not to buy from them even if the Asians offered to sell at giveaway prices. Wait and you will get it for nothing. You want a store, a bazaar, a house, a motor car, a farm owned by one of them? Just wait and it will come to you and it will cost you nothing."

"Even if this were to happen," Jacob protested, "not everyone will get something. How will those who get nothing feel? There is nothing that stirs up the moral conscience quite as much as being at the losing end of an immorality. Haven't our church people seen that?"

"I'm not sure," Odera said. "The idea of a house or a car or shop being yours without cost is dazzling. It stirs the greed in everyone; even some priest."

"Some of ours?" Chitole sounded distressed.

"Yes. I spoke to some of them. It helped. Some were shamefaced enough to admit an ugly thing had been let loose among us."

"Then we must stop it," Chitole said firmly, looking at Jacob.

"Not if the President orders it," Odera said quietly.

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"We can stop our own church people, whatever the President orders," Chitole said.

"I agree with John," Jacob said. "But you realise it could set us on collision course with the government."

"We could do it quietly," Odera suggested. "The church of Christ is not unfamiliar with quiet, underground activity in times of moral collapse and danger. There are ways in which we can spread the word without anything coming back to us."

"It may be a time for public witness," Chitole said.

Odera lowered his head. He did not want to contradict his friend and bishop and mentor. "It is a question of what's best for the church and its people. This man would lead the country away from Christianity and to an Islam of which I am not sure he is a true believer. If he had his way he would destroy the Christian church here In any head-on collision he could succeed, especially if he could keep his army happy and well fed by giving them what he has stolen from others, like the Asians. But one day he will run out of things to steal from others, he will run out of money to buy their loyalty. When that day comes people will see him for what he is . It is important that the church be not destroyed by him before that day comes. For if it is destroyed there will be no one to lead our people back to the paths of righteousness."

"I do not think we can avoid the collision you so right fear," Chitole said, using his voice to make Odera understand he did not mind being contradicted.

"Tell them about the soldiers visit," Emma urged.

Chitole told them and they listened in silence till he had done

Then Odera nodded. "Yes, I see. We cannot avoid a collision if

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they challenge us in this deliberate way."

Jacob said:

"I think we have to do both things: we must bear witness as John wants, when the time comes. In the meantime, we must prepare for the survival of the church, no matter what happens, as you, Michael, want. They are the two sides of the same answer to our problems. Do you agree? You, John?"

Chitole's face cracked into a warm smile. "Yes, grandpa."

"And you, Michael? Don't hesitate to argue if you want to."

"No more arguments, sir."

"Then let us conspire, my sons! Let us think our way through the troubles ahead; let us make plans and contingency plans and fall-back plans in case the contingencies fail. Emma, get paper to make notes and all the notes must be destroyed once we have agreed."

Emma went away and came back with note pads and pencils.

"Now," Jacob said. "Where do we begin?"

Odera said:

"They will want to seize whatever we have so we must put away whatever we can for later use. That means we must secrete away in safe places all the money we can lay our hands on. We can always bring it back if if what we fear does not come to pass."

"It will come to pass," Chitole said.

"All right then," Jacob said. "You'll begin immediately with the money."

"I'll work out some way for Emma to get to know where the money is if anything happens to me," Odera said.

"Next?" Jacob said.

"My next meeting with the soldier, the Asians and you: in that order."

"The soldier.??" Jacob said.

Chitole began to talk. They were, all of them, at the peak of

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alertness now. Emma looked at Jacob. No grandpa that: for all his thinning white hair, for all the heavy slackness age had brought to that big body, he seemed, suddenly, as he had been twenty years and more earlier, as she had first seen him when he was at the peak of his phyiscal power as a man in his prime: clear-minded, gentle, in control. That was how he had been that first day Missy had brought her to the Mission a long time ago. He was like that now, alert and in control.

With a sense of detachment which surprised her a little she thought: These men, these men of mine, are planning to fight to defend what is a lifetimes work for each of them, and many lifetimes of work for grandpa; and they are preparing calmly as if the battle must begin tomorrow. There was no fear in Emma now, only a quiet determination that the work of her men be not destroyed.

Chitole's voice droned on quietly, leaving out no detail of what had passed between himself and Captain Musaka of the Tororo barracks. Every now and then Jacob or Odera would stop him to explore some point, then he continued again...

Toward midnight Emma and the night duty helper brought coffee and sandwiches. Twice Odera made telephone calls. One brought the chief accountant from his bed, the other woke the transport manager who in turn woke a small select group of mission workers who went out to the motor vehicles they drove.

When the first gray light of morning showed, Emma gathered up all the papers and took them to the ktichen and stuffed them into the stove and watched till they were all burned. Then Jacob, utterly exhausted, went to his bedroom followed by Jane. Sarah went to bed too, but Chitole and Odera stayed for a while longer, going over a few more points of detail. At last for them, too, the night's work

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was done and they went wearily to bed. A few mission vans and jeeps, readily all the portable and/available mission wealth hidden away in them, took off in all directions in the very early hours of the morning. went in person and The chief accountant/woke the bank manager in Tororo before daybreak and made arrangements which ensured that the missions money would be out of reach of all unauthorised hands, even if the bank was itself taken over.

7

three Over the next/~~xxx~~ days there was a greater coming and going to and from the mission thanusual. ~~Selected~~ ? priests came from all the outlying stations; they came mostly at night or in the very early hours of the morning and went straight into conference with Jacab and Chitole and Odera when he was present. Often, at odd hours of night or day Odera was on the road, away from the mission, with noone knowing where he was or when he would return. The leading members of the church women's guild gathered frequently, at all sorts of odd hours, and then one or another of the members went on an unexpected trip, laden down with presents for some relative no one had ever heard of before. sudden new But for all these/actvities, life at the mission continued in the old undisturbed manner, and most of those working at the mission, people intimately involved with its daily affairs, knew of what was happening.

On the fourth day, which was a Friday, Captain Musaka of the Tororo barracks paid his second visit to the mission in the late afternoon. Chitole met him at the door and led him into the office. The Captain was dressed in ~~xix~~ green parade uniform this time, not the casual old khaki of the last time. He had all his medals on his chest;

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his cap sat at a jaunty angle; his shoes were so highly polished they dazzled; he held his swagger stick so that the big gold signet ring on his finger could not be missed. This time, too, he had not come alone. He had come sitting in the back of his military jeep, erect and formal, an officer on duty, two soldiers, one driving the other cradling an automatic rifle in his arm, on the front seats. The armed soldier had jumped off, opened the jeep door and saluted again impressing everybody who had come out to witness the arrival which had been announced at periodic intervals by the shrill sreech of a siren mounted on the jeep.

Captain Musaka looked very dapper and hamdsome and his bearing said he knew it. But Miss Kagwa's eyes showed resentment when he looked at her expecting admiration.

"You're very formal today, Captain," Chitole greeted.

"Any objections?" Musaka snapped.

So you're still looking for a fight, Chitole though: "None, Capatin, just a social remark."

"My visit is not social!"

"My apologies; please have a seat."

Musaka remained standing, fierce and angry.

"I demand to see your bishop. I demand it now!"

"So be it, Captain." Chitole depressed his intercom button. "Miss Kagwa, please call Bishop Brown for me. Tell him it is urgent and he is to leave whatever he is doing and come immediately. Tell him Captain Musaka demands to see him." He let go of the button. "There, He should be here soon, Captain."

Musaka seemed nonplussed and sat down abruptly. Briefly he for got to be the stern ~~officer~~ interrogating officer.

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"I thought ---"

"You thought I was trying to hide him from you; no. I just told you I am in charge here, not he. That's all."

"And you will say this in front of him?"

"If you wish; yes."

"You have arranged it. You were not so eager to bring him in last time. You've talked it over and arranged it."

"To what point, Captain? I still would prefer to leave him out . He's an old man, entitled to be left alone. Like your father or mine."

"That's what you said last time to disarm me."

Wonder who told you that; you were disarmed so someone had to tell you. "He's coming, isn't he?"

"Yes," Musaka said unwillingly. He was supposed to be pushing this churchmmn into committing himself; instead this churchman kept making him answer questions to show civility and to think of family. He looked at the expensive gold watch he had persuaded a frightened Asian merchant to present to him, making it a show of impatience.

Chitole depressed his button: "What's happened to the bishop?"

"He's on his way, sir."

Musaka tried to think his way out of this one. If this churchman had persisted in refusing to let him see the old bishop he would have taken him with them to the barracks for further questioning. That was what Colonel Idrisi Mohammed had suggested. Now he would have to question the old bishop and go back, unless he could trap him into some admission of guilt. Again, he showed his impatience by looking at his fancy watch. Pretty little thing out there; he would smile at her on the way out and see how she reacted.

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Much more interesting-looking than those bar-girls in Tororo; after a time a man needs to be with a clean and wholesome woman to talk to and to smile with; you get tired of the easy bar-girls out for what they can get." Better get in one of the soldiers as witness when the old man comes.

"The bishop ---" the unseen Miss Kagwa's voice floated in the air, and the door opened and the second biggest man Captain Musaka had ever seen came into the room. Only the President was, or appeared to be, bigger than this man whose presence filled the room. A very dark man, dark as the President himself, but better looking even though you could see he was very much older; bigger than the President perhaps; hard to tell; just as overpowering but in a quiet way.

Chitole rose and inspite of himself Musaka found himself on his feet. The big man offered a huge hand, and again in spite of himself Captain Musaka took it and shook it.

"Bishop Jacob Brown," Chitole said quietly. "Captain Musaka"

"Glad to meet you, Captain Musaka," Jacob said. "Which Musaka?"

"John, sir," the Captain said.

"John; well, well, same as our bishop here. What a coicidence. Then you must have been born a Christian."

"My family were Christians..." Captain Musaka pulled himself together and fought off the impulse to relax. "They did not understand how the Christian religion was used to exploit them."

"So you grew up as a Christian boy."

"The army and the President showed me Islam is the true religion for our people."

"If that is what you believe then it must be good. Not to believe, not to have any faith, is the only thing that makes us into

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lost souls. Once you believe there is hope; and there are many paths, very many more than most of us realise in our arrogance, that lead to the kingdom of God. Ours and yours are only two of the many though some among you and some among us, a majority unfortunately, would claim that they have the one and only and exclusive key to God's kingdom..."

...I must not allow myself to be trapped by this old man's way with words. I must not allow his peacefulness to drown me. That is not what Indrisi sent me here for. The wrath of Idrisi is terrible...

Chitole said: "Captain Musaka wants me to say in your presence that I am the one in charge here, not you."

"And you have said it."

"But is it true?" Musaka asked. "Is he really in charge? Or is it just the cover, the man in front? Some smart Asians are trying to put Ugandans in front: to be seen in the stores, to have their names up as managers while they remain behind the scenes and pull the strings."

"And you think it is like this here, at our mission?" Jacob looked from Musaka to Chitole, then back at Musaka.

"Could be!" Musaka said defiantly, pushing away the sense of discomfort which assailed him.

"So, the one John, the military John, sees the other John, the religious John, as the puppet. Look at him, young man! Look at John Chitole, bishop of our church in Uganda, look at him closely and tell me if you see a man who can be used by anybody, by you or me or anybody else, to do what he knows to be wrong or what he does not want to do! Look and tell me! Is that man anybody's puppet? Do you, John Musaka, believe he is anybody's puppet?".

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"He may not think so, you may not think so; you may believe in what you are doing and still be a puppet."

"Explain yourself a little more, Captain," Shitole urged.

"It is simple. You have been converted to their religion and you want it to be good so it is good for you and so they use you to maintain their system through your belief."

"You could say that about all religions and all faiths and all ideas," Jacob suggested.

Musaka felt more relaxed now. This he could handle.

"Yes, you could. The important question is whose religion or faith or ideas you say it about. Your ideas and your religion come from the white man. Islam is not a white man's religion. That is why they're against it. They fear it because it is the religion of dark people and will lead dark people to an independence that is free of them."

"I've heard the President say this," Jacob said.

"Was he wrong?" Musaka challenged.

"No," Jacob said and Musaka's face broke into a smile of triumph. "But it is not as simple as that," Jacob went on and the smile went from Musaka's face. "We face two things here, my son. We face the truth you spoke of the use of ideas and faith and religion to gain domination over the minds of men. But we also face the other truth of an idea taking on a value and a life of its own, no matter who uttered it first or in what land it began or the skin colour of the person who first proposed it. And isn't it interesting to note that all the important ideas of the world began, please note, began, with one person. Not with committees, not with churches, not with armies, not with parties, but with one person: first there is

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the person, then there is the idea, and then, if it is a truly great idea, the churches and the committees and the parties and the armies will come along to embrace it and instutitionalise and, more often than not, distort it in subtle and clever ways that end up blurring and blunting the central point of the idea."

I will not let him mesmerise me with words, Musaka told himself. If he goes on with this I will call in the soldier to witness and so that there will be two of us against two of them. He must understand the power is with us, not with them.

Jacob went on talking: "And so it was that the central idea of the teaching of Jesus Christ, to love thy neighbour as thyself, and to have life and have it more abundantly, was distorted and institutionalised into a Christianity of burnings at the stake, of mass murder of the so-called lesser people of the earth, of imperial plunder and domination, of slavery, and of the ugliest period of racism known to man."

"Hah! Musaka exclaimed. "So you admit it! And knowing this you still serve it. You're not a puppet, as I thought. You are agents! Agents and perpetrators of a rotten system to exploit the dark peoples of the earth."

"Hear me out, young soldier, then condemn and denounce. So we turn to you, Islam. Did your Prophet really condone slavery? And yet it is in the lands of Islam that slavery still lingers. And it was the followers of Islam, members of the darker peoples of the earth who began and opened the African slave trade. In what way is this better than European imperialism? What kind of love of fellow Mohammedan is it to cut off a man's hand because he steals without knowing what drove him to steal? To pluck out a man's eyes because he looks on what he should not? To put to death young lovers who

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follow the impulses of their hearts rather than the cold decrees of calculating match-makers? Where is the love and the pity and the tenderness in all this, my son?"

"Islam did not do the same worldwide damage as your Christianity," Musaka protested. He's convicted himself; why don't I call in the witness.

"Only because it did not have the same power, my son. I think if it did it would have done just as much damage. Like our religion, yours became institutionalised and then became the instrument of power seekers. You're in power here now. The army is predominently Islamic, so Islam is in control. We hear terrible things but you know them at first hand. Do you think the Prophet would approve of all the killings of which we hear? You tell us. You know what is going on. Will he approve of the raping and degrading of our women by your soldiers? This is what the Christian soldiers did a long time ago in the early history of an imperialist and marauding Chrstianity. But this is what your soldiers are doing today in your own country. Would your Prophet approve of this? And to come back to your original question: whose puppets are they? Whose interests do they serve? You are a young man of sense, Captain Musaka, please do not bury your feeling and your caring for people so deep that you cannot find them again. The darkness that is over this land now will pass one day and there will be need for decent people to help rebuild."

"This is treason!" Musaka protested.

"Perhaps," Chitole said. "You have your gun and you listened to it and did nothing. They have killed people for less, you know that."

"Stop it!" Musaka ordered. "I mean you no harm, so stop it!

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Do not make it worse for yourselves. Give me tribute, something to take back; give me money and give me a promise of food --- something that I can take back and I will try to get them to leave you alone. Do you understand what I'm saying?" He was an earnest young man, now; earnest and anxious and in the presence of elders for whom respect was instinctive. The Old One could be his grandfather and that other his father's brother; the elders who gave guidance in the village in which he grew up. But Idrisi wouldn't understand that; if any of the others did, they would not show it. And these old men would be in trouble, for all their wisdom and understanding. The impulse to protect them, blind, inexplicable, was strong. "You must give me something to take to them!"

"We cannot give you anything," Chitole said. "We will not bribe and we will not buy protection."

Musaka looked at Jacob. "You understand, Old One. Make him understand. They will harm you. I may be in trouble if I go back with nothing. If you give me nothing I will have to take at least one of you back to the barracks to save myself. They do terrible things to people there."

"So we've heard," Jacob said.

"Then give me something; not too much, just enough to appease Colonel Idrisi."

"You heard the man," Jacob said. "He really is in charge and he says no."

"And you will not persuade him? Please, this is no trap."

"I know that, my son; and I will not persuade him."

"Then I must take one of you."

"So you say," Chitole said, signalling Jacob with his eyes.

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Jacob made a slight negative motion with his head, which Musaka missed, and Chitole checked what he had intended to say. There was a sudden flow of silent ideas between the two men, now joined in a telepathic link of sight. Then the connection snapped and Chitole, in his turn, nodded slightly. This time, Musaka picked it up.

"What is it? What are you doing? Don't you understand I'm trying to help you?"

"Yes," Chitole said. "We understand that."

"And you will not help yourself----"

"Not by betraying our faith, Captain."

"I do not ask you to do that. Just to make a show of tribute, for your own sake. You say you know what's going on; if you really do you will do as I ask."

"To pay tribute is to condone what is going on and that would be betraying our faith."

"It is the same as paying taxes. You pay taxes. I've seen the records. I looked at them before I came here. We know your wealth."

"We pay taxes to the state because all peoples and insitutions must do that. It is not the same as paying tribute to the army so that you are left alone."

Jacob joined in: "And the taxes we pay to the state are supposed to be for the services the state provides for the people - the schools for the children and the hospitals for the sick."

"And for the army," Musaka added, then stopped abruptly.

Chitole smiled, making it a gentle, friendly gesture: "Yes , Captain, if part of our taxes are already used to support the army there should be no

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need for tribute."

Musaka knew he had just messed the whole thing up. He shounld not have argued with them. Idrisi had warned him: Don't argue with them, he'd said. These old crooks are trained to argue. Just slap your gun on the desk and raise your voice and frighten the hell out of them and they will give you what you want. Start arguing with them and they will make you fart and shit. And they were doing that allright. But they're not crooks. Idrisi was wrong there but you can't tell him he's wrong about anything. He's the man in charge.

Musaka pulled out his gun and laid it carefully on the desk. Would it frighten them? He made his face as stern as he could and looked from the one old man to the other. The younger one really was in charge, and neither of them were afraid. He had seen fear too often on too many faces not to know it, and it was not here.

"Which one of us?" Jacob asked quietly.

"Where is your safe?"

"Which one of us?" Chitole repeated.

Musaka jumped to his feet and grabbed his gun.

"I said where is your safe!"

"We heard you," Chitole murmured.

Musaka raised the gun and pointed it at Chitole chest. There was still no show of fear. He turned his hand slightly and pointed the gun at Jacob's chest. He curled his finger around the trigger.

"Your last chance or the Old One dies. Where is your safe? Get me the money from it ----"

Still no reaction. He pulled the trigger. The gun clicked harmlessly.

"A cruel joke," Jacob said quietly, trying to contain the

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sudden wave of nausea that welled up from his stomach, trying to control and ease the tight band across his chest.

"Not a joke, Old One," Musaka said equally quietly. "At the barracks they will do this to you over and over again. And just when you begin to get used to it and stop being frightened they will wound you with a real bullet, not where it kills but where it hurts; and then they will play with you again until you will say and do anything they want. Is that what you want?"

"I notice you say 'they'," Jacob said. "Why not 'we'?"

"Perhaps this is his first time," Chitole suggested.

"Yes of course," Jacob said. "I hadn't thought of that. There has to be a first time for everything." The nausea was subsiding, the tightness passing.

"And there can only be one first time," Chitole said. "Are we going to be your first time, Captain?"

"Fools!" Musaka exploded. "Stubborn old fools!" He swung about and marched to the door. "They'll be back! And they'll not be like me! You will suffer..."

The door slammed behind him, and after a while they heard the military jeep roar away.

Chitole sighed heavily.

"I didn't think he'd do it," Jacob said, "but I was frightened yellow."

"You didn't show it."

"Tried not to. I fear that young man's in trouble now. We may have dug a hole for him."

"Perhaps he'll be lucky and survive it." Chitole mused for a while then added: "But I doubt it. I get the feeling he's failed a t

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this sort of thing before and this may have been his last chance."

"Why? Know anything more about him?"

"Not really. When our people tried to find out what was going on after his first visit there was this impression of someone rather brighter than the other young officers at the barracks, but also rather alone and not identified with the killings and brutalities going on inside the barracks. It seemed he was the only one the senior officers trusted enough to keep the books and the other record of their loot; and he was not usually sent on this kind of mission."

"So," Jacob suggested, "they may have decided the time had come for him to commit himself to ensure their own collective security."

"Something like that," Chitole said.

"Then we have dug a hole for him," Jacob said.

"Not us," Chitole said. "Or at least, only indirectly. Really it was his impulse to decency and humanity."

"We cannot escape the responsibility of having helped it along, of having played on it."

"That's true," Chitole said.

"A potentially good young man," Jacob said. "I hope he survives."

"I hope so too but I don't think he will. He said they'll be back before further action, I think their officers council will want to discuss us, and it they meet every Monday morning, so we have a little time and much to do."

Miss Kagwa came in with a tray of coffee. She said: "people have been ringing to find out what happened. Your wife too. I told them the soldiers have gone without you. Anything else to tell?"

"No," Chitole said. "Everything goes on as planned."

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After Miss Kagwa had left, Jacob said:

"Everything, John?"

"Everything," Chitole said.

"What if I refuse to leave?"

"I will have to order you to, and that would hurt deeply."

"I do not want you to face this alone."

"You saw Musaka's demonstration. You heard what he said. Would you want me to watch them kill you slowly in order to break me

"Allright," Jacob said. "But they may do it to you if you can't deliver me to them."

"I know. You are our symbol. Our founding father. We must not ley them lay hands on you and break your body."

"I will not betray the church. I will find the strength."

"Shame, Old One! I know that. We all know that. It is the symbolism of your untouched person that we are concerned with. The church must survive and you must be the symbol of that survival so that there can be a new begining. All this you taught me, so why make me teach you what you have taught me? You know what has to be done better than anyone else."

Jacob sighed and felt old suddenly. "Oh John!"

Chitole closed his eyes and allowed the wave of love and affection to sweep over him, creating a mood of soothing tranquility Then he opened his eyes and straightened his back. "Your draft of the 'Bishops Letter to our Congregations' was approved by everybody last night. I think it should be read in all our churches this coming Sunday, and every Sunday for a month. So does Michael."

"You say everybody?"

"Yes, Father; everybody. You taught us well."

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"It was easy," Jacob murmured as Chitole passed him the coffee. "You were wonderful students, eager to learn, all of you."

"Even the rogues and thieves who came among us from time to time?" Chitole laughed. And suddenly the room was a sea of remembrances of the scores and scores , some of them charming rogues and vagabonds and downright crooks, who had passed through this place and through this office and through the quiet but firm handling of this old man.

"Even those," Jacob said. "Yes, in retrospect, even those."

Chitole's mood changed,and with it, the ~~the~~ mood in the room changed, became cold and sobbre once more. Jacob recognised and shared the mood change. The intimacy between them was at a level, now at spscial moments where they could reach each other's feelings without words, as/between parent and child, between lover, between people facing a shared peril.

"What is it, John?"

Chitole closed his eyes and raised his chin; the muscle on the right side of his mouth contracted, pulling his lips into a thin, faintly twisted line. He opened his eyes.

"I want you to take Emma with you, Father. I fear for what might happen when next they come. She must not go through another bitter experience."

There was a long silence, then Jacob asked:"Does she know?"

"No."

"She will want to stay."

"She must go with you. That is the only hope of safety. If terrible nothing/happens - if things turn out better than we fear she can come back. We will soon find out."

"And the children? ~~They've gone, they went this morning, they'll be safe in the far west.~~"

"They've gone. They left this morning for the far west near the border. They'll be safe there with my relatives."

"And what if Emma refuses to go?"

"I will order her to."

"You are not her bishop, John; you're her husband."

"In my place, would you do any different if it were your Missy?"

"I don't know. You can't know till you face the choice."

"I know what you would have done," Chitole said. "And I'm doing it."

"Why not then come with us --- till we see what happens..."

Chitole's face softened. "You know why not, father."

Yes, Jacob thought: The shepherd does not leave his flock in times of danger. And my John is the shepherd now. The good shepherd. Where are you, Oh Lord, to allow these things to happen to the good and the useful and the beautiful ones of this earth? Where are you?

"Come, let us go home," Chitole said, pulling Jacob out of his reverie. "And please help me with Emma; it won't be easy." Then his mood changed again as he rose. "Michael's due back this evening. I worry every time he's away these days. It will be good to see him and hear his news. Come, father, we both need to rest a little."

They were aware, as they strolled home, of groups of young men in twos, at odd intervals all along their route. Each young man carried a wooden club. These were the unofficial security guards of the mission and its leaders and its women and its property; nobody had appointed them. They had just come together and agreed to try and protect their people and their property.

Jacob's heart went out to them. But with only wooden clubs!

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The dog, Jane, as usual when not with her master, was waiting for him, just inside the stone gateway with no gate which led to the sprawling house on the crest of the gently rising lush green land with its myriad flowers and shrubs and trees encompassing all the colours of the rainbow. She lay flat on her belly, front legs stretched full-length straight ahead, hind legs stretched out behind, as a swimmer frozen in the act of diving, or a leaping frog in the moment of full flight stretched out to its fullest length. She lay to the side of the left gate column, out of the path of any traffic that might approach, body motionless, chin flat on the ground, only the eyes moving at sound or a sense of motion. She had been known to lay like this for hours when Jacob was away on a trip which she could not share with him. People passing the gate, workers on their way home from the fields or factory, workers in the various sections of the mission, people come to see someone at the manse, all greeted Jane as they passed or went in. And she, in turn, had a deep throaty sound of recognition for those she knew well and liked. She was an important part of the land and the house and the mission, and they knew it and she knew it. Now, at last, she saw Jacob in the distance and the long afternoon's wait was over. She got up, stretched herself, cocked her head to one side and let out a sharp piercing sound, half-yelp half hysterical scream but she waited, head still cocked, listening intently. Then she heard the familiar sound: a sharp high-pitched whisle. She shot forwrd like a bullet and raced to meet her master, taking long bounding leaps while her tail made circles. She reached him and slithered to a stop. In the past, as a puppy and later as a young dog, she had welcomed him by leaping into his arms. But one day she had leapt up at him in welcome and the wait and the force of her

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had thrown him to the ground in a heavy fall that shook and stunned him for a moment. After that she had never leapt up at him again. Now she danced out her welcome, back arched and body twisted into a constantly moving semi-circle of quivering excitement, all the while making small sounds of welcome. Jacob went down on one knee and man and dog embraced, ~~each other~~. When it was over Jane was calm again, staid and balanced and adult and mature again. Only the smiling face and the gentle softness in the eyes now expressed her happiness.

Chitole watched and smiled in continuing wonder at the extraordinary bond between this man and this dog whom he had brought as a bought puppy on behalf of David all those years ago.

Jacob brushed a bit of earth from his knee and said, without looking at Chitole: "You know I can't leave her, ~~[illegible]~~ no matter what."

"Of course," Chitole said.

The two men and the dog continued the slow walk home in the gathering dusk.

>

Jacob looked down at the congregation, his congregation, and felt the specialness of the occasion. All the old ones were there, a few of them, like Mama Kilu and the blind and toothless old man who had been head gardener, went back to the very beginning when he, Jacob, then a young man in his ~~prime~~ thirties had come to start the mission with his new young bride the church elders had chosen so carefully and so discreetly and so wisely for him. Only a handful of those who were there at the beginning were still left; and they were all here tonight. The service John had conducted, the sermon he had

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preached had been ~~the~~ most moving and eloquent ~~he had ever done because~~ The thread of love and farewell had run through it like a single strand holding everything else together. And all these people here, these old friends who had shared in the long years of labour and of building, had come to share in this moment of love and farewell. And throughout the sermon Emma had sat beside him, her hand in his, but otherwise without any show of feeling, for it was farewell for her ~~as well~~ too. She had argued passionately against going but John had insisted; and in the end he had used the unfairest but most effective argument of all. He had said: "If you do not go with him, who will look after grandpa? He's an old man; we cannot send him out to find his way to the border all by himself." Jacob had protested the unfairness of this argument but Emma had given in to it. And Chitole had sent a wordless plea to Jacob with his eyes. And now they were all here to say farewell and to hear the letter that would be read in everyone of ~~our~~ their churches at about the same time, a little after now, on the hour.

"Dearly beloved," How very dearly beloved you all are to me "The Good Book says 'To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven'. And this is the time of the parting of old and good friends. I hope it will not be for long, for so much of me is and will always be left here. So I hope I will be back here among you when it is for me a time to die. I will not want to die far from you in a strange land; and if I do, I will want my remains to be brought back here so that I may be buried with my wife and so that my spirit will be among you always; that is the only way my soul will rest in peace. I see you weeping, and I understand it for I too, feel like weeping. When old friends part without knowing when they will meet again it is a time to weep. But if we

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remember the other side if it, if we remember what we have done xxxx together, what we have shared together, what we have built together, then it is a time to laugh and be happy, a time to take stock and rejoice. So weep not, my dearly beloved; rejoice instead in the good works we have together succeeded in accomplishing. Remember the good works in the morning and when the sun goes down; and in remembering the good works, remember the faces of those who shared the good works with us. Remember that and you will remember when it was a time to laugh and a time to plant; a time to love and a time to dance. In times of war and times of hate and times of killing it is a good thing to remember and be made strong by remembering the good times of our sharing in good works. We must hold on to that in the dark hours. That is our Christian witness through the ages. I see the time has come when from everyone of our pulpits our priests will begin to read the letter..." Jacob stopped talking and turned his head to ~~look at~~ the well-lit big clock near the door. The vast congregation waited with him. John Chitole came and stood on his right hand. Michae Odera came and stood on his left. The seconds ticked by; then it was the hour and Jacob put on his glasses and read the same words that priests of all their churches were reading to their congregations at this same time:

"From the Bishops of our Church to all the Congregations of our Church in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Greetings. It is the duty and the responsibility of the Bishops, after consulting with all the groups and sections and associations and parts which make up the Body of the Church of Christ, to issue from time to time guidance on matters of important religious or moral principle. Such Pastoral Letters are

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always addressed to the Church itself, to our own, not to others. They are not addressed to governments or princes or principalities; they are not even addressed to other denominations of the Christian Fellowship; they are only addressed to our own members for it is only over our own members that we have the authority to instruct and give guidance. It is so with this letter. It is for our people only; it is for their guidance only. It seeks to challenge no other authority. The things that are Caesar's remain Caesar's; the things that are God's must likewise remain God's; the spiritual and moral guidance of his people is God's business, entrusted, for the time being, to those who are his shepherds here on earth. It is in this spirit, no other, that we, the Bishops, address this letter to all the Congregations of our Church that they may be instructed and know how to comport themselves on the matter set out hereafter.

"Dearly beloved, it has come to us, and we have confirmed it, that a day will soon be appointed to order the Asians out of this country. They will leave all that they have behind them; they will not be compensated. And their goods and chattels, all they have, all they have built, all they have acquired, whether by honest or not honest means, will be left behind and will be seized and shared out among the people. This means that when this thing comes to pass and and there is, say, one Asian-owned shop or bazaar, and one farm and two factories in your town or near your town, and if the owners and managers of these places who are Asians have ten or twelve houses, and their children have thirty or forty

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bicycles, all these would be taken from them and given away freely to the people. The clothes and the food and the livestock, everything, would be taken and given away by those who are not rightful owners and so have no moral right to do the giving. A man can only give that which is his. He cannot take another's and give it away as an honest man. When a man or a woman or a child takes that which belongs rightfully to another, we describe that as stealing, no matter what he or she does with it. And for us the instruction is clear: Thou shalt not steal.

"Many among us, dearly beloved, will be tempted. Others may have a just grievance against some Asian shopkeeper or merchant or manager. Many will say the Asians discriminated and behaved as badly and brutally toward us because we are black as did the white people. This is true. But it does not give us licence to go against the Commandment: Thou shalt not steal. Our first concern is not with the Asians; our first concern is with our own people; it is a matter of how we conduct ourselves, how we deal with others, whether we steal and rob. That others behave with wickedness may be excuse for wickedness against them; but excuse does not justify. To take by force what is not yours, even from the wicked, is to steal. The Commandment says: Thou shalt not steal.

"We draw one important distinction, dearly beloved. What has been taken from us unjustly, which is the same as what is stolen from us, and which we can identify clearly, that we have a right to take back, but only as a collectivity Traditionally we held land as a collectivity, even as we now do with all our mission property and other goods and chattels

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This is one way in which our church is different from others. You know the many ways in which we have blended the traditional ways with the universal teaching of Our Lord. So we accept that the land is the people's as a collectivity to be worked and shared together; it is not the government's - any government's - to buy or sell or give away in exchange for favours; it is not even one man's to do so outside of the collectivity. Land is the life of a people, a trust that each person serves. So taking back the land which was taken is not stealing. That is the great exception. But what is on the land, what a man has built up from his own sweat and effort and from the sweat and effort of his family, even if he often used crooked means, that should not be taken from him except for fair and honest compensation. To do it any other way is to steal, and the Commandment is clear: Thou shalt not steal.

"So, dearly beloved, is it our solemn injunction to each member of our Church to honour the Commandment: Thou shalt not steal, and take no part in any way in the sharing out or the seizing or the receiving of Asian property. There is no profit in gaining the whole world if we lose our bearing as Christians and cease to draw a sharp line between what is right and what is wrong. The exodus, the driving out of peoples and the seizing of their goods and chattels was wrong in the beginning, is wrong now, and will always be wrong and even if we do not have the power to do anything about that wrong, we must not be a party to it.

"We end as we began, dearly beloved: this injunction is to our own. If others choose to heed our words and perhaps

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follow our example we would be greatly heartened; but we do not call for this. We tell only our own, as is our duty and our respobsibility, how we should conduct ourselves in trying to follow the example of our Saviour. Peace be unto you, and the blessing of God be with you through all the days of our life..."

Jacob Brown stopped reading, paused and heard the silence of the great hushed throng in the vast church, then he hadded:

"The letter is signed: John Chitole, Bishop-in-charge; and Jacob Brown, Bishop-Emeritus, retired."

Someone in the body of the church, his big voice made small and faint, started singing, Onward Christian Soldiers. Chitole made a sign to the choir leader, and the choir, with its elaborate amplification system, joined in and filled the vast place with the stirring hymn. The congregation rose to its feet and joined in the singing.

Jacob turned to Chitole: "Didn't sound quite as unprovocative as I hoped and tried to make it."

Chitole's lips curled. "It isn't easy to make the message of the greatest revolutionary of them all sound moderate, especially at a time like this."

The singing came to an end. The Congegation remained standing. They knew this was the moment of parting. Their bishop, the old bishop, had to flee this evening to avoid the coming of the soldiers. The plans were laid. Many others would leave too, travelling to different parts of the country to seek refuge and to wait out the storm they all feared was soon to be on them. After the storm they would all return and put together what had been broken and resume their lives. That was the plan.

Chitole took Jacob's place at the pulpit. One last ceremony

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had to be performed to ensure apostolic continuity before the dispersal and the coming of the soldiers in the morning. For after this Letter they were sure to come. Some feared they might even come this night, so an elaborate warning system was in place.

"We will now proceed with the last and most important piece of business." Chitole turned to see if Jacob's robing was completed. Then Chitole himself stepped back to be robed by three waiting priests. Jacob said: "The Reverend Michael Odera will be enthroned as a Bishop of our church now. You know the other two who will be enthroned as auxuliary Bishops. You know why the ceremonies are a little less beautiful and elaborate ....."

At last Chitole was robed and ready and Jacob and Chitole conducted the great and historic ritual of the laying on of hands and the apostolic continuity which has kept the Christian church alive despite the fiercest persecution at many point in its long history. The plan was for the two auxuliary bishops to disappear immediately in case the wqr against the church was stepped up by the Nubian and his predominently Islamic soldiers....

The ceremony ended and the leave-taking commenced. Jacob, Chitole, Emma and the newly enthroned bishops, walked down the aisle to the great carved doors while the singing congregation turned in their places and watched them. When they were in line and ready, Emma first, then the two auxuliary bishops, then Michael Odera, then Chitole, then Jacob, the congregation started the long slow singing procession, row by row, from the front of the church. In turn, each member of the congregation shook the hand of the people waiting at the door. And the singing, now turned into a haunting vernacular hymn of parting, filled the church and spilled out into

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the clear, cool, cloudless night.... An old woman took Jacob's hand and he could feel the trembling of her body through her hand though her old face showed no expression. She was one of the old ones who had been here from the beginning. She too had been ordered to leave for safer sanctuary after this farewell service. Jacob remembered her as she had looked more than thirty years earlier. Upright and square-shouldered and big with a child strapped to her back. A woman in the prime of life then, mother of many children. An old woman now, old as he himself was. He felt old suddenly, and just a little weary of spirit. The old woman peered into his eyes.

"So we part, old man."

"So we part, old woman."

"We have shared much and I will not see you again, but your spirit will be with me always, even unto death."

"And yours with me," Jacob said.

"This evil thing will pass from the land but the young will suffer before it pass."

"It is our shame that we allowed it to come."

"It will pass after the suffering." The line was being held up but Chitole refused interrupt the two old friends. At last she let go of Jacob's hand. "Go well, my friend and the Lord go with you. And come back to us one day so that the children may be blessed by knowing you. My spirit will be waiting with those of many others to whom you have been a father."

Jacob put his arms about the old body in a sudden impulsive gesture and held her tight for a brief moment. He felt the trembling of her body grow more violent, but the upturned face remained impassive. He kissed her wrinkled parched cheek; then he let her go and she turned and walked away. Then came Mama Kilu, tears

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flowing unchecked down her cheeks; and again the line did not move for a long time. Then another old friend, and another old friend and another old friend. The line moved very slowly till all the old friends had had their parting words with Jacob, but the haunting music of a vast throng in sad parting song seemed to suspend even the sense of time. After the old friends the line moved more quickly but still the parting and the touching of each other did not come to an end till well after midnight.

Then the mission's trucks and vans rolled up to the church door and young men and women from the schools and the seminary gathered together the old folk and the young children who had been assigned to particular vehicles and helped them in. When three or four vehicles going in the same direction were fully loaded a signal was given and they moved off as a small convoy. When half the vehicles had gone, Jacob and Emma were helped into a covered long-bodied land rover which looked like any ordinary such vehicle from the outside but which had been carefully prepared and stocked inside. Jane was waiting inside, curled up on one of the narrow two sleeping couches. The parting with Chitole was quick. All the words had already been said between him and Emma, and between him and Jacob. Now, in the presence of others, the parting was quick and formal. Emma had done her weeping in private; Jacob had shown his fatherly feeling in private. This particular convoy had a truck full of people, led by a small jeep and followed by a small jeep, another truckload going to the foothills of Mount Elgon, and another truckload destined for further north, Moroto, with Jacob and Emma's special jeep bringing up the rear. Until they reach Moroto, they would have company, after that they would be on their own, which would make them more noticeable and so more vulnerable.

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When they were settled in the ~~jeep~~ land rover, Chitole took Emma's hand in his own right hand, and Jacobs in his left.

"Thank you for bing a father to me, the most wonderful a man could have --- for showing me the way...And you, my Emma, for being the best wife a man could have. You have filled my days with blessing -- both of you. Thank you; pray for me..."

And now, at last, Emma could no longer keep back the tears.

Jacob freed his hand and touched Chitole's cheek: "Oh my son!

Their convoy started moving, followed by the mournful hymn of parting...

The army came early next morning, just as the sun was rising. Colonel Idrisi himself led the column of army jeeps and trucks that sped into the mission grounds and fanned out in what appeared a well rehearsed operation of occupation. Soldiers tumbled out of their trucks and surrounded the administrative block, the church, the dormitories, the factory and the warehouse areas. All at once they were everywhere, outnumbering what remained of the mission's population. The soldiers hustled the people out of the buildings and ordered them to the great church. Because the massive doors were always open there was no need to force them.

When all the people who could be found were gathered in the church under the guard of a score of machine-gun-toting solders, the bishop was marched from his home to join them. He had not been allowed to complete his dressing: he had on a pair of trousers and one of those collarless shirts best suited for the clipping on of

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the parson's collar; his feet were in soft house slippers. The Colonel, a big man with a near-jet black face and the slightly Arabic features of the southern Sudanese, and with a strong body going to fat, was about Chitole's age or a little younger, a man of abbut fifty, but looked older, more dissipated. He was waiting at the church door as a young officer and four soldiers hustled Chitole in.

"Where ate the others?" Idrisi demanded, not looking at Chitole.

"Only a very old woman and two girls in the kitchen," the officer said.

Now Colonel Idrisi looked at Chitole: "You, who are you?"

"I'm the bishop of this church. John Chitole."

"Ah. The one Musaka tried to phone last night. So he did get word to you. Where are you hiding the American?"

"Captain Musaka did not phone me," Chitole said.

"Where is the American?"

Chitole felt the hard point of a rifle in his back.

"He's gone," Chitole said, "And he's not an American; he's a Ugandan."

Idrisi took a step toward Chitole then, casually, slap him across the face, not hard.

"Where's he gone? You see I'm not afraid of hurting people because they are called bishops." He look at the silent frightened small crowd gathered just inside the great church. "I'm not even afraid of killing people because they are called bishops. Answer!"

Chitole held his peace and braced himself. Idrisi's eyes blazed with explosive anger. A man stepped out of the frightened crowd. "I will tell you, sir. The bishop, the old one, left here

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three-four days ago to go to Entebbe. He has not returned and our bishop's wife went with him."

"You lie, man!" Idrisi roared.

"Not sir. I tell the truth."

"It is the truth," a voice in the crowd said. Other voices took up the affirmation.

"So," Idrisi said to his young officer. "Musaka's treachery began earlier. The American left shortly after his last visit." He stared at Chitole. "You bribed him. How much? What was his price?"

"We did not bribe him," Chitole said. "We gave him nothing."

"We found nothing," the young officer confirmed. "And the soldiers who were with him say he came straight to the barracks from here."

"You must have promised him something." Idrisi continued staring at Chitole.

"We gave him nothing and promised him nothing," Chitole said.

Another officer, a captain this time, came in, saluted and led Colonel Idris aside. They conferred in whispers for a long time, then the captain saluted and hurried out.

Idrisi took a document from his pocket and unfolded it. Looking at it he read: "Fifteen jeeps, twelve trucks, eleven motorcars, seven motorcycles, thirty bicycles. This was your mission's transport stock according to your last tax returns. Where are they, Mr. Bishop?

Chitole remained silent.

"We opened your safe, Mr. Bishop. There was nothing in it. What have you done with the money? Where are the farm animals? Why are your warehouses empty, Mr. Bishop?" Idrisi deliberately pulled his gun out of its holster. "Is this part of your letter of not taking anything from the Asians? Are you agents of the Asians then?

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Speak up, Mr. Bishop, before I take the pleasure of killing you slowly! Where have you hidden all thsss things? Where is the money?" Idrisi raised his gun and took careful aim at Chitole's left thigh. Someone in the crowd began to moan. "Look out of the door," Idrisi' voice rose. "Let them all see!" he ordered the soldiers. "Let them see their bishop's house burning! And if they do not tell us where they have hidden the money and the other things then this church and every building on this mission will burn as the bishop's house now burns! Did I tell you, Mr. Bishop, how angry the President was about that letter you and the American sent to your churches? I didn't? Well, he was so angry he wanted to come up here and burn you down himself! I promised to do it for him, Mr. Bishop, so that the foreign press will not have another thing for which to blame him. Speak, Mr. Bishop!"

Idrisi's first shot echoed as a sonic boom in the vast churc The force of the bullet knocked Chitole to the ground. At first he felt only numbness then the pain in his thigh began to spread throug him as though his whole body has been shattered.

Those who had rushed to the door to look at the growing cloud of smoke from the bishop's home retreated hurriedly and sought comfort in huddling together A woman went toward her bishop to help him up.

Idrisi roared "Stop!" The woman kept going so Idrisi aimed for her head and shot her dead. Chitole got to his knees and remained there. He fought against the terrible pain and the mounting panic inside him. He said: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Then he heard the voices of the members of his congregation coming to him, and the panic left him, despite the pain. His voice, in

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union with theirs, grew stronger: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name sake..."

Indrisi shouted: "Silence!"

They ignored him. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me..."

"Silence!" Idrisi roared again and fired into the body of the kneeling wounded John Chitole. He kept on firing, even after Chitole rolled over dead, till all his bullets were spent.

The congregation paused momentarily, then picked up and completed the words of the psalm.

In the hush Idrisi looked at the dead man and the dead woman on the floor, then he turned and glared at the congregation, and then he stalked out of the church shouting: "Burn it to the ground, all of it! That's an order!"

They heard the Colonel's jeep start up and roar away. The congregation surged forward in a body to take up their dead. Some soldiers raised their weapons menacingly. The young officer held up his hand. "Let them be," he ordered.

They carried the body of John Chitole and the woman out of the church without quite knowing where they were going, singing a mournful dirge to the dead.

There was smoke and smell of smoke and fire everywhere as the soldiers carried out Colonel Idrisi's orders. The home that Jacob and Margaret had built those many years ago, and to which Chitole and Emma had added later, was now blazing fiercely. Mama Kilu, watched by two helpers, sat on a stone weeping desolately as she watched the place she had come to as a young woman perish.

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David's small party of two militarised jeeps and one large personnel carrier and a dozen hired seasoned fighters crossed the Border into/Kenya above the western end of Lake Rudolph, close to the border of the Sudan and near Lokitaung. David had picked up the news of the burning down of the mission on Radio Uganda two days earlier on his ~~powerful military~~ shortwave receiver. Chitole had died in a supposed shoot-out with soldiers who had come to investigate reports of subversive activity at the mission. The President , the radio had said, had wept when he had heard of the death of the bishop and had blamed the misleading of the bishop on American agents masquarading as missionaries. There had been no word of Jacob so David knew Odera's plan was in progress. The thing now was not to lose the old man in the great Rift Valley below the lake. The plan was for the old man to cross the border into Kenya to the north of Moroto and to make for Lokitaung without being spotted by either Kenyan or Ugandan border patrol; if ~~this could not be avoided~~ he was spotted the old man was to make a dash for the Kenyan side. Kenyatta's people would deal more kindly with him than the Nubian's.

~~He~~ David led the party off the dusty dirt road and bounced across ~~the~~ the dry scrubland as they skirted Lokitaung. The local people would not ~~really~~ be able to distinguish them from Kenya's own border patrols: the danger was of them running into one such patrol; and this was a rescue, not a raiding or attacking mission. So they travelled far away from the populated centres near the lake with their trees and cooling breezes. They travelled instead in the dusty ancient flat dry valley in the hot sun, crawling across the vast African landscape like giant ants purposefully going nowhere.

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They had crossed the border early in the morning, before sun-up; they had travelled steadily through the day, not stopping, as though on a forced march, munching what they had to eat on the move, the men peeing from the moving vehicles when they needed to. There was the driver and a companion manning a mounted machine gun on each of the two jeeps, and eight men, two mounted machine guns, a small cannon, and a vast supply of other ~~automatic~~ weapons and ammunition, ~~in the carrier.~~ and fuel and food in the carrier. None of the men looked under thirty; they all looked tough and seasoned fighters. Their commander, who drove the second jeep, sometimes leading, sometimes bringing up the rear, sometimes going far ahead or falling far back, ~~scouting,~~ was a battle-scarred brown Algerian called ~~known only as~~ Hassan. David had fought with him in Algeria so David had cabled him from Conakry to assemble this fighting group. Hassan and his men had been waiting for him when he arrived in Addis. And in three days they had assembled all they needed for the mission. The men were a mixture of Arabs, black Africans from many parts of the continent, and even one near-blond North African with hazel eyes who could easily pass for white in racist South Africa.

Toward sundown the party stopped on high rocky land which gave them a clear view of the surrounding country for miles in every direction.

"A good place to stop!" Hassan called out to David in Arabic.

"Then we stop," David replied.

The men tumbled out of the carrier and without instruction set about preparing for the night; some serviced the jeeps and the carriers, others started a fire and prepared food, two went off to the highest point of the land with binoculars; all worked with their firearms either on them or near them. They spoke little and there was none of the banter usually associated with men in arms. But there was an air of relaxation about them all

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Hassan came to David with two bugs of coffee, ~~and gave him one.~~

"I'm getting worried," David said. "We are near Uganda's border

"We cross it if we have to," Hassan said.

"We may have missed him. He's supposed to have started out three nights ago. Should have been across the border by now."

"You told me he's an old man."

"Not that old ----"

A soft whistle came from the lookout on the highest point. Instantly the air of relaxation was gone. The fire was put out; the food put away; the motor vehicle parts and petrol and grease stored back in the eerrier; men took up their arms and wqited. David and Hassan joined the look-out; they both had binoculars about their necks and they both scanned the direction in which the lookout pointed.

After a while Hassan said: "Yes; a jeep; moving slowly; a big one." Then he made a wide circle, searching the horizon. "Nothing else anywhere, but you never can tell. A plane would be overhead in a few seconds if its a decoy."

"Too slow," David muttered. "Won't reach here before dark at that pace."

"And if it's him we may lose him in the night," Hassan said.

"I'll go out," David said. "If it is mischief---"

"If it is mischief we fight," Hassan said, ~~firmly.~~

They pointed to the jeeps, leaving the lookout in place. Hassan told the men of the slow-moving vehicle and David's plan to go out alone in case it was a trap.

"Not without me," the one who had manned the machine-gun on David's jeep growled. He was a very black scar-faced little man, all muscle and sinew and bone.

Hassan shrugged slightly. "It's his gun; a man and his gun."

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"Then come!" David snapped, knowing the time-wasting futility of argument, ~~especially now~~. He got into the driving seat of his jeep; the little man got into the open body and swung the mounted machinegun from side to side, testing it for manouvreability. Hassan made a half salute as David's little jeep sped southward toward the distant, much bigger ~~and covered~~ landrover. The ~~sun~~ light was ~~sinking~~ fading fast and caution had to give way to haste if David was to reach and guide the slowly approaching vehicle back ~~to their camp~~ before nightfall.

"If it is not the old man ---" David ~~told himself and~~ touched the gun in his ~~lap~~ belt as reassurance.

It took another half an hour of fast driving across the darkening scrubland before they came into clear unassisted sight of the crawling landrover. But now those in the landrover had seen them ~~too~~ and it came to a halt. At a little over two hundred yards ~~distance~~ David pulled up and used his binoculars to try and make out the figures in the landrover. There were two but there was not enough light now to identify them; then he caught the shadowy outlines of the dog.

"It's them," he said to his campanion. "It has to be. It's him and another. Only he will think of taking a dog even/when escaping from death."

"Be careful," the little man warned as David shot the jeep forward. The little man settled into fighting position, kneeling on his left knee for better balance against the bumpy swaying of the jeep

They stopped at twenty yards from the landrover.

"Ready?" David murmured.

"Ready," the little man replied.

David got out of his jeep, gun in hand and moved toward the

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landrover in a crouching, zigzagging half-run. At ten yards he dropped to the ground and yelled: "That you, Dad?"

There was a pause, then the reply: "David?"

"Yes! Who's with you?"

"Emma; you know here, John's wife! And the dog, Jane."

"That all?"

"Yes."

"Nobody else?"

"Nobody else."

"Its allright!" David called back in Arabic to the one manning the machine-gun.

"Make sure, Commander," he called back. "We say anything with a gun in our back."

"What now?" Jacob called.

"Stay where you are," David called back. "If anybody else is with you we will find them and destroy them; tell them they are surrounded!" Then he made a sudden dash for the rear of the landrover. And before Jacob and Emma realised it David was peering at them from the back of the landrover, gun cocked. Jane had instantly sense the intruder/ she she challenged him, frangs showing, crouched to leap.

"Allright Jane; down!" Jacob commanded, and Jane relaxed. "Thought we'd lost you or something had gone wrong."

"Hello, Dad," David said. "Emma." He wondered if they knew about Chitole. He ~~jumped out of the back of the landrover and~~ went round to the front. He cupped his hands to his mouth and called out: "It is clear! It is my people!"

The little man left his gunpost and drove the jeep alongside the landrover.

"Back to camp," David said. "You lead; I'll drive this and

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followed." Then he got into the landrover and told Emma, who had been driving, to move over. Jane made protesting sounds till Jacob tol her to hush.

The little jeep, not showing and light, led the way back to the camp, followed by the landrover also not showing any light and/keeping up with the fast pace of the little jeep. Still, it was quite dark when they got back to camp. There was no relaxation, no time for a quiet reunion between David and his father and Emma. Hassan insisted that they broke camp immediately and make the journey back out of Kenya and across the Ethiopian border without delay. They had been lucky this far; it would be dangerous to push that luck. Any incident between them and either the Ugandan army or Sudanese forces or Kenyan border patrol elements with the bishop in their company could cause uproar in the ranks of the Orggnisation of African Unity.

Hassan assigned a driver to Jacob's and Emma's landrover, and David told them to try and get a night's sleep, and the convoy started the journey back, Hassan's jeep in the lead now, the landrover close behind the armoured carrier and David's jeep bringing up the rear. With a little luck, and if they could keep up the pace, and if they did not run up against any border patrols, they should be on the Ethiopian side by daybreak. There they would be safe.

Inside the body of the landrover Jacob and Emma let go of tension which had driven them these past two days and nights. They had found David and David would ensure their safety. They could relax now.

Before she dozed off Emma said; "Strange to think of David as a soldier. Never thought of him like that."

"I find it hard too," Jacob said. "If he hadn't been we would not be here now. We wouldn't be safe, you and I."

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"Goodnight, grandpa," Emma murmured. Silently she prayed for the safety of Chitole and those they had left behind. Take care of them, Lord, and let there be someone like David to come to their rescue as he has come to us. Amen." Then she dozed off, rocked to sleep by the swaying motion of the moving landrover

"Goodnight, Emma," Jacob said as he felt Jane climb delicately and gingerly onto the foot of his bunk, as though to not let him notice her presence. That was how she always got onto the foot of his bed at home...Jacob closed his eyes and relaxed his mind. Such a long way from home they were now.

Only Jane did not sleep; she relaxed, to be sure; but she kept silent watch all through the long and silent journey of that long and silent night.

In the morning, on the Ethiopian side of the border, and a good twenty miles inland from it, they had breakfast on a hill near a village. The village was roughly twenty miles from the Sudanese border as well: twenty miles from here and you were in the southern Sudan; twenty miles from here and you were in northern Kenya; and just about four or five times that distance and you were in northern Uganda. The villagers had witnessed the coming and going of all manner of people from all these places; they had grown used to it and they had profited from it, and they had learned not to ask or answer questions about these comings and goings.

The village headman, who embraced Hassan as an old friend, joined them for a ceremonial cup of coffee. Then Hassan, now with a pouch of money, took the headman some distance from the others to settle

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their business. When it was over the headman waved his farewell and made his way down the hillside, back to his village, in the long, easy loping strides of a person used to walking great distances in high mountain country.

There was a strange awkwardness between Jacob and Emma on the one hand and David on the other. They had not seen each other for many years, and letter, no matter how frequent or intimate, never quite bridge the gap of change wrought by absence over a long period. Jacob found it hard to reconcile this aloof, greying, cold-eyed and tightly controlled military man with the explosively rebellious and volatile boy and young man who had been his and Margaret's son. Almost, this cold-eyed man was an Arab stranger to him; he spoke Arabic as though it were his native language, and English, his native language, as an Arab who had learned it might do. And that gun was such a natural part of him: yet the voice was his David's and the deed of rescue was the expression of a son's love. Emma's mind could not get past the reality of David the soldier, the man with the gun, at ease in the company of men with guns. Her life had been spent with men of peace and love, with grandpa and John and all the peaceful workers about them. This one was clearly a man of war, clearly respected as such by these men around him. This was not the young David she had known in those early years at the mission. That David did not have eyes which looked at you with the coldness of a snake or as a person with no feeling.

Massan returned, received another mug of coffee from the man whose turn it was to be the waiter, and settled down near David.

"You are troubled, my brother," Hassan said in Arabic. "No

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need to worry; your transport is on its way."

"It is not that," David replied. "They do not know of the destruction of their mission and the killing of her husband."

"And you must tell them."

"And I don't want to."

"I have seen you tell people of death and destruction before, my brother."

"Not these people."

"Ah, they are close. Remember I was with you, David, when you had to tell your wife's father of her killing ---"

"That was in battle," David snapped.

"Yes, the fortunes of war," Hassan murmured cynically. "If only we could isolate the horrors of war to only the fighters."

"I have to tell them."

"Then get it over," Hassan said. "Now!"

David rose abruptly, unbuckled his gun belt and handed it to Hassan. He said in English: "Dad, Emma, come with me. I have something to tell you." Then, without waiting, he walked to a small cluster of rocks on the far side of the hill. Jacob and Emma and Jane all rose together and followed David. The fighting men had tried to fraternise with Jane by offering her choice titbits of food which she had ignored, accepting only food from Jacob or Emma.

When they reached him David looked searchingly at each of them. The realisation of how old his father really was, and the signs of physical decay, had come as a shock. You do not think of your father as growing frail with old age until you see it; and if you witness it gradually over time it is not as stark as when you remember him in one state and then, years later, suddenly discover him in another. How would the old man stand up to the news? How would

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Emma?

Emma read the compassion in his eyes and thought: He's less cold without his guns.

Old Jacob braced himself: "What's it David?"

"They burned down the mission," David said. "We heard it night before last over Uganda radio."

"And the people?" Jacob's voice was a whisper.

"They killed John and a woman."

Jacob put an arm about Emma and held her tight, feeling her body stiffen. They expected it, David thought: they had prepared themselves for it, as soldiers prepare themselves to die.

David said:"The report made it sound as though the soldiers were attacked as they searched for weapons and evidence of subversio and you are made out as the foreign villain, with John as the misguided dupe. The reports say you slipped out of Entebbe with the help of traitorous army captain."

"Captain Musaka," Jacob whispered. "I'll tell you about him one day. And about my John, our John, Emma's John; he knew what would happen and what had to be done. We expected more deaths. Only two. Please leave us for while now, David. Emma and I need to be alone."

David left them, and the old man and the woman remained at that rocky spot for nearly an hour, till the distant hum of an approaching helicopter drew nearer and nearer, till it hovered overhead and came slowly to rest on a flat spot. Then Hassan came to them and said, in perfect English with only the hint of an Arab accent: "It is time for next stage of your journey, my lord. My men and I are glad to have been able to help you this far. That monsterous Nubian will pay for his crimes one day, believe me."

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"We are grateful for your help," Jacob said.

Hassan looked into Emma eyes, hesitated a while, then said softly: "I - we - my men and I are all sorry about what happened to your husband and your mission. David will tell you," he made David's name sound like a strange Arab name, "that that one is no representative of the best in Islam. You have bad Christians, we have bad Moslems; that one is worse than a bad Moslem. Islam does not make war on the peaceful and the defenceless; David will tell you; he knows us."

"This is the way of our world," Jacob said. "You should not reproach yourself." He took Emma's hand. "My daughter and I thank you for helping David and us."

Emma held on tight to Jacob's hand. It was the first time he had called her his daughter. She fought down the impulse to lean against him and bawl. This old man, now, was her only family left.

Hassan said: "Come, please," and led the way to the helicopter where some of his men were lifting Jacob and Emma's personal possessions from the landrover into the helicopter.

"My briefcase and books," Jacob said anxiously.

David came to them and said; "Not to worry. We'll take care of everything."

"I'll go and supervise them," Emma said and hurried away.

Hassan said, in English: "I told your father you will tell him Islam is not the barbarism of the Nubian."

"He knows," David said, "but we will talk of it again one day." Then, to Jacob: "Where do you want to go, Dad? Back to the States?"

Jacob thought for a while then shook his head. "No. I'm retired now. Emma and I will go to Jamaica and wait there

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till we can come home again and pick up our work again. Michael and the others will keep it going till then. You know Michel, don't you?"

"He's been my contact all these years, Dad. He was the one who advised me of the danger and to set up this operation."

"Of course," Jacob said. "I didn't always know the details. Will you come with us to Jamaica? For a while, perhaps? I'd like that. I'd like to show you the hills where I grew up and where I learned my first lessons about love and God and freedom from your great-grandma Sarah. I'll show the place where their church was burned down. Ours wasn't the first church to be burned down. It won't be be the last."

"And God's children who love and fight for freedom will overcome," Hassan said.

"He sounds just like a brother," Jacob said and smiled.

"He is a brother," David said. "One day I'll tell you how much of a brother."

"And you will come with us?"

"For a time," David said and felt hugely rewarded by the sudden glowing warmth in his father's eyes. I must stay with him now, David told himself: until he dies.

And so they took leave of the men who had been prepared to risk their lives to rescue them. They stood in line for Jacob and Emma to shake each by the hand before climbing into the helicopter. Then David had a farewell word with each; he has fought long side these men in North Africa. They were comrades. ~~with all of them before~~. Then he embraced Hassan.

"The blessing of Allah go with you and protect you," Hassan sa

"And with you, my brother," David said.

The helicopter rose, veered, suddenly, and sped north.

(3)

Emma sat on the long verendah watching the Blue Mountains turn into a misty hazy purple against the darkening sky. It was quiet, so quiet the whole world seemed hushed. The soothing sense of tranquility of this place, which she had first felt nearly seven years earlier, was about her, a thing of endless wonder and peaceful delight. The letter with its postmark/Kampala, Uganda lay on the crude wooden table beside her. They had received several letters from Uganda over the years; but all those others had been postmarked Nairobi, Kenya; or Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; or Addis Ababa, Ethiopia or even London, England. Never Kampala, Uganda; and that made this one special. It was addressed to her this time. To Mrs. Emma Brown, so whoever had written it knew what had happened. That was/made what her afraid of opening the letter. She would wait till David returned from the city down there, and till grandpa and Jane returned from their long/walk exploration across the valley of Mount Zion. They were forever exploring, those two. After one/ such exploration grandpa had come back in high excitement because he had met up with an old man who lived alone in the remote bush and who claimed to be a descendant and/grandson great of someone called Noname who had been part of the group of runaway slaves with whom Grandpa and David's ancestors had come here first. Emma knew all about that story now. Much of it was to be found in Grandpa's notebooks and journals, and some of the older papers he had inherited from his grandma Sarah, who had come vividly to life for Emma through Grandpa's tell. She spent most of her mornings transcribing those notebooks and journals. They would make a wonderful book one day, a fine record of Grandpa's work as a missionary and of the origins and outlook of his church, and of the many-sided struggles of black peoples in the twentieth century

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and the role of one black family in those struggles. And yet David who was part of that struggle, an unfamiliar military part to be sure seemed curiously unwilling to take part in the planning or discussion of this book which would be Grandpa's last important task. He said he did not want to influence it in anyway and discussion always influenced people's thinking or approach or perspective in one way or another, whether they were aware of it or not; and he was anxious that Grandpa's last important work be truly his own.

"What about me?" Emma had asked. "What about my influencing him by our discussion?"

"That's different," David had said. "You and he share the same perspective; your interaction of ideas would deepen the work without raising questions about fundamental assumptions."

"In other words, you disagree with our fundamental assumption

Jacob had cut in, answering for David: "I don't think he so much disagrees, Emma, as he wants to avoid getting involved and perhaps having to face up to the challenge of our fundamental assumptions. Right, David?"

"I have no problem with that, Dad. I just think that after nearly a century of us tearing each other apart, usually for the applause and approval of some white audience, it is time for us to stop putting down each other and put down our enemies instead. As I say this I'm being sucked into an argument I want avoid, because I know you dislike the concept of the enemy."

"It's been forced on us, son; and regardless of colour. We saw it in Uganda."

"You're right," David had said. "And I knew I was delivering myself into your hands. Of course there's good and bad in all of us regardless of colour. You know my point is not racist. My point is,

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and it goes right back to your friend DuBois, is that the relationship has been so ~~negative~~ unnatural, so ugly, so destructive of one side as to have become diseased. For a century you have all worked and hoped for the disease to go away and for the relationship to grow healthy and clean. This has happened between ~~isolated~~ individuals and you have seen it as symptomatic of societies. In this particular respect you have believed, because you so desperately wanted to, that the most tolerant & enlightened individuals in societies are symptomatic of those societies. So your friend DuBois, almost to the very end, argued with brilliance and passion for an understanding and coming together. Your church fought nobly for autonomy on the assumption that once your capacity for self-rule is beyond dispute other good Christians would abide by the reality that your Christ is of all colours, for all men. In all ~~these~~ there is the constant hope to reach out and turn your enemy into your friend. The question is: What if he does not want to be your friend? Or if he will only be your friend on his terms, superficially revised? Or if his friendship is only in order to gain control of your raw materials, your oil, your minerals, your agricultural produce? On the hard evidence, that is all he wants by way of his transnational operations. So why should my heart bleed if these transnationals also exploit their own white people savagely? That savagery is not half as great as the savagery they visit on the so-called Third World whose workers are less organised and less able to put up even the limited resistance of the white workers of Europe and America. And still there is the talk of solidarity. What kind of solidarity? Even Garvey seemed to think that if we had our navies and our armies and our black kingdoms and emperors they would somehow learn to respect us and accept us. Always we think of them accepting us, of them respecting us; never of us

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accepting them, never of us respecting them. Both they, and we, see the whole relationship flowing in one direction only. So Haile Selassie and his elite said they were not really black because everybody knows black is inferior. Mengistu had to come along and lead a revolution which turned Ethiopia into an unashamed black country for the first time in its three-thousand-year history. You see, you've made me say things I have not thought my way through yet. Fanon began the process but even he seemed a little afraid of the line he had opened---"

As always at such moments, Emma had been spellbound and fascinated by the challenging flow of ideas between Grandpa and David.

"And you?" Jacob had asked musingly: "Afraid too?"

"Out of my wits," David had said with a sudden mood change.

Emma had watched with growing happiness as Jacob and David, father and son, grew closer and closer with each other. At first the distance between them had been awkward and she had often had to play the difficult role of go-between. It was that which had, in time, made things easier between David and herself, and had led, ultimately, ~~two~~ a year after their arrival, to their marriage.

The worse time was the first six months when Jane was kept in quarantine and she and the old man had to go down daily to visit her, while David spent his time taking care of their business and in endless wrangles with lawyers and builders to get ~~that~~ this special piece of land and get the house going. They had rented a small house at the foot of ~~the hill~~ Red Hills in Uganda and after the beauty and cleanliness she had left behind it had all seemed drab and depressing ~~for Emma~~. Grandpa had tried not to show his grief over the destruction of his life's work and over the death of John. But there were times when it was too much for him to bear alone, and he turned to Emma and Jane and showed them his sorrow.

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There was that day when Jane was finally released from quarantine and they drove up into the hills, just the three of them: Grandpa, Emma, and a Jane so beside herself with the relief of being with her owner at last she could not stop shaking and whimpering. David was down at the clinic in the West End of Kingston which he was to take over from the old Syrian doctor who was retiring. ~~so he was not with them~~. Grandpa's eyes were not so good any more, so Emma did the driving. And because Jane was free at last he wanted to go to Cyprus. For six months he had thought only of Jane and the putting of his papers in order. With Jane free he began to think of the family he had not seen for more than half a century. Cyprus was the starting point to finding that family. He hae been born there and Emma was as eager to see the place and the house where grandpa was born as he was himself.

Emma had grown familiar with the road to Red Hills, and to Rock Hall, further up in the hills, now wide and well surfaced, no longer the narrow cart and horse-drawn carriage track of grandpa's remembrances of his boyhood days. Where there had been bush big well built suburban houses stood proudly in their own spacious grounds on either side of the wide road. Kingston's affluent, the merchants and the professionals and the highly placed civil servants, lived in these fine cool big houses on the lower hillsides away from the noise and dust and fumes of Kingston but within easy reach of it. Further up, at Limes Kiln and Padmore and the areas beyond, the land was still in the hands of the descendants of those who had moved up into the hills in the days of slavery and immediately after and in the period of apprenticeship. Now, they were the independent peasant ~~farmers~~ small holders who worked for themselves and wanted to have as little as possible to do with the government and its taxes and its police.

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But the small peasants were losing out. Each year fewer and fewer of them worked the land; many the young deserted the land for Kingston; whose land commanded one or other of the series of magnifcent views sold their land for what seemed large sums of money to men in fine cars who spent generously at the local rumshops such as Bagleys in Red Hills or Curtis' in Rock Hall. until they got what they wanted; then the lawyers took over. And so Red Hills in the village of up in the hills now had its own post office and police station petrol station and supermarket and electricity and running water and local branches of the two major political parties which divided and polarised the community, especially at election times because all sorts of benefits depended on a person being known to support the winning side. Jobs were scare; and the supporters of the winning party and the winning candidate at both Parliamentary and local government level would get the available jobs while those of the losing party would 'suck salt'. In Party politics became a matter of survival for many, even up in the hills, and it systematically eroded the tradition of independence and economic self-suffiency the people of the hills had built up over the hard years of their past. Not all of that tradition had vanished yet; but it was visibly dying. The Cyprus Jacob and Emma and Jane entered by way of a bumpy narrow dirt road was part of that dying.

The once lush land had been burnt and burnt again, generation after generation, for quick and easy clearing. The forest of old trees on the gently sloping hillsides had been cut down for charcoal till the hills were bare as though no big trees ever grew. In time Bad husbandry and the sun and the wind and the rain had, over time, turned much of the once fruitful green hills into dry poor shrubland.

Emma sensed Jacob's dismay as he looked at the landscape of his childhood and youth. This was not as he had remembered it. ~~It~~

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not as he had recalled it for them on that long peaceful relaxing sea journey to Jamaica. Emma took a quick, fleeting look at his face. It was a study in distressed disbelief. She turned her eyes on the bumpy fusty road and kept them there. Jane, too, it seemed, sensed Jacob's distress and raised herself from the floor at his feet to rest her chin on his knee.

"What have they done---. It was not like this; they've destroyed the land!"

"It was a long time ago." Emma touched his hand, hoping it would comfort him, her eyes dterminedly on the dirt road.

"Time has nothing to do with it." He was getting angry now. "It's how you take care of it!"

"If you know how." Better to be angry, she thought.

"They knew how! We all knew how once! Grandma Sarah and grandpa David taught us: If you cut down one you plant one to take its place so that the species continues; if you want it to grow and multiply then you plant two for everyone you cut down. We were all taught that! They have destroyed it all!"

"People forget or grow lazy; burning the land is much easier than bushing it."

"And it takes so long to restore it," he said bitterly.

They travelled in silence after that, Jacob studying the brownish-green shrub-covered land with deepening horror and distress. Jane rubbed the side of her face against his thigh; for once she was not rewarded by the soothing laying of his hand on her head. Still, she waited, sooner or later he would acknowledge her presence and her caring. He always did.

Emma grew apprehensive as they approached the first building

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on the outskirts of Cyprus. It was a drab little shop on a bit of rising land on the edge of the dirt road, facing it; across the road from it the raw face of a partly gouged-out marl hill added to the bleakness of the landscape. Two men, wielding pickaxes, were digging at the marl hill. On a bench outside the shop three men, looking as drab as their landscape, sat on a long bench watching the marl-diggers. For Emma the little shop was familiar. As in Jamaica so in Uganda, and as far as she knew so in most other parts of Africa, the little village shop with its one bag of rice, one bag of flour, one bag of cornmeal, one tin of cooking oil, and a few tins of fish or other meat on shelves, and its drum or tins of kerosene oil, was an essential part of the landscape. Anybody with a few extra pumpkins or eggs or yam or fruit to sell would take it to the village shop to be sold on a small commission basis. When an animal was killed the village shop would retail the surplus the family did not want to keep.

She stopped the car outside the shop. Jacob ordered Jane to stay and got out. Fleetingly, Emma worried that he might take out his anger at the ravaging of the land on these men; then she put the worry aside. He was too wise for them. He studied the goings-on at yhe raw-looking marl bank then he turned his head to the men on the bench.

"Morning."

The one sitting in the middle of the bench answered for all of them: "Morning."

"We're looking for the place where the Brown lived; near the old church ruins."

"Other side through the village."

"I know. Want to know if anybody there now."

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"Doan know ---"

older looking
The/one on the left of the Bench cut in: "Hear sey the Browns control all the land here once. You one of the Browns?"

"Yes," Jacob nodded.

"Hear sey them all scatter; some gone a foreign; them sell off all the land except small piece where you find old man there."

"Thank you." Jacob got back in the car.

They drove through the drab little village till they heard the sound of water at its far western end. There were small houses and small holding everywhere and the land was fenced-in and they had to leave the car and walk across two fields to get near the river. The river itself seemed to have gone deeper into the ground than Jacob remembered it: the land going down to it was steeper and the river was narrower.

"It has dropped greatly," Jacob said and something in his voice made Emma want to turn back.

She touched his arm. "Let us go back. There been too much change."

He stopped abruptly and turned to her; he put his arm about her shoulders and held her tight for a few moments. "I'm sorry; I've been thoughtless of you."

"You been upset."

He leaned down and rubbed Jane's head. "And of you, old lady. I apologise to you both."

"Perhaps its better for us to go back," she repeated.

"Perhaps it was foolish to start but its too late to turn back

They found the old man in the ruins of what had once been a small outhouse. A few of the old trees were still standing, and the land was as lush and green as Jacob remembered it. But there

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was no sign of the house or even of the ruins of the great church which had been burnt down. All that land now was part of the farm of a prosperous Kingston merchant who spent his weekends on it. The old cutstone had been used to build his weekend home; all the rest had been bulldozed and cleared and the land put to productive use.

Jacob did not recognise the old man, nor the old man him, and the old man could tell them nothing of the whereabouts of the family. He said he had spent all his life in the service of the Browns and all they could leave him when they sold the land off was this little square ~~of land~~; not a penny, just a square of land. Then he lapsed into a steady monotonous cursing of the Browns for not leaving him any money.

Jacob gave the old man a few dollars and left him still cursing the Browns.

The overseer for the Kingston merchant whose land it now was gave them permission to walk where the ruins of the church had been. It was part of a very clean and well organised piggery now. And beyond it, on higher land were equally well kept goat pens. Unlike the peasants have about, the merchant seemed to know the importance of a good and abundant water supply for goat-rearing. Jacob talked to Emma about the goats and the pigs, he talked more than was usual for him, as though talking would somehow ease the dull pain he felt and end the terrible emptiness of his mind and spirit.

Emma listened to the pain in him & thought:

If only men had not so successfully suppressed the capacity to weep, ~~Emma told herself~~. So she let him talk and clung to his arm and let her own tears flow for him.

Later, at home, and while he and Jane were out walking, she had turned to the telephone book and looked at the listings under Brown. There were seven columns of Brown in Kingston and four in the country. How do you find a family after fifty years and more?

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When he and Jane returned, still depressed, Emma suggested.

"We could ring all the Browns in the telephone book."

Jacob's smile was that of a weary old man. "They would be strangers even if we found them. I haven't the time left to start anything new."

Not knowing how to comfort him Emma went and brewed a pot of coffee and they sat on the long verandah and watched the city and the world far below; and they waited for David. After a time the tranquility of the place crept over them and made them tranquil too. The heaviness went from the old man's spirit and the dog sensed it and relaxed and rolled on her back at his feet, hindlegs apart pointing skyward, a picture of surrender, vulnerability and complete trust.

It took Jacob nearly eight months to recover sufficiently from the Cyprus experience to talk about it. He did so one late afternoon, as

After nearly an hour of the peaceful silence Jacob turned his head to Emma, an odd little half-smile of self-reproach on his face. "It was a foolish impulse; home is not always where you are born; family is not always a line of blood alone. You and the people of the mission were and are my real family. This was just an old man's dreaming."

Remember that day at Cyprus?

Emma thought: Dreams have to be played out sometimes. Then she said it aloud, knowing that he would understand.

"This one was forced on us." His mind was clear now, uncloude by emotion. "We came here because we had to go somewhere and I didn't want to go to America or England and I was weak and needed comforting so I thought going back to where I was born would do it; but it isn't home any more, hasn't been for a long time. Tell me, Emma, did you know it all the time?"

"I feared it; but where else could we go?"

"I never asked you; where did you want to go? I mean when we

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first left: where would you have preferred to go at that time?"

"Whereever you went." She recalled how empty she was at the time."When John died it didn't matter where I went as long as it was with you. His last wish was for me to look after you, to be with you."

"That was before David; before you married David."

"David wants the same thing. We will stay with you ---"

"Until I die ---"

"Yes, grandpa."

"And you and David -- what then --- after I'm gone?"

Her eyes now were laughing at him, making her round face look very young despite her graying hair; there was a teasing curve to her lips.

"We'd like to take you home with us when the time comes. If you must, we'd like you to die there and be buried beside your Missy."

"You don't have to tempt me! I want to live till then. I'll try."

"Good!"

"But if I don't; promise you'll take my ashes there for buria

"Promised."

"Good for you too! And now can we talk about you and David. He doesn't talk about himself and you tell me very little. There ~~must be~~ is a man of feeling behind all that thought and anger, Even when we are close I'm not sure I know him. I know he was married before, in Algeria; I know his wife died; I know they had no childre I don't know what she looked like or how he felt about her; so I don't really know anything about her and very little about David the man, even though he's my son."

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" So you want our intimate detaisl, dirty old man! Where do I begin? With our lovemaking?"

"First, do you love him --" Did he dare do this "-- as you loved John?"

Oh lord, grandpa: how could you? But then you love him too; and you loved John and so you have to know.

"Yes; but it is different too; John, my husband was also my bishop. It made a difference, I think."

"To your sex life?" He looked at a distant John Crow floating easily on air as no man-made bird ever could. "I was a bishop and I had a healthy, you might even say robust sex life."

"Easy, grandpa! It has nothing to do with how good sexual partners bishops can be. Let me try and explain. David's first wife, the Algerian - you know she was a doctor too and died in the fighting; he told me Hassan the one who helped in our rescue, was with them in that fight in which she was killed - she had been circumcised. You know anything about female circumcision, grandpa?"

"It is not part of a bishop' training but I know the cut out part of a woman's privates to dull her sexual impulse." They still do in some parts at home + some missionaries turn a blind eye. But you should all this.

"David said they cut off her clitoris, which he says is the equivalent of cutting off a man's penis."

"You and he talk about all these intimate and terrible things'

"Hush, old man. You asked: now listen. David's wife was mutilated like that and,he says, even worse so that for all his love for her and hers for him, they could not have a really warm and intimate sex life. And because he is the kind of man he is they had almost no sex life at all. John and I had more of a sex life; we produced two children to prove it ---"

"But --- that thing that happened to you. Is that what

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spoilee your sex life? Is that what you are saying?"

"Not so fast grandpa. I didn't think of these things, and John's gentleness and my love for him soon overcame the panic fears of that experience. So it was not a frightening or unpleasnt experience. David says the world is full of women for whom sex is just that: a not frightening or unpleasant experience. They live with men whom they love and bear them many children and are happy without ever having a fully complete sexual experience."

"And this is the difference you're talking about? Did John know it?"

Emma shook her head. "He didn't and I didn't."

Jacob stared out at space. The John Crow had gone. The sky was clear though the speed of a few thin fleecy clouds travelling northwestwards suggested a high wind in space. He wished he had not started this conversation. There was a submerged sense of disloyalty in his satisfaction at the knowledge that David and Emma had found such deep physical fulfilment in each other. As though reading his mind, Emma murmured:

"Don't be disturbed, grandpa. It is not disloyal to John's memory to be happy and to be fulfilled. You wanted to know; now you know. I loved and respected and looked up to John. I love and respect and look up to David, and David is my lover too and my friend too, which makes him very special." She shook her head and shrugged her shoulders, a slight spell-breaking gesture. "Next question."

But Jacob now did not want to know any more intimate details. Enough that Emma and David had found fulfilment in each other. He had never been certain in his mind why these two had decided to marry a year after they all came here. He had thought of it as a thing of convenience between a widow and a widower both not so young anymore; not as this thing of high passion Emma had revealed.

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The Maroon woman, Eliza-May, who came three days a week to help Emma with the cleaning, pushed her head through the open sittingroom window. "Miz Brown; Miz Brown! Miz Emma!"

At last Emma was startled out of her daydream.

"I'm going now," the woman said. "Everything done."

Emma rose and took up the letter postmarked Kampala Uganda. Eliza-May had bathed and changed into a pair of fawn-coloured corduroy slacks and a pretty foral blouse which showed off her ample figure and glowing clear black skin. She had a string bag filled with oranges, limes, grapefruit and a few very late avocado pears. When she arrived that morning she had brought two pieces of very hard yam, some plummy tomatoes and a huge hand of bananas from her own land: she brought for Emma what her land produced and in return received what Emma's land produced. And Emma's land was a small forest of citrus and avocado.

Emma went into her bedroom and got Eliza-May's money for the day's work. She left the letter postmarked Kampala Uganda on her dresser and went back to see off Eliza-May. The helper was reluctant to leave Emma all alone, 'just in case', she said, so they stood on the verandah looking down westward into the valley of Mount Zion from where Jacob and Jane should come.

"Them late tonight." Eliza-May was very concerned; the bishop was very old and growing weaker every day. In her Maroon community when people got this old they always sent a young boy or girl to walk with ~~this~~ them 'just in case'.

"He's got Jane," Emma reassured her, remembering Mama Kike.

"She old too," Eliza-May said. "Two old ones together."

Then they saw them, far down the slope of the land, coming

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home slowly, the old man using a long staff to aid his climbing, the old dog, grown thick-bodied ~~with age~~, moving slowly beside him.

"I'll go and meet them," Emma said. "You can go now."

"Allright then." Still Eliza-May hesitated: "You need someone here when doctor not home, just in case."

Emma went down the verandah steps and down along the crooked little path. She looked back. Eliza-May was still watching and waiting. "You'll miss your bus!" Reluctantly, Eliza-May walked down the steps and down the broad driveway leading to the main road. Far down on the main road, about two miles away, the long bus going to Rock Hall crested the ~~hill~~ rise out of Red Hills and became visible It announce its coming with a long shrill blast of its horn. Eliza-Ma trotted down the driveway. to make sure of catching the bus.

Emma met Jacob and Jane about a hundred and fifty yards from the house. Jacob was puffing; the going was becoming more difficult each day. One day neither he nor the dog would be able to take these long regular, twice-a-day walks: down the driveway to the foot of the hill ~~and back~~ in the early mornings to pick up the day's newspapers; and into the valley of Mount Zion in the cool of the late afternoon. When that day came, she knew, things would become difficult for all of the As it was his book was pretty well completed and only the preparing of the manuscript for the publishers remained, and that was something she could do. If he did not have his book and did not have his walks life would become empty and grandpa was not a man to lead an empty life. And Jane, Emma knew, would not want to live without her adored master. David had tried to prepare her for this by talking regularly ~~to her~~ about the day Jacob would not be with them. He was also, of

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course, preparing himself. But Emma knew that when death came, it would be unexpected, no matter how thorough the preparattion for it.

She slipped her arm through Jacob's. He offered her a white wild orchid of exquisite grace and beauty. "We found a whole cluster of these growing out of a cracked red vein in a marl bank back there past the old ruins."

"You shouldn't go so far any more." She sensed his coming protest and added quickly: "I'm not sure Jane's up it any more."

"We can still do it. Can't we, old lady?"

"You know she'll do anything you want; don't force her, old man."

He was mollified. They continued the slow walk home, Emma, and old Jacob and old Jane. They were into the dry season and all the hills about looked brown, with trees and shrubs starved for moisture. There was no water in what was once the deep pool in the valley of Mount Zion; just a very deep hole with signs to show that there had once been water. From time to time a stray goat or pig or donkey had fallen into the deep hole and died after days of screaming for help. So in the early days of their stay Jacob and David had hired a work gang to fence off the deep hole. One day, two years after it had been put up, the barbed wire fence had disappeared. This coincided with a wave of cattle and small-stock stealing, which stopped people from Red Hills and the surrounding areas keeping their animals in the valley of Mount Zion overnight. Now, drought and lack of water ensured that no animals strayed near the deep dry hole which had once been a deep pool of clear water.

They went round the back of the house so that Jacob would not have to climb the steep sloping steps up to the verandah. and while Emma prepared a long cool drink of fruit juice for Jacob and a bowl of milk for Jane, they heard the familiar signal of David's coming: three short and one longer blast of his car horn. ~~Jane perked up.~~ Emma added a third glass.

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a bottle of rum, and a jug of chilled cochut water to the tray she carried out to the verandah. Jane finished her milk and went out to the carport to wait for David, stretching out flat on her belly, in her customary posture. ~~front legs straight out in front, hind legs far out like a leaping frog at the moment of fullest flight, chin flat on the ground between her front legs, only her eyes moving.~~ The waiting for David after the sound of his signal was the only time Jane left Jacob's presence, apart from when she had to eat or relieve herself.

David came in so angry that he ignored Jane's welcome and did not rub her tummy as she rolled over for him. The dog was puzzled and distressed by this unusual behaviour and hurried back into the house, tail between her legs, ears pulled back; she crawled under Jacob's chair, making herself as small and inconspicuous as she could. ~~Both~~ Emma and Jacob recognised ~~sensed~~ his mood; and ~~they~~ waited till he had settled down with his first drink; a few minutes of quiet in this tranquil place, looking down from this distance at that turbulent city he had left, usually eased his spirits and lifted his mood.

After a while, when she sensed a slight easing in him, Emma said: "Really bad today?"

"Bad as can be," David said. "They're now using M.16s to kill each other. Unless you've used an M.16 you can't know what a deadly thing it is. And poor hungry ghetto blacks, mostly teenage youngsters, are killing each other and their communities with these things. You can kill ten, twenty people with one random sweeping burst. I examined more than a dozen bodies after a gunbattle, what they call a shoot-out here, a little over an hour ago; they were mostly children, only two of them, the so-called top rankings, could have been as old as thirty; a bunch of dead undernourished kids with shining high precision instruments of death!"

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"How do they ~~get~~ come by these things?" Jacob turned his eyes away from David's face. "~~You know about these things~~: aren't they very costly? How do they get them? Where do they come from? How do they get into the country?"

"In normal circumstances these ghetto youth would never lay ~~their~~ hands on this ~~kind~~ type of weapon; they're too costly even for the ordinary ganja trade; and they're not freely available even to ~~private~~ street the smartest/hustlers. They're a military weapon and you have to have some sort of military connections to lay hands on them."

"They're American?"

"Yes, Dad; they're American."

Emma said: "I Read somewhere the Vietnamese captured many of these guns after the defeat of the Americans."

"~~Yes~~, I expect they did. Question: is did they then ship them to Cuba to ship to ship to Jamaica for ghetto youth to kill each other? Could be; but much more likely that they came from/stockpiles in the Florida area. In these things you must always ask the central question, love."

"And what is the central question?"

"Who stands to benefit from what we've been watching unfold here over the past ~~few~~ couple years? We've watched the systematic undermining of public confidence in the present government and the steadily escalating violence is part of it."

"All the signs, all the opinion polls, say the government will lose ~~xx~~ the next elections; and the government has publicly committed itself to such an election."

"~~Yes~~," Jacob cut in. "~~Even if you are right~~, Then there is now no need for those opposed to the government to continue what you call

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their systematic undermining of public confidence. Public confidence has collapsed; there will be a new government after the elections. So why the escalating of the violence?"

"Because, dear Dad, this is not a simple straightforward parliamentary election to decide which of two parties should run this country. This is political warfare. You two have been a little distant from it up here, as have many other rural parts of the country; down there it is naked war; I've watched it daily and, as you say, I know something about these things."

"Elections here have always been a little violent," Emma protested. "The only new thing is the guns."

"No dear; the new element is the determined and carefully orchestrated campaign to demoralise the population by the use of violence in its most brutal forms; more violence than is needed to achieve a specific end; brutality that turns the stomach; horror upon horror. Why? All to show the helplessness of those in power to cope or deal with the horror, so that in the end even the supporters of the government will come to believe in the inability of the government to control the situation and provide protection and stability which are the bases for all acceptable government, whatever the ideology."

"No!" Emma protested. "They all say they want the two-party system to continue."

"They also say the government is turning communists and so destroying the two-party system. It is not a big step from there to saying if the two-party system is going to be destroyed anyway, then let it be in our interest; but they are not saying that. They say once the communist threat has been defeated democracy will be restored."

"You make them sound such simple people." Emma's face was a

study in dissatisfaction.

"Not simple, dear; simply brilliantly schooled in how to conduct a two-pronged operation; one, psychological warfare, the other a limited and carefully contained military-type terror operation. It is a perfect synthesis of the use of the ballot and the bullet to achieve the desired end. It is a method used wherever there is a profound struggle to change or reorder existing power relationships. In Algeria, and wherever else people were engaged in real power struggles, rather than the showdplay of two tweedle-dee and tweedl-dum parties with the same basic qssumptions, you have had this kind of war politics. We used it in Algeria; they used it against us. The simplicity lies, in this instance, in the fact that the troops here, those undernourished ghetto youngsters, who do the fighting and the killing and the dying do it without any clear understanding of what it is they are doing or why."

"On both sides?" Emma asked, interested and curious now.

"They are shooting from both sides now, whoever started it. It would be suicidely foolish for one side not to somehow find arms to shoot back. It is a rule of war that you shoot back or die like a sitting duck."

"No," Emma cut in impatiently. "I meant your saying they don't understand what they are doing or why. Does that apply to both sides? To the government side as well?"

David poured himself a second drink; Emma refilled Jacob's and her glass. Jane, sensing a change in David's mood came from under Jacob's chair, tentatively seeking the show of ~~special~~ recognition she had been denied earlier. David rubbed her ear and Jane sighed, and stretched and wandered off into the big sitting room satisfied now that all was well in her world.

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David seemed reluctant, almost unwilling, to answer Emma. If was as if this was an area he did not want to enter, in much the same way that he had avoided sharing in the preparation and discussion of Jacob's manuscript.

"If you are right," Jacob said thoughtfully. "And if your answer to Emma is that both sides do not understand what they are doing or why then you must tell us who is manipulating each side: you cannot have one puppet master for two sets of opposing puppets."

"The puppet imagery won't work, Dad. There is conscious choice and the power and the option of conscious choice on both sides. The one side chose one line of action, the other side choice another line of action. → The manipulators are using these to further their own interests: no simple puppeting involved."

Old Jacob smiled appreciatively and nodded. "I was only going along with your unexpressed idea of manipulation."

"Not unexpressed," Emma said: "Powerfully implied."

"You two really think in tandem. Anyway, let me see if I can formulate my thoughts a little more clearly. I think there is something odd about a government which sets out on a course of social revolution, which is the transforming of the power relations within a society, in the way this one has. Whether they stumbled on to this path after gaining power or planned it from the outset, it is odd to expect to upend an entire social and economic order without also expecting the fiercest resistance against such a revolution. And yet one gets the impression that they did not expect this level of resistance and that they thought they could talk the reistance down and reason the old ruling class and its pillars of support into accepting the new order without a bitter fight. We've all seen this again and again over the past few years: all those meetings, those seminars, those discussions, those efforts at accommodation,

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the endless search for consensus with those opposed to you, and their constant desire to be assured and reassured and assured again that you mean them no harm while they spread harm against you. No government of a society divided by deeply entrenched colour and class interests can seriously expect to transform that society by way of consensus. It cannot be done; it has never been done; people and classes always fight to hold on to what they have, no matter how it was acquired. Not to see and understand that reality and still embark on the politics of revolution at once is romantic and brutally cruel to those who are the soldiers of the revolution."

"Perhaps so," Emma interrupted. "But that is not the same as saying they have no clear idea of what they are doing and why. That was an uncharacteristically arrogant statement from you, David." She sensed him grow angry and softened it by adding, "I'm sure you were upset by what happened today."

"Up set and angry; yes. But not enough to cloud my judgement.

"Oh David!" It was half protest, half appeal.

"Let's think it through: they started out with a massive electoral mandate for radical social change. It has all been systematically eroded over the past few years by the war-politics I described for you, that is unless you and Dad still believe that the violence and the killings and burnings and the flight of capital and the inflow of M.16s are all random, unconnected, uncoordinated happenings, like the find of that secret hospital and stockpile of drugs. If you do then I must sound arrogant."

"Come off it, David; you know we don't. So the anti-government campaign has been systematic and, probably in all helped from outside." Old Jacob shrugged. "Emma's question still remains."

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David was clearly impayient now. "Allright. You accept that it at least looks like a systematic campaign of what is now called destabilisation. I think we all agree that no foreign power can come in and destabilise a country unless it has the support of a significant group in the country; so the point is not to look for external villains. In any case, they are expert at leaving no evidence behind and their beneficiaries do not talk. So forget them and look at the victims. If a victim knows and recognises what is happening he acts to protect himself and to prevent the same things happening again."

"You yourself said they are shooting back," Emma whispered.

"True; and being outgunned and out-killed at the level of the ghetto, at the level of foolish and brave and hungry young men. When the next elections are over this government will have lost because the people who gave them that mandate will have transferred it to the other side which has proved itself strong enough and ruthless enough to seek power by means other than the gentlemanly parliamentary game, despite the holding of elections. When hundreds of people die in what is supposed to be an election campai you are into war politics. And the victims do not seem to understand this. So they will see their loss as a temporary setback and they will try again next time around, in exactly the same way. The catch is ---" He paused, all anger gone now, replaced by that familiar air of quiet sadness Emma found so heart-rending whenever he talked of war comrades who had died, or the awfulness of killing.

She restrained the strong impulse to reach out and touch him.

"Shall I complete it for you?" She offered and did so without waiting for his answer. "The catch is that if they are elected again and if they set out on this path again the same force will

rise against them again and they will again end up as the victims of your war-politics. Is this what makes it almost pointless, what makes you say they don't know what they are doing or why?"

"Yes."

Jacob tried to change the sombre mood. "So we do understand, after all. Don't underrate us, son. Our church has had similar experiences."

"Not quite; you always knew where you were going; you and the communists have this in common. When their people - their soldiers - and your people die, it is always to a clearly understood end. The people who fought and died in Algeria did so for a very specific purpose; not as long as your religious purpose or that of the communists, but very specific all the same. And each one knew that those who survived would ensure that his or her death was not a pointless waste of life./The independence of Algeria justified their deaths. What makes this thing here so terrible is the pointlessness of the killing; there is no historical, political and religious justification for it./ And promising to repeat the process is simply promising a repeat of the cyclical wave of slaughter each time the so-called progressives try to alter the terms of power."

"Surely they will not always lose," Emma said.

"For as long as the great power to the north wants them to they will; for as long as it will not tolerate anything labelled socialist which tries, however modestly, to live up to that label they will be put down every time; or until there are changes within that great power itself. How long do you think the Cuban revolution would survive without the protection of the Soviet Union? Just as long as it takes for an American army to crawl all over it. The Soviets are Cuba's security shield. That is the reality, the stark fact

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of political power in this part of the world. Those who seriously want to alter that reality will need much more than fine speeches with no tangible forms of power behind them; the peasants call it 'backatif' here. Without it, without superior firepower to put down the fire of your local enemies, and without external protection, or a simulataneous political upheaval throughout the Caribbean and Central America, or a combination of the most important elements of all these, there can be no radical change in this part of the world. Even the churches here/ act like partisans in the power game between the super powers, not like your church, Dad; black like you but not like you ."

"You make it sound hopeless," Jacob said. "Are these people then to just resign themselves to their fate? Are you saying man mus not struggle for change and justice, because of the odds?"

"You know they are politically freer than any group of people you want to name in Africa. They elect and reject their rulers. How many exercise the same freedom in Africa, with or without the help of the gun?"

"I'm lost now," Emma protested. "What are you saying, David?"

"I'm saying you have a model parliamentary democracy here, better than anything in Africa. In theory the people have control of their own destinies; in theory they can make all sorts of political and economic choices. But it's all in theory only."

"There are limits to all freedom," Jacob cut in.

"True; but who sets them? And in whose interests?"

"I really am lost." Emma was puzzled and a little angry now. "They have more democracy than we have in Africa, you say; you're angry about their slaughtering each other in what you see as pointless party politics. And when we ask you what is the way out you

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make it all seem hopeless. How can they be both freer than we are in Africa and also hopeless? There are many things I don't like here; I don't like the racism which everybody pretends does not exist; I don't like the self-contempt which comes out in the white bias of most black Jamaicans; I don't like the brutal callousness to the maimed and the sick and the old and the helpless; but I do like their democracy and I would have thought you would too; I thought we agreed that the only things which mars it are the gross inequalities and cruelties in the society and, of course, the political killings. Now you make it sound as though they have nothing to hold on to and nothing to offer. I really don't understand you, David."

There was a long silence after that, a little charged, but not enough to spoil the air of tranquility that pervaded this place. A cool breeze blew through the grapefruit and navel orange trees just below the long verandah made a steady wooshing sound which enveloped everything else. Far down in the valley of Mount Zion a John Crow made a sudden swoop out of the clear sky, seeming to drop like a stone from a great distance. At the very last moment, when it seemed certain to crash to its death, it swooped up again, circled and then came down more slowly to settle on the earth and waddle awkwardly toward the stinking carcass of a dead rat whose scent it had picked up from a great distance in the sky.

Jacob asked: "Cool enough?"

Emma looked at David, willing him to look at her and smiling when he did. Their eyes met in the fading light, and they embraced with their eyes.

"Cool enough, " Emma said; David echoed it after a while.

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Jacob looked from Emma to David. "Can we understand each other on this one, David? Or shall we put it up for another time?"

"I think so; but I'm upsetting Emma."

"Not really; not angry-epset; its just ----" the words seeme hard to find.

Jacob helped out, a teasing look in his eyes. "Just that the emotions of the woman and the lover kept intruding. With us it was the other way round. I remember Margaret was the cool one and I the one who got worked up; it usually ended up in bed, especially if the argument developed into a flaming row. Now, where were we?"

"The doctor says the patient's condition is hopeless. I'm questioning that." She would be cool and calm this time Emma decided

"If we've finished with the sex life of the old bishop the doctor will be glad to respond."

"The sex life of the old bishop is over though he still remembers it fondly. Where were we? Let me see if I understand you. Your point is that the limits on their freedom are not set by the Jamaicans themselve or by what you would accept as reasonable external factors."

"Please bear in mind the context, Dad. A strategically placed little island wanting to assert its independence of both the American Eagle and the Soviet bear. In the real world of today's power politics it can't be down, not here, not at this time, certainly not without the kind of understanding that would inspire the kind of long and sustained fight, and I am talking about a fight with both guns and ideas, that ultimately drove the French out of Algeria and the British out of Kenya and both the French and Americans out of Indochina. Not only can it not be done without that will and understanding, there is no perceived reason for it; Jamaicans

have their political democracy; they don't have to fight to gain that. And economic democracy is just about the trickiest to fight for at the political. The people of the most advanced western democracies do not have economic democracy, except in a most limited form; the welfare state is the nearest thing. It is arguable that economic democracy is really possible under the western brand of political democracy. The point is that Jamaica under the present government seems to think it can have it both ways: be a western parliamentary democracy with an almost Soviet or Cuban type socialist economic democracy with the new twist beinga brand of worker ownership which I'm not sure even the Soviets would tolerate. There is, in marxist terminology, something utopian about it. And it is for this that the youngsters of the ghetto down there are spilling out their guts and dying by the hundred. I find that intolerable. The pointless waste of life is always intolerable. To repeat the waste in five yearly electoral cycles makes it worse. That's all I'm saying."

"Then what is their future?" Emma asked.

"It will largely be determined by what happens outside; in yhe region around, in the twists and turns of the cold war; their choices are limited and in the context of these limitations heroic gesture of dying to no real point are wasteful of that most precious of all our possessions, human life."

"So what can they do?" Emma persisted. "Those who want to change the system."

"I suggest they learn from you, from your church. You are the people who elected not to be a part of a religious system which had ceased to be revolutionary and become counter-revolutionary."

"I see someone has been looking at my manuscript." Jacob's eyes glowed. He was glad of the fading light which hid the hint of a

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tear.

"I find it most instructive; I like what I'm reading; it's helping me see things."

Emma was startled. She hadn't know, like Jacob, that David was reading the manuscript. She tried to look into Jacobs eyes. She sensed his happiness and reached across the old wooden verandah table and touched his hand. He held on to her hand for a while.

Emma said; "Well!" making it as casual as she could.

"I didn't think it was that private," David looked from the one to the other. "Shouldn't have read it?"

"That's allright," Jacob was offhand. "How much have you read?

"Not much; a little over a third perhaps."

"I thought ---" Emma hesitated; "We thought----"

"Reading it can't influence you."

"So how can they learn from our church, apart from trying to be good Christians without also becoming black-faced white folk, helping to keep their own people down?"

"By doing what you did, old man. What your ancestors did here and what the blacks did in America which you write about so beautifully. Oh lord! Daddy! How I wish I knew your grandma Sarah and great-grand-pa David! Did you name me after him?

"Yes."

"Well they found a way to deal with this problem of survival in a hostile alien world. It's a little more complex now but I feel their basic solution still holds. It will be easier to apply in Africa than here, but it still holds." Then David shook his head. "No. I don't know that it will be any easier there than here. I don't know that it will be easy at all. I don't know that it is possible. What I do know is that you people, your church, may have

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always have had the answer to the problem which obsessed your friend DuBois and many generations of black folk."

"I'm flattered," Jacob laughed happily. "But I don't know what part of the book you're talking about or what great mystery the church has solved. So let us into the secret."

Instead, David threw back his head and laughed. A joyous roar of happiness with an edge to it.

He's drunk with ideas, Emma told herself, remembering other times when he had been caught up in ideas and been carried away by them as other people are by drink or good food or sex , or the kind of love she felt for this old man and his son now that they are so close in spirit; it made her feel lightheaded and happy too and she joined in their laughter. For a few moments it seemed that all the world was caught up in a wave of intoxicating laughter. Jane came out of the big room to see what was going on then wandered off in disgust. The laughing humans were not even playing.

"Well?" Jacob leaned back feeling good and almost young again, and remembering his old friend Dan Lee. They used to share moments like this in Liberia a long time ago when the True Whig Party looked as though it would be in power forever. Well, the so-called native Liberians were in power now and not doing a much better job than Nurse Symes' Americo-Liberians had. How clearly things came back at Tuzzle. There were times when he could not remember a single name or place and would have been lost without his notebooks. It had all started because of his and Dan's desire not to lose touch, so he had kept notes for the once-a-year letter they exchanged; and that and the need to make the quarterly reports to headquarters had led to the notebook habit. Without it he would not have been able to prepare this manuscript which David had now made special.

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They all gone now, Dan, Mrs. Willis, Nurse Symes; but Dan's hospital and Mrs. Willis' girls' school are still there on that Liberian hill. Jacob had last visited it twelve years ago to preside over the burial of his old friend. They had their monuments still; only his, the place he and Margaret had started from nothing, was no longer there. But perhaps Emma was right: the manuscript made into a book would be his monument and also a monument to all the others he had worked with over the years, with love. And they would live and be remembered as long as that book is read. And David had found something special in it. "Well? Aren't you going to tell us."

"Give me a little time," David murmured. "Words are your business, not mine. I have to work at organising them."

Emma got up and gathered the glasses and bottles and jugs onto her tray. "I'll get the food ready while you grapple with words. We have jerk pork, friend chicken a la Brown, xxx rice and peas a la Miss Eliza-May and a dish of mixed greens in poor man's butter or soybean margarine - its good for the heart." She left themwith a little dancing flourish.

"She's happy," Jacob sounded a little surprised. "I'm so glad she's happy with you; there was a time I feared she never would be."

"Wixx me? Why?"

"Not like that. There was a time I felt she could never be happy again."

David rose and moved with a mock peacock strut of self importance to the door of their bedroom section leading off the long verandah. "Didn't take my sex-appeal into account. Now I'll spruce mtself up to charm her some more."

"Vanity!" Jacob's affection washed over David.

Jane came and the old man put his hand on her head and the man and the dog remained in silent communion as night fell.

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David was under the shower when the telephone rang. He knew Emma would pick up the extention is the sitting room; he hoped it wasn't any emergency at the clinic. His young partner, a rastaman who had been born into one of the island's most affluent families and who had then opted out of his class and joined the Twelve Tribes, was an able doctor and would only call on him in case of some grave emergency. His young partner and his nurse girl-friend were as accustomed to the bullet wounds and the stab wounds and the battered bodies of their ghetto patients as he was; they had worked at their clinic at times when the police and the fire brigade were afraid to enter the area. Of course, the top-rankings of the rival political gangs had ensured that their followers understood the importance of the two doctors and their nurse being free to come and go at all hours. Once, a little over a year ago, a couple of young fellows had held up the clinic and robbed his partner and the nurse of money and a supply of drugs. Word of the robbery had spread fast and within an hour the bodies of the two young robbers had been found in one of the many burnt-out buildings. All the drugs and all the money were left between the two bodies, with a note saying they had been executed for interfering with the people's clinic . The clinic was never troubled after that, not even when all the shanty houses near it were burned down in one bitter all-night gang battle.

Emma came into the bathroom, carrying the bedroom phone with its long extension cord. David turned off the shower and dried his hands.

"One of the funny calls," Emma said soberly.

David took the receiver. "Hello? Yes?"

"That you, doc?" It was a husky whisper.

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"Yes. Who's that? There's a doctor at the clinic if you need help."

"Is you we want, doc. Stay where you are; don't call anybody."

The phone ~~xxxx~~ clicked off.

"Looks like we'll have visitors," David murmured handing the phone back to Emma.

She saw his eyes grow cold and distant, felt him withdraw into himself. They had had this kind of experience before. Once three young men had come looking for firearms; once it was an attempted robbery by an elderly man who looked half-starved; once two men had tried to steal one of the cars; twice men with gunshot wounds had sneaked up here trying to force David to help them. Those looking for firearms and those seeking medical help had made this kind of telephone call before coming.

"What do we do?" She tried not to show her fear for him. "Let me call the police."

"They may only need help," he said.

"Or be up to mischief," she countered.

"We must risk that."

"Oh David, why? What if they are killers?"

"What if they are not? What if they are only part of that pointless foolishness going on down there?"

"So we just wait?"

"Yes; we wait and see."

He ~~had~~ finished drying himself and ~~had~~ wrapped the towel round his waist. She led the way into the bedroom and sat on the edge of the bed while he dressed, recalling in quick flashes the exhilarting joy and warmth and high passion she had derived from that beautiful near-black body: big and strong and hard of muscle.

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"I think I'm carrying your child," she said, startled and surprised because she had not intended to tell him, not like this, not now. Perhaps it was the desire to blot out what they were waiting for.

He stopped in the act of putting on his shirt. "What?"

"I know; you don't expect an old lady of forty to get pregnan

"Sure?"

The cold distant look had left his eyes and she felt his excitement; a warm glow replaced her anxiety.

"I think so."

"Oh Emma!" He gathered her up in his arms. "Told Dad?"

"No."

"He'll love it."

"Better confirm it first."

"Missed one period?"

"My second is two weeks overdue; but it's more a feeling of being pregnant. A woman thing."

"I trust your women thing, my love! Tell Dad, he'll be so happy to be a grandfather!"

"And you, David?" This was what she had not been sure of.

He held her lightly, close against him, her head reaching up to his chest. He tilted her chin up so that she looked into his eyes She felt a sea of tenderness wash over her. He kissed her and the tenderness overwhelmed her. Then he pushed her away to look at her at arms distance.

"What do you think?"

"I'm so glad, my darling. Tears shone in Emma's eyes. "Come supper and Grandpa and Jane are waiting."

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They had finished supper and Emma was about to go and get the letter postmarked Kampala Unganda when Jane told them someone was coming. She crawled quickly from under grandpa's chair, cocked her head to one side, listening, and growled softly, deep down in her throat. It took at least another half-minute before the people at table heard what the dog had: the distant sound of a car, nearly half a mile away, starting to make the long, struggling climb up the steep and narrow driveway.

~~"Expecting anyone?" Both Emma and Jacob looked at David.~~

"~~No?~~" David rose briskly and went to their bedroom.

That gun, Emma told herself. His sudden transformation into a brisk, cold, purposeful person always meant the gun and a man as alert as an animal in the wild. At first, seeing him change into thi cold person who was almost a stranger had frightening her, made her withdraw from him and turn to grandpa. Granpa's casual acceptance of this transformation had helped her overcome ~~it~~ her fear of it and accept it as part of the David she loved.

When he returned she knew the gun was on his person though she saw no sign of it.

"Sta here, all of you; you too, Jane." He crossed the room and shut the two big windows leading on to the verandah. The sound of the struggling car was louder now, drawing nearer. "If there's any shooting dial the police emergency number then get out by the back way and hide in the bush."

This was the cold man with the gun as she had first seen him seven years earlier on that lonely frightening journey to the Ethiopi border in the gathering dark. For all that had happened inbetween, for all the love and tenderness they had shared, that cold man with the gun was still there, could still be brought out when there was

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danger; and in spite of herself Emma wished he were not also her David.

He tested the doors to ensure they were locked, then he looked back at them, first at the dog, then at his father, then at Emma. "Lock it behind me," he ordered and went out.

Emma did as he ordered and went and sat near Jacob who had moved to his favourite easy chair. Jane was at his feet on her special piece of carpet, conscious of her goodness in obeying David's order. Jacob held out his hand to Emma. They sat holding hands, alert, waiting. Emma felt the terrible trembling of grandpa's hand,

"It's allright, grandpa. David will take care."

"I know; I've seen him doxx it. He's good at it."

"Then stop trembling, dear."

"I can't." His voice was suddenly very weary.

David went quickly down the steps leading to the driveway which was a good twenty feet below the verandah. He crossed the driveway and took up a position behind the huge banyan tree which ~~overshadowed and~~ cast its shadows over everything, making the place an area of darkness. The gateway leading to the back of the house and their carport, was shut, their ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ and the approaching car would have to stop and turn in the area of darkness. When the car headlight lit up the dark area those ~~xxxxx~~inside ~~the car~~ it saw no sign of the man hidden behind ~~its~~ the huge tree trunk.

A voice said: "Turn the car; douse the light." When that was done, the same voice said: "Blow the horn." It was a loud squeaky noise. When nobody showed on the verandah one car door opened and a

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long shadowy figure got out. "Gimme the gun." It was the same voice.

"You going up there?" another voice whispered; "Me no like that."

"Want Joe fe dead?" The first voice was impatient. "Gimme the gun." A long shadowy gun was passed out of the car.

"Him bleeding bad," a third voice said anxiously.

"You sure 'bout this man?" Second voice was worried.

"Stop this foolishness before Joe dead." The first one now had the gun at the ready and turned to climb the steps. "Me hear 'bout him. Them say him a freedom fighter in Africa."

David's voice, cold and threatening, came at them as from nowhere. "You with the gun! Stop! Don't move! Or I drop you in the spot! I'm the doctor! What you want?"

The long one began to turn.

"I warn you!" David snapped.

"Peace, doc, peace," the first voice pleaded. "We only looking help."

"With guns? Put down that gun! Carefully!"

"No, sah!"

"Then you and your bleeding friend and the others all die."

"They going kill us if you turn us in."

"That what you hear about me?"

"No, sah."

"Then give me the gun. Walk to the tree; don't point the gun."

The shadowy one hesitated then approached the tree, the long gun pointing downward. One instant he was near the tree, the next he was on the ground, disarmed, and with his high-powered rapid-fire rifle pointing at him, and a huge man towering over him.

"Get up; and warn your friends not to try anything."

The ong one got up, bewildered by the ease and suddenness with which

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he had been disarmed. Always, in the past, all you had to do was point this thing at a person and they did exactly what you wanted.

"We not going do anything," second voice said from the car.

David put his fingers to his lips and let out a sharp whistle. Inside the house Emma jumped up with relief, hurried to switch on the outside lights, and hurried out to the verandah to look down on the now lit up driveway.

"Allright?" she called down.

"Yes," David called back. "Tell Dad and bring down a lantern."

David looked at the tall thin one beside him. In his early or mid-twenties; obviously the leader of this lot; brave and foolish tools of a cynical political system.

"What happened? You tangle with the police?"

"No doc; is a gun battle with the otherside; politics."

Emma came down with the powerful lantern and David examined their wounded companion inside the car. At last he was satisfied.

"A lot of blood but nothing serious. Have to remove a couple of bullets." He turned to the long thin one. "You know I have to report this to the police."

"Yes, doc; but you not holding us. You fixing him first."

"Yes, I'll patch him up first; and no, I won't hold you. Now, I'll open the driveway and you drive round the back." He held up the gun. "I'll keep this thing until you are ready to go."

"We hear right about you, doc," the long one tried to be friendly.

But David was angry. "Did you hear that we don't play foolish political games with life? What's the difference between you and what you call 'the other side'? You're poor and black, and so are they; you're hungry and unemployed, and so are they; and you're all

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hellbent on killing each other - black youth killing black youth! hat for?"

"For power, doc," the long one said, sure of himself now, clear about the politics behind their deadly game: "If we have the power we get the benefits, if the other side have the power they get the benefits; you don't understand this, doc, middleclass people never do; you allright no matter who is in power; not so for us; in the ghetto who is in power decides who eats and who suck salt, who get house and who don't."

"And for that you kill each other; why don't your leaders kill each other too, heh?"

"That different, sir; if they kill a leader that's war and the whole country mash up; so them not do it."

"I see. Its all a very well thought-out gentlemanly game of knowing who can and who can not be killed without upsetting the show. And you, you people from the ghetto, approve of it?"

The long one showed his teeth in a grimace that David recognis from his African childhood. "What fe do, doc?"

David shrugged and turned away, taking the lantern from Emma and leading the way up the narrow marl-stone steps cut out of the rockface. The car struggled up the narrow curving drive to the back of the house. Jacob and Jane watch it all looking down from the verandah, the powerful impulse to obedience to the loved ones restraining the dog's natural urge to lrap forward and challenge.

They carried the wounded one into a small sideroom David ~~occasionally~~ used for emergencies from the surrounding villages, especially on Saturday or Sunday nights when little or no medical help was available as people were not supposed to get sick or have accidents at weekends. David took out three bullets, all in

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non-vital areas of the young man's body and, with Emma's help set about stopping the bleeding. Young fellows like this one often bled to death from wounds that were otherwise not fatal; at times they bled to death while people stood in a ring about them; at times they were shot and bundled into the back of a police car jeep which then travelled to one or two other places before finally turning up at some hospital where the victim was usually pronounced dead.

"He has lost much blood." David did not interrupt his work or look up. "He could still die if he does not get proper attention; hospital is the best place for him."

"No hospital." The long one was firm.

"Wanted?"

"Them frame him fe murder. I know him; him don't murder women and children. We know who do it; we going settle it; but them frame him."

"So what will you do?"

"We have a safe place. You fix him up and we take him there and care him."

"The wounds are going to have to be cleaned, the bandages chang every day."

"We have someone."

"And proper feeding; he's very weak."

"We'll feed him."

"Then what? Does he go back to the street war if he gets well?"

The long one shrugged and looked away.

At last it was over. The long one pulled a fat wad of money out of his pocket.

"Keep it!" David snapped. Probably taken in a hold-up, he thought.

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The long one smiled as though reading his mind and shoved the wad back into the pocket of his tight blue jeans. He looked at Emma: "Doc's allright, ma'am but him soft; anyone else would take a heap a money for this job."

David finished his final injection and straightened up.

"Take him away and take care of him; and remember I have to report this."

The long one and his two companions lifted their wounded comrade and carried him ~~gently~~ out of this little room, through the kitchen, and arranged him with care on the back seat. One of them sat ~~with him~~, holding him. The other went into the driving seat. The long thin one, almost as tall as David but less than half as broad and big, turned to David. "The gun, please, doc; we need it; must have it."

David went back into the house and came ~~back~~ out with the gun.

"Know how to use this thing?"

"Yes, sir." Long one was solemn now. "We no shoot except them shoot. We no gun-happy."

"Weapons of death attract death."

"Them shoot us if we have it or if we don't have it, doc."

"But it's wrong, young man, both for you and for the other side. Neither of you will get any real longterm benefit, Jamaica won't benefit, from your slaughtering of each other. Others may benefit; not you; not Jamaica."

Again the long one shrugged, a hint of resignation in the gesture this time, as if saying 'wha' fe do?'. David handed him the gun.

"Thanks, doc." He got in and the car started down the steep hill.

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Emma came and stood beside him and together they watched the tail-lights of the car till they went out of sight round the first bend in the driveway. She took his hand and they walked to a point on the flat land from which the could ~~look down on~~ see the lower part of the driveway. They heard the engine of the car in compression, then a while later, they picked up the twin red glow of the tail-lights again till the car reached the foot of the hill and crawled slowly till it joined the main road, the car turned left; the way to Kingston was to the right. They were going away from Kingston, further up int the hills. Their hiding place must be somewhere up there.

"What now," Emma asked.

"For them?"

"Yes."

"Another gun fight, another day and they may not be as lucky as this time. Sooner or later those young men, probably all of them, at one time or another, will die by the gun. This is the price they have to pay for this much vaunted parliamentary democracy. What a different place this would be if it were the leaders who had to go out and gun each other down! You'd soon have an end to the bloodletting then

"Come," she tucked her arm into his and pulled him along. "We've neglected grandpa long enough; and I've news for him and there's that letter from Kampala."

"Have they gone?" Jacob asked as they came in. He sounded a little breathless though he had been sitting down.

"They've gone," Emma said and went and sat beside Jacob.

"I have to call the police." David went into the study and sat very still ~~watching his watch~~ till ten minutes were up. Then he picked up the phone, dialled, identified himself and asked for

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the ~~Inspector~~ Superintendent in charge. He had made this kind of phone call many times before from his ghetto clinic. When the ~~Inspector~~ Superintendent came on the line he said: "Evening; Dr. Brown here. Thought you should know I just removed a ~~couple of~~ three bullets from a man; nothing serious.

The voice at the other end asked: "He with you now?"

"No."

"Didn't expect it. Please describe the man, doctor. Are you at your clinic?"

"No; at home. He looks just like all these youngsters killing each other; like those we looked at earlier today. You know."

"And he came up to your house?"

"Not alone. He was brought up." David knew everything he said was being taped. "There were three others with him. They were allright. They had one of those M-16s with them."

The voice mused: "Four men, one wounded, and an M-16. Who had the gun?"

"A tall thin young fellow."

"Beardd?"

"No."

"Scar on his left temple?"

"Couldn't see?"

"See which way they went when they left you?"

"No; and I didn't see the car number either."

"Witnesses?"

"My wife and my father."

"You could have refused to help them till you called us."

"And risk my wife and father?"

"Allright, doctor; thanks for calling."

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David hesitated then asked: "The shooting eased up down there?"

"Yes," the ~~Inspector~~ Superintendent said. "Much quieter than earlier; but they are now setting buildings to the torch and keeping the firemen at bay from rooftops. Want me to send up a couple of men to guard your home?"

"No; don't expect anything further."

"Then you expected this one!"

"Come, Inspector. Just not likely. Tell me: when will all this foolish bloodiness end?"

"Your guess is as good as mine, doctor; probably after the elections."

"When there'll be no more need for it?"

"As you say; when there'll be no more need for it. 'Night, doctor."

"Goodnight Inspector."

David joined Emma and Jacob in the sitting room. The old man was weary and ~~kept dozing off and jerking himself awake~~ shaky. Emma had tried to persuade him to go to bed with the promise that she and David would come and read the letter in his bedroom as soon as David had finished his call to the police. ~~But Jacob knew that if he went to bed then he would fall asleep and they would not wake him and so he would not hear Emma's letter.~~ But Jacob would have none of that. He was determined to stay up till the letter was read. He had peered at the outside of the letter through his thick reading glasses but couldn't decide whether the writing was in Michael Odera's hand; such a long time since he had seen Michael's handwriting. Now if it were John's he would know it straightaway.

Emma smiled warmly at her husband and offered him her hand.

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"Grandpa won't go to bed till I read the letter."

"Then read it, my love." He settled beside her, close, so that their bodies touched and moved against each other. He put his hand on her thigh.

Unusual for him, she told herself as the warmth of this pointed physical contact flowed through her mind and body, stirring her to sensuasness. It's the thought of the child in me that makes him do this; whatever they say, most men want the women of their choice to also be the mother of their children. It had seemed as though not having a child did not matter to him. Now she knew how important it was. To have a child, and for her to have his child, was the ultimate sealing of the bond between them. She caressed the hand on her thigh and allowed her body to ache for him briefly. Then she pulled herself together and opened the letter from Kampala. Her eyes ran over the first few lines.

"Well!" old Jacob demanded a little testily.

She looked at the last page. "It is from Michael Odera."

"Read the letter woman!" Jacob could not contain himself.

Emma read in a measured voice, loud enough and slowly enough for an old man going deaf to hear it all:

"Dear Sister Emma: Greetings to you and to our revered bishop, Grandpa, and to his son and your husband, our brother David. This letter is one of joy and good news. The tyrant is still here among us but the land will soon be free of him. It is only a matter of weeks, if not days now, before the soldiers from Tanzania will be here. We know the outside news you get of what goes on here may be twisted because there are many who do not wish to see the tyrant's fall, especially with the help of Tanzania, which many damn and fear

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for putting the land and the power in the hands of the people. But whatever you hear or read, we know, and we tell you with great joy that the tyrant's end is near. You know our people are everywhere and hear everything; this is how it has always been since the beginning of the days of the Old One and the time of our beloved bishop, John Chitole, our glorious martyr, and we have carried it on through the dark days; so we know. We know the time is at hand for our church to come from the dark shadows into which we have been driven. The word has gone out and the brothers and sisters who have not been killed, and those who have fled and who have been scattered, are all returning to their villages and their churches and their communities to rebuild the churches and the congregations. And we of the centre where it all began are returning too, to rebuild. Some have already started. Many of the vehicles are coming back; the women and the children are out in the fields while the men retore the buildings which have been destroyed or vandalised. The damage to our great church is terrible but the building itself stands. The schools buildings and the offices and the factories and the stores-houses and the living quarters did not fare as well. And the Bishop's Home, as you know, was burnt to the ground. All this we will restore. You know the church money, which is a very good amount, has been put away safely. We will be able to use some of that for the restoration work and for the new beginning.

"And so we come to the purpose of this letter. It concerns our beloved Grandpa. We know he is very old but we also know he is well in body and spirit and it is the wish of his church that he returns to his people and his home as soon as possible so that our minds may be at peace because our father is among us."

Jacob let out a cry compounded of pain, joy, love. Then the ol

X Then the old man wept loudly and long, while Emma and David tried to comfort him.

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Emma stood over the seated Jacob and cradled his head against her breast and stroked the thin fleecy white hair while she rocked from side to side making the gurgling comforting noises mothers make to calm disturbed children. David patted his back ~~a little~~ awkwardly, not as at ease as his wife with the sight of his father weeping, ~~as was his wife~~. The dog, Jane, was calm, as if knowing that this was a different and special kind of weeping signifying no pain, no danger, no threat.

After a while Jacob calmed down, found his handkerchief and wiped his face. Still Emma felt the trembling. She looked at David, showing her concern with her eyes.

"He trembles a lot. Quite often."

David took his father's wrist and felt the racing pulse.

"The letter," Jacob was impatient. "Read the rest of it."

Emma went back to her seat under the strong light and took up the letter. David remained beside Jacob, holding his hand, seemingly no longer checking his pulse. Emma picked up the reading where she had left off.

"----so that our minds may be at peace because our father is among us. So will you please bring himhome to us. If you yourself or your husband cannot do it because of commitments, let us know as soon as possible and we will send one or two people whom he knows well to travel with him. Tell him the women have restored the damage done to the grave of his dear wife and it is now as beautiful and filled with flowers as when he lost looked on it ---"

Again Jacob let out a cry; but he did not weep this time and Emma paused only very briefly before continuing the reading.

"---Tell him by the time he gets here his section of the

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Bishop's Home will be ready, they are already working very hard to ensure that.

"You and your husband must forgive the inconvenience this may cause you but we need our father here in his home, we need his spirit here, and we need to bury him here when the time comes so that we will always have him here and his spirit will always be with us and watch over us as we move and work in the way he taught us. We will understand if you and your husband have made a new life for yourselves in a more peaceful place and do not wish to return. But we do not want he who was our inspiration and our leader and father to be buried in a strange land, far from us, so that we may not go and sit by his grave and commune with his spirit.

"We ask this of you in the name of our church and all its branches and all its congegations.

"The Lord bless you and keep you.

"Michael Odera, Senior Bishop."

Old Jacob said: "Amen!" He looked at Emma. "You will come with me?" They felt his high excitement.

"Oh yes, grandpa!" She said it with quick warmth. Then she remembered her husband. "Oh, David! It's allright, isn't it?"

David felt the renewed racing of his father's pulse; he nodded.

"Of course."

"There!" Jacob reached for the dog at his feet. "We're going home, girl! We're going home again! How long, David? How long will it take?" A week? Two? Let's send a telegram to Michael! Say: 'Coming home as soon as possible' signed grandpa'. Allright?"

"We' ll send it in the morning," David said.

"We can fly! That will make it quicker! We could be there in

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a week! Can't we, David?"

"Easy, Dad. We'll make it as quickly as possible but there are quite a few things to be done. Papers to get in order and plane seats to book, my practice and this place to think about."

"We'll go ahead and you can follow us; can't he Emma?"

Emma looked at David who nodded imperceptibly.

"Yes," Emma said; "Yes." A sudden new concern nagged at her.

"And there's Jane to think about," David rose abruptly and hurried to the little room he used as ~~xxxx~~ emergency surgery.

"Oh, Lord, yes; Jane!" Jacob's excitement mounted. "Can we get her on a plane? We canIt stand another long quarintine. No! We'll have to do something about that David!"

He's not even aware that David has left him, Emma thought with dismay. She hurried to David's little room. The excited voice of the old man kept talking.

David was rummaging in his medicine bag.

"What's the matter?"

"That pulse; I've got slow it down before it/forces an ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ an attack." Trouble is I can't use anything too strong; he's too old.

"Does that mean we can't go?"

"Perhaps. If we can control this; but he's very old, love. His heart won't take much."

She followed David back. Jacob was still talking with ever growing excitement; remembering home and the people and the things would have to be done. Now talking to Jane, now to Emma, now to David

David gave him two little white pills and a tumbler of water.

"Take these." He watched while Jacob took the pills and drank the water. "Time for us to go to bed, There'll be a lot to do

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tomorrow."

"Yes of course; you go off to bed. You are going to do all the preparing; I'm not much good at that any more. You go off; Emma and I will sit and talk for a while. Perhaps you'll take some notes Emma, you know, like in the old days, of some of the things we're going to have to do. It will be difficult without John; he was the best planner and manager we ever had; but Michael's good too ----" He kept on talking, planning, dreaming aloud.

"I'll stay a while," David said insistently, compelling Jacob's attention. "Remember we were talking earlier about what I found in your manuscript?"

Jacob stopped talking; his excitement abated; he looked at Emma, then at David; his lips curved in an apologetic little smile.

"I got carried away, didn't I?"

"You surely were!" Emma tried to laugh and choked.

David looked at his watch; it had taken half an hour for the pills to work. Now to see how long the slowing effect would last. David checked the pulse again; it was very much slower but still above normal, still far too fast.

"WHat's the matter with you?"Jacob teased Emma. "Don't you want to go home?"

"What nonsense!" Emma fought back her tears.

"Do you want to hear what I found?" David simulated anger.

Jacob went quiet suddenly and both Emma and David sensed it.

"Is it serious?" Jacob asked softly. The answered himself: "Must be to make you so worried. Just can't control the excitement every now and then; becoming more frequent; Emma noticed it. What does it mean?"

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"Machine running down." David made it sound casual, off-hand, very professional. "Body is a machine, you know; parts get worn-out and you need spare parts; the older and more worn-out the more spare parts are needed."

The idea amused Jacob; "What parts for excitement?" He saw the sudden contortion of Emma's face and offered her his hand. "Come, child. I'm very old, you know; and the old machine does run down. You mustn't be afraid. Which parts, David?"

"In your case, no special parts, Dad; just wear and tear."

"Just time?"

"As you say."

"And the excitement? Is that like an engine so worn that it can no longer be fine-tuned so it races and races and over-heats and you have to keep on trying to adjust the tuning ---"

"You have it. The danger is in the overheating."

"Yes; I think I understand. How long before the overheated engine cracks? I mean in this case?"

"Stop it!" Emma jumped up and stormed out of the big room weeping.

Jacob called her back. "Come ~~love~~ Emma, we have to talk about these things."

"Let her be," David said softly. "It takes time to adjust to this sort of idea. She'll be back."

"Poor Emma; always losing those she loves and depends on. You must not let her lose you too, David."

"I'll do my damnedest not to."

Father and son looked steadily at each other, all barriers down now, all pretense abandoned, more mentally and psychologically

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naked before each other than each remembered ever being with anyone else.

"And you, son, are you adjusted to the idea of death?"

"Yes; it's part of the process; and you do get adjusted in my work."

"Even without faith?"

"That's what you really want to talk about, isn't it?"

"D'you mind?"

"No; not now."

"Good; but first tell me about the overheating and cracking. How near am I?"

"Hard to say, Dad. I'm so close to you; perhaps we should get in someone more detached."

"I don't want that. All I want is your guess. You understand I don't want any long drawn-out futile effort to keep me alive. Of course I'd like to see home again but it doesn't really matter now. Things will begin again; it isn't all lost; that letter says so. If I can't make it I will die in peace knowing that you and Emma will see that my ashes are buried with Margaret. So what's your guess, doctor?"

Emma returned quietly to the big room and composed herself on the little divan in the shadowy corner. Jane announced Emma's return in a soft welcome growl.

"Come Emma; you must share this with us and we must make plans
stretched out his arm in
Jacob/ a gesture of invitation and appeal; Emma came slowly out of the shadowy corner and sat beside the old man, and took his hand, her eyes red from weeping, the lids swollen

"David was about to give me an educated guess of how much time I

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have."

David and Jacob had sat side by side on the long bamboo settee; now, with Emma on the other side of Jacob, David pulled up a low stool and sat facing them. He took Jacob's left hand in his own right hand and Emma's right hand in his left. Now the circle was complete - a circle of love this time, the strongest, most healing, most binding, most ennobling of all the many circles of life.

"It is not the sort of thing on which you can put a time."

"Quit stalling! I know that!"

"Then let him be," Emma protested. "Let us weep when it is the time to do so, not before. You've already made me weep before the time."

"Dear Emma. Do not be afraid of it, my child. It is better to be prepared for the journey than to start out with fear and ignorance and ready. If you are prepared when the time comes the journey is easier for everybody, for the traveller and for those who have to remain behind and watch him go. I learned that from the mistake I made by refusing to prepare myself for Margaret's dying; she tried to help me prepare but I was stubborn and demanded of God a special miracle that would defy all his own laws. Now, while I still can, we must prepare so that you do not repeat the mistake I made."

"He's right, Emma." David raised the back of Emma's hand to his lips.

Emma squared her small chin, clenched her teeth: "I know."

"Well?" Jacob sounded relaxed and tired now.

"It could happen any time; tonight, tomorrow, next week, next month. So we go ahead and start planning tomorrow for the journey home."

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"I like that," Jacob smiled, trying to coax a responding smile out of Emma. "Who was it who said we must carry on as though we are immortal even in the face of death? One thing that poor soul didn't seem to realise is that we really are immortal. Oh not in the way those involved in what my old friend Dan Lee called the God-business think, but in the way it really is and our congregation understood so well without the help of any intermediary. If you listen to the wind or the sound of the trees and the leaves and the rain, ~~even of~~ or if you walk on a special piece of earth or sit in a certain place, and if you are quiet, you will feel and, at times, actually hear the spirits of those who had been there and walked there."

"That is pagan belief," Emma protested through her tears while her face lit up with the smile the old man had craved to see. "And you a bishop of the Christian church!"

"Christ's church, my dear; Christ's church. Not always the same thing. If He walked the earth now they'd call Him an old African pagan. He believed in life as Africans do; the body is only a temporary temple, a shell: where does the spirit go when it leaves the body? Look and listen and you will feel it and see it, and, if you are quiet enough and if you are lucky, you may even hear the voices of those who have been here before. My old grandma Sarah often heard them. I know now it was no vision, as I first thought; I've heard them too, at home, rather faintly, but more strongly here when I had time to really listen." He looked searchingly at Emma. "You have, too, haven't you? You're becoming more like old Sarah every day." He sighed, exhausted ~~by the effort~~ suddenly. "I'd like to lie down."

David got up, breaking the circle of love, and Then helped the old man up and on the short ~~distance~~ walk to his room, followed by ~~Emma &~~ Jane

They sat on the verandah looking at the twinkling lights of Kingston/ more than two thousand feet ~~far down~~ below. The old man was asleep and Jane was on guard at the foot of his bed; she would let them know if he woke. The strong south wind which had blown in from the sea an hour earlier had abated; the world now, from their verandah, was calm and tranquil. The city was a thing of fairy-tale quality, a piece of starlit earth/ framed by dark the/mountains to the east and the darker Caribbean sea to the south and south-west and the clear moonlit sky above. This they would miss ~~if ever they left this spot~~; this they would carry with them wherever they went; this they would remember with a quiet ache when they thought or talked of Jamaica; there/ is no other place on earth where the high mountains/ are quite as close to the sea/, quite as close to the city; no other place where you can climb two thousand and three thousand feet up, and more, without travelling twenty miles; no place where you can, quite as quickly, in less than half an hour, leave the sweltering heat of a tropical coastal city for cool refreshing mountain breezes and a temperate climate in which peaches, strawberries and blackberries, and even broccoli and brussel sprouts grew.

They had gone to bed after taking care of old Jacob, but neither could sleep, and after the high wind had died down they had put on pajamys and nightdress and got themselves long grapefruit drinks and gone to the verandah and the view. Emma knew that of all the things she would miss about Jamaica, this place, this view, the feel of this place, the atmosphere it radiated, the strong sense of the many kindred spirits of those long gone, would be strongest. She would, too, remember and miss the work she and Eliza-May had put into this land, with the occasional help of some strong young man

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from one of the villages: all the avocados - she knew the characteristics and the taste of the fruit of each one of them; and all the coconut trees Jane had planted all over the land! And the cutstone walls and walks. And their joint pride, Eliza-May's and hers, the little cutstone cottage they had built all by themselves, only getting help with the casting of the roof. She had sunk so much of herself into this piece of earth; now she had to prepare herself to leave and forever after to have only the memory of it; and she had, too, at one and the same time, to prepare herself for a life without grandpa at its centre: to lose both at the same time-----

"I must write Michael in the morning. What do I tell him?" Both at the same time: please, Lord, give us a few years between one and the other. Leave him with us a little longer; ley him die at home

"What we agreed: that we're all three preparing to come as soon as we've wound up things here. I don't see us doing it in under a month, but we'll try."

"And about grandpa?"

"Yes; tell him."

"That you think he might not be able to make the journey?"

"Yes; they must prepare themselves too."

"Then what, David? What for us? We'll take him home, one way or the other. And Jane. Then we must plan for you. What shall we do? Where do you want to go; where will you be able to do what you want most and be happy? North Africa? Algeria? You were happy there and your friends are there."

David stared into space for a long time before answering; it had been a long and painful night and he had coped the only way he knew, by withdrawing and deadening the hurt by an act of will.

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"What do you want to do? Where do you want to go?"

She thought it out carefully, quickly; really she had already thought it out, not consciously, perhaps, but she knew she had, long before this bitterly painful night; now it all came to the surface.

"I want to go home, of course." She turned her eyes from the twinkling city and looked at the shadowy outline of his face in the pale moonlight. "But I'll go wherever you want -if you want me to." She knew she was cheating with that last bit and smiled inwardly. Then she grew serious again. "I'd stay here if you were happy but you are not; the politics here distresses you; and I'm not sure it is just the violence or the waste of life you're so angry about. Will you tell me why you're unhappy here: I really want to know."

"You, Emma, could you be really happy here?"

"The roots of my happiness are rather different from yours, dear. That woman in the Bible, Ruth, said it."

"But after Dad's gone ---"

"There'll be you; you've been at the centre too, you know."

"Not like him."

"Because he needed me more and you understood. When he's gone you will fill my life. And if you'd been happy here you and this place and the land would be enough. I could never be lonely here. Or wherever else you are, if you let me have a piece of land - and your love." There you go again, she told herself; what Langston Hughes described as laughing to keep from crying; trying to be a tease with your own husband to hide your seriousness and your pain.

He said, speaking slowly and carefully, as she knew he usually did when he grapple with ideas. "Remember our talk before the gunmen

came?

She thought back to how nearly they had quarrelled and how Jacob had eased things. "What has that to do with our future?"

"Everything, my love. I wish I were as good with words as Dad is. Think about those youngsters down there in that toylike twinkling city; we don't see it from up here and we don't hear it, but they're killing each other in the name of ptheir precious parliamentary democracy."

Emma protested: "What we fled from in Uganda was worse, much worse; dictatorship and tyranny are worse."

"To be sure; but are those really our only options; our only alternatives? Must we have either that brutal and bloodthirsty dictatorship or this?"more democratic elective bloodletting every five years?"

"Allright, my darling: why ignore the Cuban or Soviet alternative. You talked about that earlier."

"Because Cuba's communism can only last as long as she has the protection of the Soviets. Any deal between the Soviets and the Americans, any change in the terms of their relations which makes Cuba expendable as far as the Soviets are concerned and that noble attempt at schools and jobs and homes and health for all will be wiped out as though it was never made."

"You are talking about the limits of geography; and besides I don't think the Soviets would dare abandon Cuba just like that. It would be the end of their influence in the world; no small country would ever depend on them again."

"You're probably right, dear. My real point is that ultimately

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the Cuban freedom of choice is as restricted and limited as the Jamaican freedom of choice. To be sure the making of their revolution was their own choice, but now, for the survival of that revolution they must depend on the Soviets to shield them against any American overthrow of their revolution; and in order to survive you adjust and adept yourself to the thinking and desires of those on whom your survival depends; you are, in short, dependent. Whether the person or the power on whom you are dependendent is tolerant or overbearing, reasonable or capricious, mean or generous does not alter the fact of your being dependent."

"Allright; but what you seem to want, darling, is, to use your own word, utopian. We are all of us dependent on each other: nations, groups of nations, states, families, individuals; you know that."

"You are confusing interdependence with dependence, Emma. There is very little real interdependence between the Soviets and their client states, and between the Americans and their client states. It has to do with the angle of vision, darling; whether you have to tilt your head and look up and say what you know is expected, or whether you can turn your back and say no and walkaway and still survive. And it gets even worse when the dependence has gone on for so long that you have become conditioned to it to the point where you, the dependent victim of a process, become the first agent, the first line of defence of that process. The tragedy is not that you become the driver so that you can avoid being whipped by whipping other slaves; that is just the mean and ugly side of the survival instinct. Being the literary or artistic or sporting or economic or political or military or cultural prepetrator of that process is simply the modern day version of the driver. The tragedy is what has happened

to our minds. ~~It seems as though~~ Our minds have been occupied in the way conquoring armies occupy land. ~~When~~ I posed two options a while ago you posed a third, and what was it? I spoke of the brutal dictatorship which seems to be coming to an end in Uganda and the bloodletting here under the respected facade of parliamentary democracy ~~here~~; and there are, let us hasten to admit, qualitative diferences: but they are still not pretty choices for the people of the ghetto here or in Entebbe or Kampala or Nairobi for that matter. And what was your third alternative?"

"The Cuban model."

"Or the Soviet, you said, as though they were synonymous. But they are not, darling. The thing is: we accept the state of dependence; we accept the value system that goes with it; we accept the power equation that goes with it. And worst of all, our minds have been so colonised that we ourselves are the most effective progagrandists of the process which sets other people's limits on our own thoughts and options. Even you, my love, could not think of survival options other than those which have evolved from the great Western European awakening. And yet there were great political systems and great schools of thought and great philosophies long before the rise of Western Europe to its dominant position."

"But no such great worldwide imperialism."

"Only because the world was smaller then; and they had not yet discovered the usefulness of colour differences as a power tool. But the really important differences are Western technologies, and America's most monstrous gift to the world, the ~~multi~~trans national corporation: that economic and political monster which knows no nationality, no ideology, no loyalty other than to the god of growth and power, no commitment. This is the forerunner of the great new technotronic

no compassion

barbarism which threatens to engulf the world if the Russians and Americans do not wipe us all out first in persuit of a so-called winnable nuclear war."

"You make it sound so dismal, David. Is it really that hopeless?"

"It's dismal all-right; but your church teaches hope, my love, especially in dark and difficult times. And this is where it has to do with our future. The people of the East, the Indians, the Chinese, the people of Indochina and the islands and, to a lesser extent, the people of the Arab world, have all somehow succeeded in surviving this great Western onslaught without having their minds occupied. Even those who went to school in Europe somehow survived psychologically intact. Some of the more inaccessible African tribes did too, but their numbers are too small to be of any significance. In the main it was only the sub-Saharan African mind which was so completely colonised that we ended up being the principal instrument in our own continued domination, even after most of us gained political independence. And this is particularly true of the Black Diaspora - the blacks of the Americas & the Caribbean It is no use blaming others for this state; we are not the only people who have been enslaved and colonised and occupied and dispersed. The new thing now is what they call the brainwashing which was so complete that we have even denied and repudiated our own past in order to prove how 'western' we are. And ~~having~~ being so completely occupied, ~~our minds,~~ with our own active asistance, it is going to be very diffult to liberate our minds from that occupation. Fanon showed the depth of the problem by talking about that enslavement of the African mind as though marxism was somehow not a part of the great western process which brought it about. How to ~~Breaking~~ out of this mold was what I couldn't see till I read Dad's manuscript. I suppose I was looking for some political or economic or military formulation ----"

Emma's mind was in tune with David's now; xxxxxx her thoughts flowed along with his, picking them up almost before he had ~~formulated them~~ turned them into words. ~~She raised her arm impulsively and waved him to silence.~~

"But David!" The protest was excited; she was wrapped up in the idea, almost oblivious of the man. "The manuscript is what you would call a western document, part of the process you are against. It can't help you any more than Franz Fanon's essays, if what you say is right. Fanon's thoughts are in the marxist, therefore western mould, so are DuBois', and so are grandpa's. You can't take some and reject others and pretend you are turning your back on westernism! Fanon and DuBois and your father xxxxxxx are all creatures of their world, your western-controlled and dominated world. They have no other to escape to. The Asians all have huge land masses into which they could withdraw and keep their own cultures intact, and their lands were never as completely occupied as Africa." But even they have been more influenced by the west than xxx you seem willing to concede. Like it or not, grandpa's manuscript is a western document."

"Like I am a western product." The very quietness of his response stopped Emma, made her listen for more. "But I'm also a product of Africa, Emma. Perhaps being born there and spending the key early years there is what makes the difference. Your heroes, including Dad, all went to Africa as adults, as children of the Black Diaspora. Even so, it is their thinking that gave me the key which led to the questions I am now raising. So please don't misunderstand me. I am not interested in rejecting westernism. I think we must come to terms with what you call westernism, but before we can do that, or before we can be certain that we are doing that, we must be certain of our own minds; we must know who we are and what

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we are, and that the thoughts we think are our own, not conditioned knee-jerk reflections of the long and often complete occupation of our minds. Do you see, darling? It is not against anything or anti-anything or anybody; it is not anti-westernism, not anti-Europe not anti-marxist or anti-capitalist. It is to say quite simply: let us withdraw from all this as fully as is humanly possible, and for as long as it is necessary to free ourselves of the occupation of our minds."

"Withdraw from all what?"

"Don't sound so shocked. In your maniscript those early runaway slaves, Dad's ancestors and the one called Samson who led them to this place, they withdrew."

"They had no option, darling."

"That's my point, dear. We are back to the question of options: the brutal dictatorship or your murderously manipulated parliamentary democracy or the variations inbetween: all of which are what the Chinese so indelicately call 'the running dogs' of this or that superpower's hegemonism."

"Or the bobbing and weaving and snatching of advantage from this or that side of their cold war," Emma cut in quickly. "That is the non-aligned way."

"Until they outwit and out-manipulate even non-alignment, ~~my dear~~. They do it with everything, love. It took them a few years to get the measure of the OPEC oil cartel. They use their wits and their money and the stranglehold of their TRANS-nationals to ensure continued and privileged access to the world's resources. For all your many Sovereign States they have a tighter grip on the world economy today than ever before. No, dear, your bobbing and weaving and snatching of advantage will end in your own

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further impoverishment. Not because of malice. They have simply become very good at something which they have themselves after all invented and developed to a very high point over a long time. And what they do to us they do just as ruthlessly to each other. ~~Within their own frame of reference~~ It is pure foolishness for third world countries to think they can use their greater numbers to outmanoeuvre the west at its own game and gain better terms of trade or a better and fairer sharing of the wealth of the earth. Just watch how they will undo the efforts for a more equitable sharing of the resources of the oceans. Give them a little time and see!"

"So we withdraw," Emma said. "Where to? Africa? And why should they leave us alone there?"

"They will not. We will have to insist. And you cannot insist on anything if you cannot defend yourself. In this one respect we can make the idea of sovereignty and the United Nations work in our favour: there will be no wholesale invasion of countries for raw materials and minerals, especially if they know we are prepared, and able, to do a Vietnam or an Algeria on them."

"And you will do without loans and gifts and technical assistance?" their

"We will do without anything we cannot pay for; and we will do our own training, as you did in your mission and year churches. You did it, darling ! You did it in Uganda: Dad and John and Odera and all the others, all the people of your church created a self-contained community that prospered and paids its way and rewarded everyone in accordance with effort. You've done it! There's no reason for skepticism; what you've done once, you can do again and on a bigger scale."

"On a national scale? On a continental scale? Oh, David! You are dreaming, my love. Your father spent all his life creating one mission that tried these things. One dictator came along and burned it down in one night."

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"And before that they burnt down his grandparents' church in Cypress, and before that they burned down other so-called primitive temples and citedals and even towns and villages and whole communities. What's the matter with you, Emma? First you and Dad make me see something in a new way and now you try to cast doubt on it. Do you give up because a dictator comes along and burns down your work? It is being rebuilt; you read us the letter saying so."

Emma thought of the young gunmen: would they have the patience needed for that kind of work. She sighed: "Would they, David?"

"Would they what? Who?"

"Those who came here with the wounded one: would they have the patience and make the sacrifices demanded by your withdrawal?"

"No: they won't. And even if they wanted to they would not be allowed to; but that will not arise; they themselves will choose to cling to their murderous democracy as the alternative to a communism they know the Americans would not allow; their psychological dependence is too far gone for them to entertain the possibility of other alternatives; the failure of the present progressive lot is all the proof they need."

"Then it is only the Africans who might."

"Not all of them; but some will. Your church is proof of that. The whole history of black withdrawal for survival, here and in the plantations of America, and in the black churches is proof that it can be done, that there are people who will make the effort and the sacrifice. I think Garvey's Back-to-Africa movement was an instinctive reaching toward that but the premise was wrong

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because it saw African freedom as coming from blacks outside, and it saw that freedom in terms of western structures ---

Again Emma's impatience showed in the harshness of her interruption; "If not western structures, then what? Back to the tribal village council in which only the old men talked and the women had no say?"

"Come off it, Emma! You were at the centre of the structure created by your church: was it either the one thing or the other?"

Emma remembered how it was and her impatience vanished.

"A synthesis," she said softly.

"Which came out of two things," David said; and now he, too sounded soft and at ease, knowing that he had reached her at last, knowing that all this long night's talk would repeat itself over and over in her mind, its ideas would be tested, examined, brooded over till they became part of her mental baggage, a frame of reference for all her thinking. "Out of a need of people to worship in freedom in their own way and out of the need to create structures to make that possible, and out of all that came the kind of love with which an old man created your church and your view of life and the world. All I ma saying, my love, is that we must enlarge this self-discovery and this self-awareness and this sense of self-worth so many generations of black folk have striven after until we really know who we are. Not as others see us: as we see ourselves. Not judging ourselves by values imposed on us by others, but by our own values. When we really know ourselves, when we come to terms with the reality of who we are and where we came from, we may come to like and respect ourselves and each other, and so shed ourselves of that invisible occupation of our minds which makes us ~~the~~

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~~first agents~~, the advance guard, of our own psychological emslavement. If we can do this we may be able to look at our world in new ways, and see things in new ways, and, who knows, we may even be able to offer our fellowmen of all races and colours an alternative vision to that of strife, competition, greed, and the terrible prospect of anew age of human and spiritual darkness brought about by the present threat of technological barbarism. Who knows? I think our world is in desperate need of the co-operative humanity your church brought out in your congregations. You are the begining, the germ: how to institutionalise it is the hard and long challenge? How to make it national policy that people will live by and, if necessary, fight to defend."

"And the beginning of this has tobe withdrawal?"

"I see no other way. They will subvert all effort if they are not deliberately excluded;"

"If it can be done, how long must this withdrawl last?"

"As long as it is needed. Those who have been through it will know when they are their own people. People know these things deep down."

They were silent for a long time after that, and in the silence they were aware once more of the beauty and peace of ~~the world about them~~ this place. The moon was very big and not very high in the sky and David remembered the total skepticism with which a group of men from Rock Hall had rjected reports of the first men who had landed on the moon; the television pictures of theevent and the newwpaper pictures, they said, were faked: man could not walk on the moon.

Emma went into the houwe and returned with drinks.

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Again they sat in silence, and it seemed to Emma that there were invisible spirits present all about them, sharing this night's thinking and talking with them. Or was it part of the subconscious preparation for the time when she had to leave this place? It had been a kind place to her, a place with an aura of gentleness; even the lizards and the cleaning ants who helped keep flies and roaches at bay had become her friends in this gentle place.

At last Emma broke the silence.

"I think Michael will agree with you; but it is a long work that you are planning. Can you work for something that you will not see the end of? It is not like you; you don't have the missionary's training."

"I can be a medical missionary."

"I don't mean that, darling. I'm talking about the patience which is needed to change people's way of seeing and understanding. That takes time, more than one lifetime ~~often~~."

"We must try. Not to try is to give in. Let us make a start and see what happens. And we have the mission as a starting point. We won't begin from scratch. And let me warn you, now that there'll be more crises and more upheaval in Uganda; you don't get rid of this kind of dictatorship and move straight into peace and tranquility. Things will be unsettled for a long time, which is both a challenge and an opportunity. It isn't going to be all peaceful and we are going to have to train our young people to use guns."

"A Christian church with guns," Emma murmured unhappily.

"Dad might call it the black church militant."

"I don't like guns, David. I never will; I never have, but I think Michael will agree with you. Both grandpa and John were worried about his

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impulse to revolutionary action even before things got bad."

"This is not a time of peace, my love, and it is an invitatio to disaster to be unarmed and unprepared in a time of war. When we come to the time of peace we will put away the guns."

"Allright; but I don't like it. Please rmember."

"I'll remember."

"Then it is settled. We'll go home and if they agree this will be at the centre of our work."

Emma got up and moved to the edge of the verandah, a mood of sadness over her. David came and put his arm about her; the long night was imperceptibly changing to a new day, it showed in the changing darkness of the mountains which were now enveloped in a pre-dawn darkness which was not quite the coming of daylight.

"And you, Emma, is it so difficult for you to accept the idea of a withdrawal inward in order that we may find ourselves and become our own people?"

"No." I need to think it out some more but it's not all that hard."

"Then what is it, my love?"

"It is the hurt of the thought that it should be necessary. It makes me understand, suddenly, how all those others through the ~~years~~ generations must have felt and hurt to want to withdraw, and now you want us to do the same thing."

"It may be the last withdrawal. If it is successful we may reach out to the world again as a healed and whole people with something rich to offer."

"Pray God you're right, David."

"Dad's manuscript says I' am. Please don't be sad."

"Then come and comfort me. I need to be comforted." She pulled him to their bedroom door.

~~Suddenly, a shaft of light hit the mountains, transforming the~~

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David held back. When she turned to him to seek the reason he averted his face, looked down at the twinkling city far below.

"What is it?" she asked.

"A small foolishness," he said, head still averted, acute self-consciousness in his voice.

"Then tell me."

"You will find it foolish; a thing of symbolism I have long thought of."

"Allright! So you think it foolish but important enough to tell me; so tell me!"

"Batari; that was your maiden name. May I use it?"

Emma understood and a flood of emotion overwhelmed her. She flung both arms about him and rested her head against his chest.

"Of course, my darling! Of course! And it is not foolish! It is the first step..." Many others, here and elsewhere, had made this kind of change, but not in the way he wanted to do it. For him it was no isolated act in itself. She said it softly: "Dr. David Batari. I like it; I like it very much. And it gives me back my own name. I give it to you, with love!"

They went into their bedroom.

Suddenly, a shaft of light ~~and a radient orange glow~~ hit the ~~Big~~ Mountains, transforming the view from Coyaba.

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