

F O R T Y T H O U S A N D B R O T H E R S

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P A R T O N E

Ronald Green simply wasn't good friends with any of the boys who lived on his street because, he considered, for the most part they were his inferiors. So, as twilight grew, for reasons which were his own, he remained apart from the little group near the street lamp. He remained seated on the door step of his gallery where his father grumbled and complained at intervals that Ronald was different from the other boys only because he thought himself to be a big man. This expression irritated Ronald exceedingly and he got up from the door step, brushed the dust off his pants, and angrily walked away from the house. Putting his hands into the holes that were in his pockets he went to the corner store and bought a five cent cone and thought that perhaps he should buy his mother and father cones too; he wouldn't have minded buying his mother one, but he didn't want to get one for his father, and so he left the store.

By the time that he had wandered back to the front of his house, the street lamps had spread their yellow glows over the pavements. A slight wind rustled the autumn leaves in the trees. Men and boys carrying baseball bats and mitts came streaming away from the direction of Fletcher's field, their games ended by the lighting of the street lamps. The little group of boys, some on bicycles parked near the curb, others leaning against the telephone poles, thinned out. Now there were only a few who vociferously discussed the relative merits of the various High Schools in Montreal. Ronald finished his ice cream cone and felt quali-

fied to enter the discussion; he approached the group.

"Baron Byng is one hell of a dump," said Freddie, a small freakish looking boy who nevertheless was no fool. "All you've got there is Hebes."

"So what if there's Hebes?" said Simon. "At least you have lots of fun there!"

"Whaa, lots of fun! The first thing you know if you start fooling around there is they throw you out", Sydney, who was a first year student at Baron Byng, declared.

"So what if there's Hebes, ai?" Freddie retorted. "All you see is a bunch of Hebes. You think that's the best thing for you? All you guys know is Hebes. What if you have to speak to somebody who's not a Hebe sometimes, hey? What would you do then, hey? You wouldn't know what to do, would you? It's not the best thing if, like my brother-in-law says, if you live in a country like Canada and all you know is Hebes"

"Ah, so what do you wanna be, in a school with a bunch of limies and frogs?" asked another boy.

"That's not the point," Freddie shouted, and the veins in his throat showed with excitement.

"Ah, even if Baron Byng didn't only have Hebes there, it's still a lousy place if you ask me," said Jerry, a boy who was friends with Ronald. "My cousin who goes to Baron Byng was telling me about the teachers there. Christ, ya never heard anything like it. The

teachers there are all a bunch of crazy jerks. There's one guy whose name is Mech...."

"I heard of him," Ronald said, trying to edge his way into the discussion.

"Ya hear," Jerry continued, "he knows from nuttin. So the guys curse him in Yiddish and he shoots them out, so they go and shoot a game of craps in the toilets, and that's all they know. The whole goddam class walks out on him, right under his eyes, and he knows from nuttin"

"You know," Ronald said, "the trouble with Baron Byng is they don't have any Hebes for teachers. My cousin who goes to Baron Byng - he's gonna go to McGill next year - told me that they only have one Hebe there for a teacher, all the others are limies and old geezers. The whole school is Jewish - out of a thousand guys, about three or four aren't Jewish - and you can imagine, one teacher, my cousin says, one in fifty that is, is a Jew. That's what's the matter with Baron Byng"

While the others urged agreement or dissent with Ronald's analysis, Ronald's mother started calling him from the porch.

"All right boys, it's the first day school tomorrow. You had better break it up and go in to bed now."

They argued and shouted for five minutes more and then they dispersed. When he went to bed that night Ronald was buoyant with expectation. Tomorrow was the first day at high school.

Morning came bright and rosily, and he put on his new suit

and combed his hair and made sure the parting was straight. He bolted down his breakfast, then searched high and low until his mother located his report card. He was ready to start out. The air was cool and fresh; the sun shone brightly. He said good bye and went out to the small porch in front of his house where he waited to see if anyone he knew was passing by. Bright coated girls flocked by in droves; tall thin boys in leather jackets passed along in twos and threes. But no one he knew passed by - or rather, no one he cared to associate with.

He set out, but immediately felt unhappy walking to school alone. Everyone else seemed to be walking with a friend; even the guys taking their bikes to school coasted by in groups of fours and fives. At every corner he stopped and waited.

"I've never seen a boy who should be so fussy about people," his father had complained about him several evenings ago. "This person he doesn't like, that person isn't good enough for him....."

"Oh, he'll grow out of it," his mother had said, and the intelligent cousin who had been present at the house nodded.

Ronald had been waiting all evening for his intelligent cousin to speak out in his defence, but she remained silent. How, he asked himself, could he be friends with those guys? All they were interested in were sports, more sports, and some more sports. He simply wasn't interested in sports. He was interested in - well, science, things like - a cure for cancer, whether there were people on the planet Mars, and the problems connected with the ionic barrier. And also he didn't like being

part of a gang - that is of a street gang. He just didn't like it, that's all. What was wrong with that anyhow?

But his father didn't agree, and his mother generally assented to anything her husband declared was Holy Writ. Thus Ronald reached the brownstone building, and from among the host of rushing and moving and shouting all about him Ronald could find no one he could go over to. Nor did he like the boys of his former grade seven, so when he saw them congregating in the long, narrow yard for the feeling of oneness in this first day of school, he was afraid to approach them because of the rebuff they might offer. He was afraid because - he didn't know - he just didn't like to - while he somehow felt he wasn't like his father always described him as somebody who didn't like anybody ... because he was wishing that, perhaps, some of the boys with whom he used to be friends on and off would see him Oh, he didn't know.

He entered the school yard and waited in the shadow of the tall cast iron gates for the bell to ring. He was startled when someone tapped him on the shoulder.

"Hi there," Laurie said. "Where have you been all summer?"

"Oh - I've been in the city - where have you been?"

"Ah - I've been up in the country most of the time - and I met some real sharp broads there." Laurie was a big boy, though not quite so tall as Ronald. He was rather well dressed, and his comb had rigged a masterfully curled pattern in his greasy hair. "I used to meet them at the dances," Laurie explained.

"Gee," Ronald admired, "you know how to dance?"

"Sure, they taught me - christ, you should see some of them, they're really sharp."

Laurie continued to describe the glories of his latest exploits. While he spoke he continually eyed the girls who darted in twos and threes past where they were standing. "Say, there are sharper broads around here than I expected to see. I thought only ritzy Strathcona had sharp broads"

At that moment the bell rang. Ronald turned and wondered where they were expected to go. Everything seemed strange and different. Laurie pointed to the mass of students hurrying up the stone stairway which led to the playroom. "Let's stick together," Ronald said to Laurie as they followed the others.

Inside, a gym instructor in a white sweatshirt lined them up and led them into a gym which was terrifically large, thought Ronald, immensely long. Three hundred boys, abnormally quiet, waited until their turns came to approach the desks which were lined in a row with a print-smocked teacher sitting behind each. After their reports were taken in, the new students were divided into groups of thirty. Then, with a teacher at the head of each group, they were led up what seemed endless stairways and through numberless corridors. Finally the group in which Ronald and Laurie chanced to be together reached its classroom; Ronald was the first inside. He dashed to save Laurie a seat beside his.

Then, reduced to breathlessness by the novelty and strangeness of the high school, they listened to the lady teacher hold forth on what wisdom she would see fit to impart to them, on what propriety she would

expect them to have and to hold, and what books, pencils, pens and erasers they must have for the first day of classes tomorrow. On the stairway downstairs Ronald suggested to Laurie that they go downtown immediately and buy their school supplies.

They took the streetcar down to St. Catherine street to Eaton's. The first floor where school supplies were on sale seemed packed with students purchasing dollar packages of school supplies which contained thirty-three items, all the notebooks, pencils, pens and assorted stuff they could use in a year. Laurie, however, was far less interested in purchasing school supplies than he was in whistling at the broads. Since last Spring, when Ronald had last hung around him, he had developed a skill in this art equalled only by the surprise, elation or disappointment he manufactured at the sight of bobby soxers. Ronald quickly learned to admire his discrimination.

"Sharp broads, si?" he exclaimed as each different group of gaily dressed girls sauntered by.

After an hour of this special sort of sight seeing Ronald asked, "Don't you wanna go and buy what you need?"

"Sure, let's take a look at the ties they're selling to-day,"

They boarded the elevator up to the Men's Wear department. Laurie slid some three dozen different ties through his hand. "Bien shmateh," was his knowing judgment. "And they want two bucks. Bah, they're not worth two cents!" Then a tie on which a semi nude Hawaian girl was painted caught his eye. "Take a look at this, hey? This is real

class! Christ, two and a half bucks too. Take a look - Christ, if I work an afternoon in my father's store, I'll be able to buy it ..."

After their excursion at the tie counter they sardined into an elevator and went up to the fourth floor to examine the bicycles. Jaunting towards the Sport's department, Laurie said that the new dynamo his uncle would bring him from New York would be sharper than any of the cheap ones available at Eaton's. They spent fifteen minutes examining the bicycles. Most of the bikes carried chromeless handle bars in accordance with War Regulations. "Maybe I'll work in my father's store for a weekend and I will be able to buy this bikestand. But Christ, but that means I wouldn't be able to go down to that club ..."

"What club?" Ronald asked.

"Ah, there's a lot of sharp broads there. I was supposed to go down there, but I didn't have time."

"Where is the club? At the 'Y'?" He hoped it wasn't the 'Y'; and then, he hoped it was. Maybe Laurie would ask him to come and at long last he would be part of a club

"No - it's some kind of club - they're Zionists, or some crazy thing - but there are broads there - by the way, do you wanna come down with me?"

"Sure, when do they meet? Friday nights?"

"Yah, they meet at a cheesy little place on St. Lawrence boulevard - but what to hell, there are some sharp broads there , so if I don't work at my father's store, maybe I'll go down there ..."

Finally they went to the counter which sold school supplies and both bought the dollar packages. Homeward bound on the streetcar, Laurie confessed that he was worried because a cousin of his told him that High School was tougher than anything he had seen yet, much tougher in fact; and, since he had barely got through seventh grade, he was worried because, he had better start plugging right away. But Ronald re-assured him. He knew it would be a cinch.

"I hear algebra is very hard," said Laurie.

"Ha - there's nothing to it. I was doing some during the summer. It's really a cinch.

"Christ, if I get stuck, will you show me how to do it?"

"Sure. There's nothing to it!"

Ronald was pleased as punch, because now he could be sure he had a friend.

Now that he had a friend, he must think of keeping him, and of making new friends. He knew why he didn't have friends; as his father always said, it was his character. Well, he was going to change. He would show his father yet.

Before entering his doorway at Waverly street he chased away a few kids who were playing marbles in the unplanted garden in front of his house. Then he entered the low built flat, determined that he would start right now and be nice to his mother. Yes, he was going to keep his friend, and in order to do so, he was going to re-form his character. So, in what he thought was a sweet voice, he began by telling his mother how wonderful

high school was.

"Ya, well I'm glad to hear," his mother said drily. "Dinner will soon be ready," she added, "so don't go running off."

"When will it be ready?" he asked.

"It'll be ready, it'll be ready," she replied, short temperedly. "Don't expect me to go running into the street and start calling you."

He didn't answer back, as he would ordinarily; instead, he slammed the door of his little room and flopped down upon the bed for a while.

He lay there and thought about school. The great difference now that every day of school would bring to him, to his innermost desires. Soon he would be strutting along the campus at McGill University, with friends, with companions, and his longed-for freedom and happiness would be within his reach. But he couldn't permit himself to loaf too long; he wanted to start the first day on the right foot. He jumped up and sat down at the little card table that served him as a desk, and began examining the second hand books he got for a dollar and a half from a guy he knew.

He was about to clean his algebra text with an eraser and print his name in block letters on the cover when his mother's voice came from the kitchen.

"Ronnie, I can't spend all day here waiting. Come in and eat and that's all. Ronnie, nu - where are you?"

"Wait a moment," he shouted back, conscious that he was losing his temper. "I'll soon be in. Can't you wait a moment?"

"Ronnie, I have no time for you, you understand me? If you want

dinner, come in right now!"

Two minutes passed; then the voice of his mother came again more shrilly.

"Can't you understand I haven't got the time to waste with your dinner?"

"Oh, all right," Ronald said, and went into the kitchen.

He had forgotten all about his resolutions, How could he keep up his resolutions in a place like this, he asked himself. He approached the sink to wash.

"For christ sake, look how goddam filthy this place is!" he shouted. "Why is it never clean?"

His mother boiled at him. "Damn you, if you want it clean, then clean it up and stop making so much noise!"

"I'm making noise? Listen to all the racket you're making!"

"Look Ronnie," his mother turned to him. "If you don't like it here, you can move out. I'm not asking you to stay here if you don't like it. Just take your things and go. I'm not making a living from you. Neither is Pa. So if you don't like the way things are run around here, move out, and that's all."

Ronald burned as his mother repeated these familiar words. Why was he ever born into this house? Why wasn't he ever given a chance to live in a nice place? Why did his mother always have to shout at him? And why did he always lose control

"Oh, goddam it!" he cursed, throwing down the dirty towel with which he had been wiping his hands.

He sat down near the table.

"Haven't you got anything to eat but salads. Salads, salads, all the time! A person gets sick and tired eating grass!"

"If you want fancy food, go out and work, so I'll give you fancy food. What do you expect for dinner?"

"Oh, that again!" he yelled, getting up and pushing the table away from him so that the dishes clattered. "That's all I ever hear in this dump. Money, money, all the time. That's all I ever hear!"

"So what do you want me to do about it? Go to heaven and argue with God and tell Him we aren't satisfied we're poor people? So we are poor. Face the facts. Don't live in wild dreams. You can't afford to. Besides, it could be worse"

He sat quietly and stared at the hodge-podge of food she had placed before him. As she continued, her tone of voice grew more assuaging. "Sure, it would be nice if we could afford to live nice with a maid and things. But we can't that's all. Thank God for what we have. Pa is not a strong person and hasn't been earning too much lately. So what can we do. God will help. You'll get older and start bringing money into the house...Ronny, where are you going?"

"I'm not hungry!"

"Ronny, the soup will get cold!"

"I don't give a damn!"

"Ronny, come and eat your dinner," his mother called once more, but she heard no reply. She sat down near the table and rested her elbow against the unwiped and chipped enamel. Her head ached. She called once

more, but that moment the front door whammed open and in scrambled Herbie followed by an unnumbered host of companions.

"What's the matter, what's wrong?" called the mother, jumping up. In a moment her Herbie was in her lap and she examined his nose.

"It's nothing, Mrs. Green," one of the youngsters explained. "We were playing stocking-football and we tackled him."

She told Herbie's friends to wait outside and she stopped his nose-bleed. In a moment he regained his senses and insisted on being let loose again.

"Nothing doing! You're having your dinner first. No, your dinner first!"

"No, I'm not hungry, I'm not hungry!"

"What am I going to do with all this left-over food. Your rotten brother got sore and wouldn't eat!"

"I'm not hungry, I'm not hungry," Herbie re-whined his petition and darted outside.

Meanwhile Ronald slipped out of his room and re-seated himself at the table. Mrs. Green put the soup on the gas stove again and told him about Herbie's nose.

"That little jerk," Ronald muttered. "All he knows is to play ball!"

He began eating in silence. His mother made a loud scraping clatter, removing the hardened grease from a pot. She wondered when her husband was coming home for dinner. Five minutes later she heard the front door open. Quickly she turned to Ronald.

"Ah, here comes Pa. Now look Ronnie. I want you to be quiet. He wasn't feeling well this morning and almost didn't go to work ..."

Mr. Green hung his coat in the hall closet. Then he entered the dimly lit living room. He slumped down near the uncovered table and began working his feet out of his shoes.

"So, how have you been?" his wife asked, leaving the greasy pot soak in Old Dutch.

"Ah, it's slow at the shop." He leaned against his up-thrust wrist as though he were suffering from a burdensome headache.

"Nuu, you're not so well, Issie," she told him. "It'll do you good to lie down and rest up a bit this afternoon. Do you want hot water for your feet?"

It was a moment before he shook his head.

"Nuu, wait a moment, Ronnie is eating his dinner. He'll be finished so I'll be able to give you."

She returned to the kitchen and said to Ronnie, "Make it fast, Pa is tired and hungry!"

"Make it fast," hollered Ronald, "What's the make it fast for? If he wants to sit down and eat, let him!"

"Ronnie, I need the table. I can't clean off half of it. So please don't make a tarrarum!"

Mr. Green bent forward, elbow on his knee, and caught a glimpse of his eldest son. "What's the matter, big man?" he said, "You think you're so important? You're not so important, you know!"

"Ronnie, make it fast, it's Pa who brings in the money here - not you!"

He crammed the remainder of his food down his mouth, and with a last mouthful stoppering his anger, he rose and stamped out of the kitchen. His father glared after him, but said nothing. Mrs. Green then turned to the sink and commenced scrubbing the dishes. Before she could get the lukewarm water to flow, in burst Herbie again, this time without a bleeding nose, but with an appetite for apples. He was given three and he put two in his back pockets and started chewing on the third. "When are you going to have your dinner?" his mother called. Herbie was impervious to her question. Instead, seeing his father at home, he sprinted to the other end of the dark hallway and called, "On your mark - get ready - get set - GO!" and he charged down the hallway and leapt onto his father's lap.

"So, did you go to school today?" his father asked affectionately.

"Sure I went," he replied, kicking his feet out and in as he anchored himself on his father's lap. "Guess what grade I'm in? I'm in third! Daddy, give me a nickel?"

"Herbie, you had your nickel today," his mother called.

"I want another one, I want another one. I spent the other nickel!"

"Issie, don't give him any more money. He spends it all and buys gum ..."

Herbie got off his father's lap, lay down on the floor and started kicking his feet.

"If I don't get a nickel I'm not going to sleep tonight, I

don't care, I don't care!"

Mr. Green reached into his pocket and took out a coin. Herbie, seeing it flash in his fingers, leaped up, wiped his eyes, and dashed forward to pluck it out of his fingers.

"Oi Issie, you're spoiling the kid," but Herbie cheerfully scampered out of the house.

Mrs. Green trailed after him to close the door against the flies and fallen leaves and dirt which blew into the passageway. She stopped a moment by Ronald's door, but moved on into the kitchen again.

"I don't know what's wrong with that Ronnie lately," she observed. "Maybe it's the age when they get crazy and you can't do anything with them - I don't know - for dinner today he was so crabby it was terrible."

"That kid makes me sick," the father finally said.

"Nuu - but listen, Issie, he's your child, don't forget that! Do you have to be strangers with him? Here - you're going to finish dinner - you don't have to go back to the shop - go over to him, he's in his room, sit down and talk with him. He wants to be friends. Yesterday he was saying to me, 'My father, do you think he gives a damn for me? Other fathers ...! I told him, 'Ronnie, your father cares for you. What do you mean he doesn't care? What's the matter?' I asked him, 'he doesn't chalilah support you? He tells you not to go to high school and go to work? Other parents - but I said to him, 'Speak to your father sometimes' - after all, Issie, I heard a doctor on the radio say that it's very important if parents want to get along with their children, they should try to have interests together!'"

"Oh look," Mr. Green said, waving his nicotined fingers, "I don't know, but there's something about that kid that I can't stand."

"What? What is it, Issie?"

"Tell me, does he have to be a boor? You tell him something - so he opens his big mouth and he starts screaming. He's not normal. What's the matter, I don't give him clothes to wear? He doesn't eat? I'm not giving him a chance so he should go to high school?"

Mrs. Green didn't reply to this last remark, for she knew her husband was perfectly right. Nevertheless she felt deeply disturbed. After she finished cleaning up, she wiped her hands and tip-toed to Ronald's room so that her husband, now sitting in the parlour, might not notice her. Quietly she turned the handle and entered the room.

"What do you want?" Ronald barked at her.

"Ronnie," she whispered, "Why don't you go into the parlour and speak a bit with Pa?"

He turned away and muttered an irritated, "Don't bother me!"

"Ronnie, it's not nice a father and a son shouldn't be pals and get along. You should be friends with each other, and not strangers."

"Look, will you please ..."

"Ronnie, close your big mouth, will you? What are you so sore at Pa for?"

"I'm not sore, he said, gritting his teeth.

"Then why don't you tell him about high school - and try to be friends with him?"

"Because!"

"What's the matter? Something has been bothering you all these years. What is it? You think he hasn't been a good father to you?"

"No!"

"Why - because he hasn't been like Mr. Caplan who throws his boys out of the house if they speak above a whisper and they spend the night sleeping on the mountains? Ronnie, you know Pa has always tried his best for you! It wasn't his fault that he is poor."

"Look, will you leave me alone!"

"Or that he comes home at night from the shop and he's too tired to sit down and be interested and talk to you. You know what European fathers are like, Ronnie? What do you expect of him? To run around with his sons and play ball and go to the country on hikes? I know you'd like that, but what can you do? Pa is different. But, Ronnie, that doesn't mean that Pa is not interested in you. He never says anything, but you think that when visitors come he never shows off your report card? He does, you can believe me! Plenty of times he asks me what you are doing, where you are, because he is interested."

"Yeah, he does, ai? Why doesn't he ever ask me?"

"Because I told you, Ronnie, that's the way he is. Only yesterday I heard him speaking to Sam that you're starting high school, and that when you'll be finished, we'll try our best to send you to College. You should have seen how proud he was when he told him!"

"So? - Ma, I'm busy!"

"All right, when you're finished being busy - Ronnie, speak to

him - he's your father. You'll regret it later. I'm warning you. You don't have parents with you all your life."

"Will you leave me alone!" he screamed.

"Oh you devil," she suddenly shouted, and slammed the door.

School routine began, and all his expectations that Baron Byng would be different than the elementary school were satisfied. The teachers were different, the boys were different, and some of the subjects were different. In the morning, at precisely a quarter to nine, he met Laurie and walked to school with him. During recess, whether he was hungry or not, he went down to the little store called Freed's and bought a hot dog and a coke. During lunch time he ate his sandwiches with Laurie and lingered with him in the schoolyard and listened to the modulations of his wolf calls. Every night before he fell asleep Ronald thought about the events of the day. He was terribly happy now that he had a loyal and true friend.

When Laurie started being friendly with some other guys, Ronald became fearfully worried. Perhaps his resolutions had all gone to pot. Just in case they were vanishing, Ronald bought a little notebook and noted all the good things he should do during the course of each day which would make the guys like him and be his friend. As soon as he came home from school he would note his successes and failures. By the time winter arrived Laurie was still Ronald's friend because Ronald was, well Laurie didn't catch on to his algebra and Ronald did, so he was able to show him how to do it, and Laurie would say, "Christ, he has brains!" to some of the other guys

who didn't know why they didn't think highly of Ronald Green.

Then one Friday night in school Ronald asked Laurie whether he would ever get around to going to that club Laurie had mentioned once, and Laurie said, "Sure thing, I'll meet you at the corner of Fairmount and St. Urbain at eight o'clock."

Ronald was delighted. He was on the corner at ten to eight and eagerly waited some twenty minutes until Laurie showed up. When he did, Ronald dashed across the street to meet him. Laurie's face shone with a thorough scrubbing and his hair stood erect in a miraculous pompadour. His shoulders drooped with the inappropriate width which a pair of shoulder pads gave his gabardine fall coat. In contrast to the rather shabby garments Ronald wore, under his gabardine mantle he sported a made-to-measure sport jacket styled with the latest loop, the snazziest lapel, the most sensational sleeve, and as a further attraction, the most exciting lining and lustre.

Ronald stared at Laurie's clothes. Perhaps he would get himself a job and buy such clothes too. But he knew that were he to earn some money his mother would want it all, so what was the use?

"The club house is on St. Lawrence boulevard near Marie Anne street," Laurie said as they started moving eastward. "How does my hair look?" he asked, not as though he didn't know the answer.

"Terrific!" Ronald exclaimed. "What did you put into it?"

His big face flushed a proud hue. They crossed heavily trafficked St. Urbain street before he offered a reply.

"Ha ha, that's my trade secret!"

"No, kidding aside," Ronald begged, "What did you put in 'em?"

"I got a special hair cream from my druggist. It was the last bottle in the whole store."

Turning down St. Lawrence they moved in an atmosphere smelling of fish and fruit markets and the stale tang of leather coming from shops operating overtime. Four blocks on they approached what seemed to be a deserted store from which garbled noises and singing filtered through onto the bustling street. They hesitated a moment, but finally entered. A sense of strangeness and diffidence overcame Ronald as he huddled by his companion and heard Hebrew singing and watched unfamiliar chalutzic square dancing in the middle of the room. He remained beside Laurie in the doorway until some scampering hide and seekers bumped into him. He moved into the interior of the store and stood beside what turned out to be an old piano on which lay plaster and dust thick enough to shovel off. Uneasily, he shifted himself further into the premises, tugged and pushed from side to side by dozens of people. Each time he moved he was able to take notice of a different section of the beaverboard partition which divided the room into two parts; the overturned benches which bounced to the rhythm of the floor boards now vibrating with the dancers' heavy stamping; the cylindrical stove crouching half hidden in a corner amid last month's ashes.

He listened to the singing and watched the wild unvaried dancing. The older girls hardly seemed older in their white blouses and blue neckerchiefs knotted like scouts'; they wore plain navy blue skirts. None of them wore lipstick, he observed. Several boys in white shirts rolled up at the sleeves clapped their hands and shouted a song to which two

pairs of dancers jigged and gestured in the centre of the circle.

Ronald watched this strange, uninhibited dancing, then he moved along the walls and studied the pictures of life in Palestine thumb-tacked on to the beaverboard. He examined a large seven foot star of David encompassed by a plywood laurel leaf. But above all he read and re-read a striking banner drawn across the entire length of the wall:

THE WAY OF THE CHALUTZ IS LONG AND DIFFICULT, BUT IT IS
THE ONLY WAY!

He turned to Laurie who was standing beside him and asked him what the banner meant.

"Ah, it's a bunch of crap!"

He didn't press for more information, but then he had another question.

"Don't they have an office where you join up?"

"Naa, what are you worried about?"

"But what if I want to become a member?"

Laurie did not listen for he was craning his neck to see above the heads of the bobbing circle dancers.

"What kind of club is this anyways?" Ronald persisted. "It must be Zionistic, ai?"

"Hi there," Laurie began to wave and call at five girls for whom he flashed a most perfectly articulated smile. "Here," he said to Ronald's question, "you wait here." Then, repressing his bounding enthusiasm by glancing from side to side to see if perchance anything of greater interest might excite his attention, he advanced diagonally across the room to-

ward the girls, but two whirling male dancers bumped into him and threw him off his feet. He muttered something, then rose red in the face; he brushed off his clothes with what was meant to be a few effortless swishes of his hand and continued toward the girls, quickly regaining his animal magnetism with its indefinable assurance and lack of assurance. Ronald had to stand on tip toes (on such moments and such moments alone was he glad that he was tall) to watch the attentive faces of Laurie's companions smiling, then saddening, like the fading of summer with deep regret, but the very next moment irrevocably shrieking and laughing with wide open mouths; in the meantime Laurie was afforded the opportunity to see that his hair was properly balanced and the dust from his fall quite removed.

As Ronnie kept his eyes glued on Laurie one of the leaders approached him. He had fuzzy blond hair and an engaging smile. He wore a white shirt which was not too white now, and a whistle attached to a red cord bulged in his pocket. Putting his arm against Ronald's shoulder, he inquired:

"Is this the first time you've come here?"

Ronald straightened to attention.

"My friend asked me to join up," he replied.

"Well - that's good. I'm glad you've come. My name's Yosef. What's yours?"

Ronald told him. Yosef took his hand to shake. He was very friendly, thought Ronald.

"You must go to Baron Byng too?" Yosef asked. "All the others

in the group I lead go there too." Yosef continued, stretching his hand to scratch the back part of his head. "Did Laurie tell you what activity we're having tonight?"

They were interrupted by the prolonged burring of a whistle. Yosef straightened up, thrust out his chest, and tightened his fists by his hips. He told Ronald they were going to have an Oneg Shabbath.

"What's that?"

"Wait, you'll see."

Presently a wide circle formed close to the walls. Yosef remained near Ronald and he smiled and shook hands with three others when they came over to where he stood. The room grew silent and they all put their arms shoulder high about each other, swaying to the Hebrew singing which several of the group had started. A table was placed at the centre of the circle and a white table cloth was straightened on top of it. A girl with an obtrusive bosom and solemn white face lit two tall candlesticks. A strange, strained, and sober silence strangely filled with singing filled the place as the two yellow tapers cast their sad yellow light upon the shining faces hushed in the room. Everyone swayed from side to side in accompaniment to the rhythm of the singing. Ronald pushed through to the rear of the three deep circle about the wall in order to watch six persons not much older than himself who were evidently to perform in some way. The singing continued five minutes. Someone then blew a whistle. Laurie put his hand to his mouth and whispered to Ronald: "Did you ever see such crap?"

A loud irritated shhh from the leaders standing about prevented

further comment.

The six boys behind the table began reading. One of them read and another came forward and sank onto the floor, his legs crossed beneath him. He looked like Rodin's statue of The Thinker in the dim light and breathless atmosphere of the empty room. The reading continued; another came forward, and then another. They were attorney for the defense and attorney for the prosecution, and the thinker saddened and became Dreyfus accused with treason. In a moment the boyish voice of another reader, solemn and cracking, pronounced the conclusion to the drama and the moral to the story; there was one solution to the Jewish problem - the creation of a Jewish state.

A split second's silence prevailed when the presentation was over, and then a few lusty shouts and final bursts of singing broke out from the tense audience and the lights blinked on to reveal a dancing, yelling, swirling nebula of dancers spinning about without restraint.

"How did you like the Oneg Shabbath?" Yosef later asked Ronald.

He shrugged his shoulders. He was too impressed to say anything.

"You see, an Oneg Shabbath is the way we celebrate the Sabbath. It's the modern way of celebrating it, for instead of merely having religious significance, it has cultural purposes"

Several of the other boys gathered around Yosef at this point.

"Yosef, where are we going to have our meeting?" one of them asked. "We can't meet tonight at my house, and Eli says we can't have his."

"What about Barry?" Yosef inquired.

"I don't think we can meet there either."

"Then we'll have to remain here in the Bayit," announced Yosef.

The room still teemed with people and they were obliged to wait. After the crowd had cleared out, with the prodding and urging Yosef and what turned out to be the members of his group, two benches were placed parallel to each other beneath a map of Palestine, which hung upon the wall. They sat so that those seated on one bench behind which the girls of the group Laurie was interested in were holding their meeting.

Ronald was uncertain whether to seat himself near his friend or near Yosef.

"I want to introduce a new member to our group," Yosef began, patting Ronald on the shoulder as he spoke. "His name is Ronald - and I hope he is going to come to our group meetings and activities regularly." Then he turned to Ronald. "You must have met Barry Stein already," pointing to the tall thin youth whose knees, Ronald observed, were even thinner than his own.

"Hi there," Barry called, shooting out his thin hand to shake Ronald's. "You go to Baron Byng?"

"Sure," said Ronald.

"Who's your teacher - who, you mean you have Bates for maths? Oh ho ho ho ho - what a dumb jerk, ai?"

A few others started joking about this teacher and about what he said and what the others said. They all thought this subject was ex-

ceedingly funny and they laughed with loud guffaws.

"Listen you guys," Yosef said, "when you start talking about your teachers, there's no end to it, so let's not start now."

Finally, when he had them under control, he opened a book and asked them to listen to a certain passage he was going to read. The book was The Forgotten Ally, by Pierre Van Passen. When the reading was over, Yosef leaned back and waited for comments. Barry was the first to speak. Everyone listened, with the exception of Eli, who was more interested in practical scouting and how to build a bonfire than in discussions, and was trying to work a scouting knot until he distracted Louis, who tightened his dark face into a pugnacious grimace and barked, "Put it away, will you?" And to this Eli replied, "I'm doing something!" whence Yosef had to say, "It's very important that everyone pay close attention to what we are saying, because this is a matter of the destiny of the Jewish people!" Eli put away his leather and listened.

Barry continued speaking and after fifteen minutes of arguing back and forth with Yosef, he disagreed with him. Yosef read and re-read a passage from the book open in his lap to show that his point was valid. Eventually the stalemate caused Yehudah to push back his horn rimmed glasses and he said in a voice which sounded more asleep than awake, "I think we should stop arguing and look at the facts. The facts are right there in the book!"

Barry violently disagreed but his exposition was too domineering in the view of Yosef who tried to cut in. Eli went back to his knot and Louis started kidding around with Joe, for the discussion was way over

his head.

Ronald listened open mouthedly to such intelligent debators and wished he could add something, but heck, what could he say about the history of Science which would be relevant here? He remained silent, but made a mental note of the name of Yosef's book, and decided he would read it as soon as he could get hold of it.

In the meantime he was very annoyed by Laurie whose attention was all but concentrated elsewhere. Yosef asked Barry to give others an opportunity to participate and he tried asking the "sharpie" a question, but failed to draw him into the discussion. Laurie's attentions were wholly taken up by the group of girls he could see sitting behind the beaverboard partition so that he peeked a planned agenda of come-hithers-won't-you-all-after-the-meeting-is-over at them. Louis, who had been doodling on a scrap of notepaper, suddenly flared with anger at him: "For christ sakes man, if you can't contribute, why hinder?"

"Mind your own business!" Laurie mumbled, and withdrew his comb from his back pocket to re-shape his oily hair.

When the meeting was over the group of girls floated out from behind the partition. At the same time Yosef remarked summarily, "Okay, don't forget we're meeting here tomorrow night. And don't forget to be on time."

Then someone announced that they were all heading for the local delicatessen.

Outside, the streetcars clattered and roared. The girls hummed a song and started dancing on the pavement, but Simcha, their leader, told them it was too late, and if they wanted to go to the store they should go now. The store was only a block away, and Ronald teamed up with Laurie again, only to be deserted when his friend resumed his flirtations.

"So tell me, what are you interested in?" asked Yosef across the shiny little table they crammed about, the entire group of fourteen sitting at two tables.

Ronald was unprepared, but he welcomed the leader's interest.

"I'm interested mainly in Science, but I'm not sure in what branch of Science I'm most interested in."

Yosef liked his reply. He thought it showed that Ronald was intelligent. That, unlike Laurie's lack of potentiality, made Ronald good material for the Youth Movement. Presently he began working on him.

"Do you take Science in school?" Yosef asked, as the others guffawed at a joke Barry had just told, and which Ronald would have liked to hear, but he preferred talking to Yosef, who seemed to be such a swell guy.

"Yes, I was going to take Latin, but then I started reading some books on Science. As a matter of fact, I've read all the books by Paul de Kruif that there are. The librarian at the Jewish Library told me that after I finish the last one, I would have to start reading some other author. There's a biography of Einstein I'm going to read next."

"Say, that's terrific," Yosef beamed. "By the way, why don't you come down to the Bayit Tuesday afternoon. We have a Science group

meeting then. It is led by Nathan. He's doing graduate work in bio-chemistry."

The others listened to Yosef. Ronald was thoroughly entranced.

"Where does he go? To McGill?"

He had to contain his interest while a sleepy-eyed and sloppily attired waitress pressed her pencil point to her pad and took their orders. Then Yosef fiddled with the salt shaker and said, "No, he graduated at the University of Montreal, and he's doing his graduate work there."

"Is it harder there than at McGill?"

"I don't know if it's actually any harder," Yosef replied, jerking his head from side to side as he spoke. "Your lectures are in French. You have to be pretty fluent to understand them." He broke off and laughed. "Poor Nathan - he learns bio-chemistry in French - and when he'll be in Palestine, he's going to have to use Hebrew ..."

Barry and the others laughed in sympathy.

"Why does he want to go there for?" asked Ronald.

"Well, because he's going to be a pioneer there. As a matter of fact he hopes to go next September."

Eli and Louis burst out with "You're kidding!" Then Yehudah remarked that Nathan would probably have already gone, except that he had to leave behind two old, sick parents, and that was why he was still here. Ronald listened with absorbed interest and asked Yosef to tell him more about why this guy who was so lucky as to be a bio-chemist, and who was going to be a pioneer when bio-chemists - (Ronald had read all about bio-chemists, had followed the Want Ads in the Star, had spoken to the family

doctor on the matter) were highly paid, highly esteemed and everything. Yosef answered his questions with an educational purpose at the back of his mind. He didn't try to tell him too much, because it would be some time before Ronald, if he kept coming down to the Movement, would accept the meaning of chalutzith, pioneering in Palestine. Yosef assured Ronald that Nathan would be a bio-chemist in Palestine, only he would be serving not only himself, but the Jewish people as well.

Munching and sipping quietly, they sat ten minutes more, and then Barry squeezed up in his place and said that everyone had to contribute one cent to leave the waitress a tip. He had to run after Rita for her contribution because she said it was against her philosophy to leave tips; Sarah, who was cross-eyed and a tightwad, said she had just left a waitress a tip last week; and when he confronted Frances, a tall skinny girl with a pleasant face, she said she was broke. Finally, Adel dug into her pockets, purse, hand bag, and into any other place where money might be hidden until she found a single penny, and lent it to Frances in order that she shouldn't be a cheapskate after all. Frances smiled happily. Barry, who was as tall as she, smiled back. He slapped the thirteen cents onto the table messed with mustard and splotted with coke and began buttoning his coat.

It was eleven thirty when Ronald watched Laurie take leave of his lady friends. He said good night to Yosef. "Don't forget to come down tomorrow night," the leader said to them both. They put their hands in

their pockets, said they would, and started up the street.

"You know, he's a darn nice guy," Ronald began, as they walked against the wind. "He was telling me he goes to McGill and he's going to be an engineer. And he knows a good deal about politics. You heard the way he was talking. Kripes, imagine getting up and going to Palestine."

"Ah, what are you talking about? They're a bunch of queers if you ask me! See the way they dance? Like a bunch of wild Indians! This is the last time I'm going there." He bent over and ejected a widely veering spitball. "But did you see the way I handled them? That shows how experienced I'm getting with women! Christ, did you see that broad Estelle? Christ, what a broad, ai? You know what she said to me tonight? Christ, what a compliment!"

"Say, why don't you introduce them to me?"

"She said I was the sharpest guy in the whole place! Christ, what a compliment, ai?"

"Ya But why don't you introduce them to me?"

"But to tell you the truth, all the other broads down there are real shitfaces. There was only one sharp looking broad in the whole place! And you know what? I think she wants me to call her up and talk over something; I think she wants to form a co-ed club. Isn't that a sharp idea?"

"Say, that's excellent!"

"Sure, I'm telling you, that broad's got a head on her shoulders - so she wants me to come up to her house and make plans."

"Say, that is terrific!"

"So I'm going to call her tomorrow, and I'll let you know. You'll

come in on it, ai?"

Ronald was delighted. The following day Laurie telephoned to tell him where they would meet to go up to her house. On Sunday they walked seven blocks, saw that their hair was set right, and pressed the glowing button for the little automatic elevator which took them up to Estelle's apartment.

Even Laurie was nervous when she smiled in the opened doorway and invited them in. Later, when they got down to business, Estelle said, "You see, I know a whole - well, you could call them a bunch of girls who want to join a club. Take the girls of Simcha's group - with the exception - with the possible exception of Rita - and perhaps, - oh, I don't know - a few others - I'm sure nobody considers it a compliment socially to belong to that club. Besides, they all dislike Simcha because she is so domineering - and also you know what that organization is like ..."

"So you know what we can do?" Laurie said, rubbing the palms of his hands together, "you'll get the broad - girls, and I'll get the boys - okay?"

"That sounds like a reasonable plan, instead of going to that place - heavens, it was so damp there the last time we were there, I almost froze, and talk about war and politics and all those things - you have got to be a college professor to know what Simcha talks about - and everything - so we can just as well have dances and socials - and oh, I'm sure we'll plan good activities ..."

"Sure we'll have dances and everything. But listen, don't forget

to get good-looking girls," Laurie smirked.

"Oh, in that case you must get handsome - and respectable - boys!"

Having struck the bargain, they discussed other plans. Then Estelle carried in some yellow soda water and offered a cut glass bowlful of bridge mixture. More relaxed about the situation, Laurie got up and turned on the radio to get some jazz, and Ronald sat on the couch for the next half hour to watch Laurie demonstrate the fancy steps and uninhibited gestures and wriggling of his hips which, he knew for sure, would make him popular among sharp-looking broads.

All week long Ronald and Laurie tried getting eight to ten sharp looking guys for the proposed club. Laurie did the approaching and selecting of candidates and overruled Ronald's objection to good looks as the only pre-requisite to membership. But he didn't care to argue with Laurie since they were such good friends.

When Friday evening came Ronald wondered what his friend intended in connection with the meeting Yosef's group was holding. He wanted to go down to the Bayit, or whatever it was called, because, he thought, Yosef was a darn nice guy and he was going to McGill. He also wanted to find out more about Nathan, the bio-chemist, and when his science group would meet.

"Ah, those queers! Estelle invited me up to her house. She said she quit that group and a bunch of other broads quit too and she's going to have a bunch of sharp broads up at her house. You wanna come?"

Ronald's heart was divided, but he quickly consented. He didn't want to leave his friend in the lurch.

The evening jumped along with a jam session, followed by a necking interlude during which the boys sat on the arms of the chesterfields near the girls who went only so far as giggling. Ronald imitated Laurie's every gesture; he tried to jitterbug, joke, neck, gobble up food, and act big. At eleven o'clock they began to be slightly bored and Laurie told some jokes which had been heard before, and so he asked for some real hot jive. At twelve o'clock their eyes were tired and sore and several jokers began monkeying with the light switches. But the moment the lights went off three girls shrieked "Ma!" and Estelle said, "Don't please, or my Dad will come in and ask you to leave." There was nothing else to do but to try to do the Shimmy and the Charleston which, of course, none of them knew. At one o'clock they began to feel exasperated. The party was over and they had to go.

"It'll be an excellent club once we get started," Laurie told his friends as they walked home.

"The first meeting of the Hep-cats Co-ed club was successfully held at Miriam's house on Saturday night, February 3," Ronald wrote in his notebook as official secretary treasurer.

"Everyone's welcome and I hope happy to be here," Laurie said, officiously, "but according to the Club's constitution, each member has to be voted in after three weeks' trial. And then he's an official member and has to pay fees."

The seven girls Estelle had invited pressed their knees to-

gether, folded their hands in their laps, and put on the act of looking prim. The boys sat with the crease in their pants pointing forward; a few were passing their hands over their fourteen and fifteen year old faces, searching for the non-existent sandpaper-like stubbles at the tip of their chins. The boys felt no misgiving; Laurie had told them that all the sharp-looking guys would be voted in.

Next day, Ronnie and Laurie on their way to school, were still making plans for their club.

"You know, Estelle told me not to worry last night," Laurie said, "she said she was getting real sharp broads from another Co-ed club that busted up when they heard we were forming one!"

"Kripes, we're really going to have sharp broads!"

"But, you know, that broad's got a head on her shoulders! She said that we need to have a social director so we could have real parties and dances."

"Why don't you ask one of the broads to be social director? So whenever we make a party or a dance they'll give their house and supply the food."

"Na - ah, a broad is no good for a social director! There's a guy I know who'd really be good, but I don't know whether he'd want to come to the club ..."

"Who is he?"

"I don't think you know him; he's a drummer and he plays the saxophone and he knows every shikseh in town. His name is Benny Herman;

I'm going to his house this afternoon and ask him if he wants to join the club."

"Can't you go another afternoon? Like this I can go with you, but this afternoon I have a job."

"Na-ah - it's better to see him this afternoon. I'll tell you what happened when I'll see you to-morrow."

That same afternoon Laurie took his bicycle and rode up to Benny's house. He rang the doorbell and waited five minutes before realizing that the buzzer didn't work. Then he mounted the dingy stairway and knocked on the first door on the landing. An old woman opened the door, but Benny rushed up in his soiled and sweaty undershirt, "Hold it a minute," he said, and got into a shirt and zippered up a leather jacket over it.

Benny was a tall, husky looking, but fat-faced youth whose sleek black hair was brushed back smartly. Not quite as successful as Laurie had represented him to Ronald, Benny was trying to crash the night entertainment circles, with little success. He laid the giant's share of the blame to his father who didn't allow him to become a drummer full time, and forced him to remain at school where he eked out a bare pass from grade to grade.

"You know a couple of us guys just formed a club - a Co-ed club," Laurie told him, "how would you like to join it?"

Benny swerved on his toes and added a few spitballs to the unswept dust and garbage in the street gutter. He wiped his thick lips with a filthy mess of handkerchief.

"Are the broads good looking? I'm asking because I don't want

to bother with broads who look like my cat's ass on a rainy day."

"No, no, you should see them, they're really sharp. You should see those broads, I've never seen such sharp ones!"

"What about the guys? Who are some of the guys I know?"

"Ah, there are a whole bunch of guys - there are three guys from Strathcona - one has a car - you know him? His name is Murry Fier, and there are other guys, there is Peter Golden, Irving Alpert, Ronny Green - and a couple of others."

"Who did you say - Green?"

"Yah, and there's"

"Crap-sakes man, what kind of club is it with such a fairy in it? He's the biggest pisiotz in the whole of Baron Byng. Kerist, a guy in my class was telling me about him ..."

"Yah, I know, the guys in his class think he's a queer. But what to hell, he has brains. You know some of the broads like a guy with brains sometimes ..."

"Not the kind of broads that interest me! If those are the kind who are interested in a good hard six incher, they're the ones for me!"

"Christ, you'd better watch how you talk in front of them! They're respectable broads. You should see - some of them live in Outremont, and we go to their basements - all furnished there, with furniture and low lights - christ, it's really sharp. Last Saturday night we were there until one o'clock, no, christ, we didn't go home until two o'clock, and we were dancing shiek to shiek, christ, you should have been there. So, do you wanna join? If you join, I'll make you social chairman."

Next meeting Laurie introduced Benny as a well-known night club entertainer. Benny squirted a professional thank you and said kerist if he only had a pair of drum-sticks, he would show them his stuff. Nevertheless, he did some professional jitterbugging and showed an admiring club the latest fashion in dancing developed by Montreal's famous pair of jiggers, Jack and Janice. And all the girls clamoured, "Oh teach me that step," and Benny's face sparkled and glowed. Next to Laurie he became the most popular fellow.

Ronald took an immediate dislike to Benny. Why shouldn't he like him though; he knew he was a nice guy and he was a drummer and he could learn a lot from him. Was he not Laurie's good friend?

It was not long before Ronald got tired watching Benny doing his stuff and he started looking about the room, searching for a girl he could ask to dance. There were some pretty girls standing about in a group in a corner, but he did not know what to do. He waited. The music played on, the drummer hammered on a chair, and the girls shyly clasped their hands and waited. It was now or never, he decided. He scanned the faces of the girls to find someone homely enough to be tempted by his offer. Finally, he selected a fluffy, fat cheeked girl, and dared to ask her to dance. She nodded yes, and he awkwardly put his hand about her pneumatic waist as they began to dance. He fumbled for something to say. The music stopped, then started again. Another number, and five slow minutes made his cheeks hotter and his pulses beat faster before he could find his tongue.

"What's your name?" he asked finally, stepping on her toe as

if for emphasis.

"Annie," she said. She paused. "What's yours?"

"Ronald."

That topic was exhausted. They stumbled on in nervous silence. Ronald was aware of Laurie's eyes upon him. Perhaps his friend was laughing at him! Should he stop dancing with her and leave her flat? His cheeks went hot and cold. Finally the third dance came to a close.

"Thank you very much," she said.

Now he was sure Laurie and Benny were laughing at him. "Ah, you shmuck, you can't even dance for beans," he could hear them say. Ronald jabbed his hands into his pockets and feared to move away from Annie. Feeling awkward as hell, he waited for the engineers attending the phonograph to get the next platter rolling. To hell with Laurie, and they danced again.

Somewhat later cokes were served around, and Benny made a big fuss with some trick he tried pulling off but which didn't go over very well. Some of the girls looked very bored. Finally the get together was over, and Annie disappeared with the other girls. Ronald waited for Laurie and Benny to start making fun of them. Instead they boasted their own triumphs. The girls re-appeared, some ready to leave. Among them Annie waited in her coat.

"Why are you leaving so early?" Ronald asked.

"I have to be home early."

"Do you live far?"

"No. Near Rachel street. Good night."

He waited and watched her join a group of girls she was with and

leave. Then he turned and approached Benny and Laurie. The mixed tri-umvirate walked home together.

"I'll tell you what," Benny said, talking so that the passers-by across the street could hear, "what the club needs is a smash bang party! We need a party to get sharper broads; we haven't got bad ones now, but if you listen to me we can get real sharp ones. What do you say?"

"It's a good idea," Ronald said.

"Ai, so what do you say?" he repeated, ignoring Ronald's opinion.

"You see, if we can get a hall, we can have plenty of dancing, it'll be real class."

"What do we need a hall for, we can get a room at the 'Y' free!"

"Ah, you cheap jerk. The 'Y'? You know what the 'Y' is for? It's for fairies! You know what a hot time is? What are you talking about?"

"How much does a hall cost?" Laurie asked.

"What are you worrying about how much it cost? You becoming like the Hepes at Rachel market? I know the old kaker who owns the joint, and he'll give it to us for a little nothing!"

"But we can get a room at the 'Y' free!" Ronald insisted.

"How do you know? You don't know from your ass to your elbow from nothing!"

"I think so too," Laurie said. "We can get a room for nothing, so why should we fork out money?"

That decided it for the time being. Next day the trio met and went to see if they could get a room at the local Y M H A.

"I still say we shouldn't be pikers and rent a hall," Benny griped.

They entered the main lobby at the 'Y', and proceeded upstairs to the Educational Offices.

"Mr. Moscovitch is the man you want to see," the office girl chirped to Ronald, whom Laurie had appointed the spokesman.

They edged into the little office and moved over to the desk behind which Mr. Moscovitch smiled at them through a bushy moustache.

"Well chaps, what can I do for you?"

"Well sir," Ronald spoke, "we'd like to inquire about using a room - a large-sized room, for the purpose, because we're having a dance."

"I see," Mr. Moscovitch drawled. "What's this in connection with?"

"Well, we represent the Hep Cats Co-Ed Club. It's a co-ed club, and we thought since we're having a dance next Saturday night, maybe-perhaps we can get a room here."

The educational director tilted back in his squeakless swivel chair and laced his hands below his knees.

"Yes, well - that's a 'Y' group, isn't it?"

"Well, some of us were - members of the 'Y', I think, but..."

"I see, you are a club under the auspices of an organization other than the 'Y'?"

"No sir, - we don't - we're not from any organization."

"I see, you formed a club under your own initiative?"

"Yes sir."

"Well, that's a very admirable enterprise - however, since we have so little space here as it is, I'm really afraid that it won't be

possible to accommodate you, - that is, unless you want to become 'Y' members"

"You see," hollered Benny when they had left, "It was a waste of time. Let's go down to Coleman's like I said we should in the first place and rent it and be finished with it."

"Take it easy, will you? There's still the Neighbourhood House," Ronald said.

"Oh what are you listening to that jerk for?" Benny yelled, turning toward Laurie. "He doesn't know what he's talking about!" Then, addressing Ronald, "Come on you pisher, how many dances have you ever been to in your lifetime? You just stepped out of your knee pants and you're trying to act like a big man!"

Ronald blazed with anger and hatred; he clenched his fists until they were white.

"You big fat dope," he countered, "if you ever knew anything you wouldn't shoot off your big fat mouth!"

"Ah, what are you arguing about?" Laurie mediated. "Let's go over to Coleman's and rent the place ..."

He started, swaggering to the door, oblivious of the volatile antagonism flaring between his two companions. Ronald and Benny glared at each other, then they turned and followed their captain.

Coleman's was a little abandoned restaurant on St. Lawrence Boulevard not far from the Bayit of the Youth Movement which Ronald hardly gave a thought to now that he was "in" with Laurie. It was a sad little place, socially passe, its paper-covered walls and elaborate chandeliers redolent of the clatter of weddings and feasts of the Twenties, of the years when Jewish Montreal hadn't learned English too well and ate knishes

and kugel instead of Chinese egg rolls and Southern Fried chicken.

"The hall's not empty Saturday b'night," the owner, a man who wore a great musty smelling sweater, declared. "If I rent it to you I lose business."

This time Benny presided.

"Ah, so what - the dance doesn't start until nine o'clock," he bluffed and before the man could continue his sob story, "How much do you want for the place?"

The man gazed at them quizzically, summarising their pecuniary worth in a glance and a half.

"Eet's an expensive proposition to rent this place. Last week I had some boys like you and charged them a lot of money."

"Ah, what are you shooting the bull," Benny protested caustically. "How much do you want for this place, take it or leave it. De Bucharest down the street has got a better dump than this, and if you don't want, we can go there."

"Well, for you, a special price. Five dollars down and seven before the party starts."

They bargained the price down to ten, and then tried collecting the five dollar deposit among themselves.

"I can't give this two dollar bill. It's my brother's," Benny said.

Laurie had only a half a dollar and Ronald had only seventy-five cents.

"I'll tell you what," Ronald said, "I've got ten bucks saved up

at home. I'll pay it to him and then I'll collect from the other guys."

"Yah, that's a good idea," said Laurie. Benny also agreed, and they walked Ronald home and walked him back to Coleman's where they watched the old man lick his purple pencil and write out a receipt.

With these arrangements completed Benny and Laurie decided that they shouldn't invite a whole lot of broads and be done with it that way. Instead, everyone was to bring his own date. Then it would be a real high class party.

Thus Ronald began fishing around for someone to take. There was a girl who lived on his street, almost next door, but that was no good, since his mother and father would know and they would either object to her or laugh at him. No, there was only that girl with whom he had danced at the get together: Annie. But how in the dickens could he ask her to the party if he didn't know where she lived and what her telephone number was? Nor did he know her last name and in that way locate her, either in the City Directory or in the telephone book. After considerable thought, however, he decided to rig himself up and wander through the area where she had told him she lived; perhaps in that way he could discover her address.

The following Friday night he didn't meet Laurie or Benny. Carefully he vaselined his hair and shined his shoes in case he should, by chance, meet her face to face. He spent two hours walking about those streets in the vicinity where she had told him she lived. He returned home, after the first excursion, without a single clue.

But he continued the search, for the party was but two weeks

away. On Saturday morning Benny, whom Ronald definitely did not like very much remarked, "Hey Green, are you gonna bring a broad or are you gonna take your grandmother?"

"Don't worry, don't worry!" he said angrily.

Three days later, still out searching, the idea occurred to him that he could more readily find out where she lived by ringing a doorbell. Deciding to act on the spur of the moment he chose a respectable looking house as his first target.

"My word, I say, there's no Annie who lives here," merrie olde England told him.

"I'm sorry to have disturbed you," he said.

"That's quite all right, young man, quite all right."

He was not discouraged, but he walked away a little shaken that he had not had enough sense to look for the Mazuzah on the doorpost before ringing the bell.

He tried again.

"What's her second name?" he was asked at the second doorway.

"I don't know. But I do know that she lives somewhere around here."

"A fat chance of finding her if you don't know her last name," words of wisdom came from the third doorway.

He thought he had had enough for one evening. He stood at the edge of the sidewalk, considering, but a blind impulse took him with a firm hand and he darted over to still another doorway.

"Does she lisp?" a lady questioned.

He didn't know what she meant. "No," he replied. "But I know she goes to Baron Byng."

"Well, there are three Annies who live on this street. Try the one who lives near the corner across the street. Here's the address"

He leaped over two parallel snowbanks and stood before that address. "There are two other Annies who live on this street," Annie told him.

"Yes, I know," he said, and asked to be directed to the next Annie on the list.

In this manner he found where she lived. It was a ground floor flat whose front was blackened as by a fire which had flowered darkly over the whole brick building. No curtains hung on the front parlour windows and through the saliva-smudged windows he could see into a living room crowded with a medley of disarranged furniture. He stared and wondered if he should go any further. His imagination could not reconcile what he saw with those wonders in his heart which glittered and breathed delicate perfumes and promises of attenuated music over waters purpled with the last rays of sunset. But heck, - he had come so far, he might as well.

The rusted doorbell made a loud scraping sound.

"Vat do you vant?" a roly poly woman asked.

"Is Annie in?"

"Hoo - Ennie - hoo do you vant?"

Before he could repeat his request the inner door of the front passageway banged open and a bald head poked over the woman's shoulders.

"Yess - wat is it?"

He repeated his question.

"Noa noa, she issn't in jusst noaw. Whosse cawling please?"

"Oh, it's just a - friend."

"Va-it a moment - wait, vat's your name - tell me your name, so I'll tell Ennie ver called," the mother said.

"Beila, shah - please. Will you sstep insside please?"

He felt immensely uncomfortable, but he had come this far so heck

"It's cold outsstide, you undersstend," the father hissed.

They proceeded to extort Ronald's first and last name.

"Very good! You'll cawl again?"

"Yes, I'll call to-morrow," he agreed, and was permitted to leave the smelly passageway.

Down the street he hopped, skipped, splashed and jumped. At last he had his quarry in sight!

The girl with whom Ronald had become infatuated had been doing homework that evening in the cozy apartment of a friend. Since she had an examination to prepare for the following day, she said good night early and came home to do some studying. No sooner did she cross the doorstep when her parents stormed the wonderful news at her.

"Who wath it?" Annie demanded.

"A big - a verry tall boy," her father told her, and he embarked on an animated description of the prince charming who had poked

his head in that evening.

"Oh yeth, oh yeth," Annie remembered. "I know who he ith."

"I tink I seen him working by me next door near the shop - what is he, an operator by men's cloaks?"

"No, he goth to school," she replied.

"A collitch boy?"

"Yichiel, let her alone," the mother reprimanded him in Yiddish.

"You're upsetting her."

"Pa, let me alone."

"I'm asking a ssimple question. This is a free country - noa? It's very important a girl should have a tought from a future, noa? I'm assking a simple question!"

"Ask better where she has a decent dress to wear? To a party she went last time with a shmateh Auntie Mintzeh gave her. Don't worry, nobody is going to grab her out!"

"Ma, I have an exam to-morrow."

"What's the good of examinshions, tell me? A girl hass to tink from a future!"

"Yichiel, let her alone," the mother shouted, and the three younger children simultaneously re-echoed her shouting by beginning to bawl an ensemble.

Annie, at once embarrassed and infuriated, went to wash her teeth, then slammed the door of her bedroom shut.

The next evening, just in case Annie should turn out to be a

gold digger, he opened his piggy bank - his last resort after the ten dollars he had paid at Coleman's - and he took out the dollar and seven cents he found in it. He asked his mother for fifty cents which he obtained after some wrangling and equipped himself with a brand new multi-coloured tie he had purchased at Woolworth's for sixty-nine cents.

He fixed his hair three times before he approached her front door and scraped the doorbell. When she came to the doorway he tried to breathe more easily, but he hardly could.

"Hello," he said.

"Hello."

"How are you feeling?"

"Fine."

"Can - may I come in?"

"Thertainly."

He stepped inside. This time the odour from the kitchen was of pickled herring and coffee.

"It's awfully cold outside. The radio forecast said it would be cold."

"Yeth, it did."

She didn't know whether the parlour looked presentable with her baby brother's crib smelling of last night's wetting and her kid sister's playpen reeking with battered toys and vivisected dolla, so she invited him no further than her front hallway. He, desirous of making a record hit, began telling her about himself; he wasn't sure whether he was going to be a brain surgeon like the famous Dr. Penfield or whether

he was going to tackle the equally challenging field of nuclear physics. Finally, when he had exhausted the highlights of his program and about to shift weight from leg to leg, she said, "Juth a minute. I'll get my coat," and disappeared behind a closed door.

They went for a walk that evening and discussed Baron Byng high school and why it was certainly a far superior school to such dumps as Strathearn and Montreal High and why there was no snobbishness at Baron Byng such as one found at Strathcona. In addition to these merits, they considered the advantages of going to a ninety nine point nine per cent all Jewish school such as Baron Byng high school whose staff was ninety nine per cent gentile and one per cent Jewish. After half an hour's walk he felt he had talked enough and he asked her to a restaurant for a - he didn't know the prices so he couldn't decide whether it was a hot chocolate or a coke - but she refused without mentioning that a certain doctor said that you get too fat from too much drinking and that she was already - well, overweight. After the indecision regarding the restaurant he led her back to the charred and blackened doorway and prepared to ask her to the party as formally as he could.

"I was wondering," he hesitated, "are you busy on Saturday night?"

Her shoulders rose and fell beneath her ill-fitting coat.

"Well you see - you were down at one of the get-togethers our club had - you know that I belong to a club. Well, our club is making a real party. We rented a hall and everything. Would you like to come?"

Just a little less than an eternity of silence passed before

she said, "All right,"

"I'll call for you at eight o'clock. Okay?"

"Okay,"

When he said good night she fairly ran into her house but remained in the hallway counting chimpanzees to sixty after which she hoped that he had disappeared down the street. Then she hastened outdoors and splashed through the early Spring puddles to her friend's house around the corner.

"I don't want to, I thimply don't want to go to the party with him. I thimply don't want to," Annie said to her best friend.

"What party?" her friend, who was always helpful in ironing out Annie's problems, inquired.

"He asked me to go to a party that crazy club is making, but I don't want to, I thimply don't want to."

"So don't go if you don't want to - oh, I know - you said you'd go. Ai? Did you?" She waited for Annie to nod. "Well, so if you don't want to go, you've got to break the date. But I don't see why. I saw him walking to school the other day and he looks like a nice boy to me."

"But I don't want to go to that party! They're such a bunch of - of jerks!"

"Oh Annie, don't be silly! They may all seem jerks, but there might be one nice boy there. After all, if you don't go to parties, how are you going to meet boys?"

"No, I won't go, I thimply won't ..."

Her friend kept trying. Two days later she was at her rope's

end. "Okay," she told Annie, "have it your way. But whatever you do, phone him up, say you're sick, or your Auntie has come into town. But break the date, not like last time ..."

"Okay, I'll phone him."

But she didn't phone him because she had read in *Calling All Girls* that you're not allowed to call boys except when - anyways, even if she was allowed, she would rather die than call him. Besides, she didn't know his telephone either

"So Green, you've got a broad?" Benny asked two days before the party.

"Sure. Why not?"

"Why not?" He nudged Laurie. Laurie looked away and grinned, "Because broads don't like going out with a fairy!" Both horse-laughed, but afterwards Laurie changed the subject.

He would show those two - he didn't want to say two because Laurie was a nice enough guy, if only Benny would take the air.

At seven thirty that Saturday night, he left his house and ran all the way. He had heard it was a good idea to keep a girl waiting for a few minutes, but now he didn't care to abide by that rule since he was so anxious. Before he rang Annie's doorbell, he had to pause to regain his breath. The doorbell screeched.

"Noa - Ennie's nat in. She vent away mit her friend! "

He stood staring at the woman, dumbfounded. He simply couldn't understand what had happened. Why wasn't she home? Where had she gone?

Didn't she recall that she had a date? Why had she left him in the lurch? A hundred thousand pin points of emotion stuck in his throat. Surely this was his own fault. In spite of everything he had done to improve himself his father was right about him: he was just a plain good for nothing and nobody would really like him very much. But why should she leave him in the lurch? Feelings of horror spread through every limb as he stood in front of her house, his back to her door, and wondered what he should do about the party. Now Benny and Laurie would jeer and scorn him to the very limit. Oh what should he do, what should he do, he wailed quietly to himself.

But soon the full force of his feelings of anger and shame passed, and he decided he would go to the party anyhow. He was better than Benny and Laurie; he would show them yet. Why shouldn't he go to the party? He had chipped in for it as well as they. And perhaps there would be girls around with whom he could dance. If not he could work the phonograph. But a feeling of nausea and disgust caught him fully and again he despaired.

But he turned up at the party. Benny and Laurie did not have time to laugh at him because they had their hands full: two broads didn't even want to step into the place because the lights were off and the owner was cursing and swearing loud enough to raise the roof. On top of that the cokes were disgustingly warm and the boys had to use nickels in a nickelodeon which played last year's Hit Parade tunes. Those girls who had acquiesced in the dismal affair and had stayed, had to turn their faces away when Benny started giving them a taste of his idea of entertainment, and even Laurie said, "Christ!"

The following morning Benny met Laurie to discuss the party's failure. It was the fault of one person.

"Did you ever see anything like it?" Benny squawked. "That guy simply has no sense! Right in front of the broads he goes around and starts collecting money. Did you ever see anything like it? Christ! He comes over to me, the cheap bastard, and says, 'Benny, where's the buck you owe me?' Right in the middle of the dance - can you imagine? The dumb shmuck comes without a broad in the first place, - what broad would want to go with that fairy? - and then he starts collecting money! For Christ sakes, what in the hell is this anyways? It's not a party, it's Rachel market! I'm telling you, that's what it is. If you ask me, Christ, I've never seen a guy like that!"

"Ah, if you ask me the whole club is lousy," Laurie said.

"What are you talking about? It's a good club, but there's one thing wrong: if we have a guy like that in the club, it's hopeless. Otherwise it's a good club - no joking around. There's a couple of real sharp broads there. But I'm telling you we've got to get rid of him."

"Ah, so even the guys themselves are a bunch of shmoes - Lenny and Peter started spilling coke all over the floor like a bunch of kids. Estelle was telling me some of the kids should be in a kindegarten, not in a jive club. Besides, the place stank 'n everything ... "

"Ah - Estelle - you know what I think of her! To give you my honest opinion she's full of hot air! But we've got to get rid of that Green. He's ruining the club. I've never seen a guy so dumb to go around asking for dough right in front of the broads!"

Laurie reflected a moment and then passed judgment.

"In school he may be smart but otherwise he has no sense!"

"That's exactly what I've been telling you. You see, we kick him out - then we reorganize the executive. We can put Bernice on it - she's a smart broad. We make Louise secretary - what's the good of a guy secretary anyways? And you and I will be the president and vice-president. How does it sound?"

"It sounds okay."

"Good. So you see him in school. Tell him to screw off from the club. We don't need him."

Laurie hesitated a moment.

"Well - !"

"I can't tell him. You tell him. It's okay if you tell him. You're his friend."

They finally decided to bring the matter up at a meeting. Although this sounded distasteful to Laurie they saw no other way.

Ronald was disturbed about the money; he was two dollars short, and as official treasurer he was determined to bring the matter up at the next meeting.

That was on Friday night. The meeting was preceded by dancing, fox-trotting and rumbaing, since there wasn't enough room for jitterbugging. Then Laurie called the meeting to order.

Ronald read the minutes of the last meeting and was about to open his treasurer's report, but the president didn't give him the floor.

"We have a very important matter to discuss right now. Benn - Mr. Herman, do you wish to tell the club about it?"

"What is it about?" Benny feigned.

Laurie's face brightened. "It's about the matter of the elimination."

"Oh yes," Benny said, clearing his throat. "Well, the executive of the club has decided that there should be an elimination ... "

Ronald threw an uncomprehending look at the two. "Mr. President?" he called. "I don't know what Mr. Herman is talking about. Since I'm a member of the executive, I'd like to know."

"You weren't at that meeting - you said you couldn't make it - Benn - Mr. Herman, would you please tell the club?"

They shuttled the matter back and forth for a few more minutes and when the president conveyed what he wished to say, Ronald's face was rocked by confusion earthquaking through every bone. He wished to speak up, questioning what right they had in the first place, and in the second place . . . He knew that if he could only speak now he could make that big baboon Benny seem an utter fool; he could show up Laurie as the shallow idiot that he was - and he could get all the girls and boys on his side and it would be he who would kick out Benny and Laurie!

But he couldn't speak. He sat there shaken and frozen, silent as a dummy. He glanced about the room at the witnesses of his castigation; the eight girls shifted their eyes to the floor; the boys tried relaxing in their places; Laurie cracked his knuckles; someone coughed. None of them cared much for this Ronald who acted like a big man, just because he got high marks in school!

Laurie finally broke the silence. "If the eliminated member wants, he can sit through this meeting!"

Ronald shot a glance at him and decided to get the hell out. He rose slowly, so that his great length unfolded itself gradually, and for a split second those in the room grew small, mediocre, worthy only of scorn; his head began buzzing and his ears began ringing with what he thought was victory. But as he left the room, he knew he was defeated and once again, alone.

Downstairs he let loose a paroxysm of bitter, hopeless sobbing. He leaned against the doorpost awhile and then descended the stairway and stood in the driving wind and fluttering snow. He tried controlling himself as the passers-by peered at him through the darkness. He felt hot and miserable. But he decided he would waylay Laurie when he came out and ...

He half staggered down the street and remained by a lamp post where Laurie was sure to swagger by. As soon as Laurie would pass he would jump him and knock him so hard in his teeth that they would have to call an ambulance for him! He rubbed his clenched fists and gritted his teeth. He waited there for half an hour. His toes became frost bitten and his ears nipped with the cold. The wind was driving hard and the snow was falling more heavily. Then he saw there was no point waiting since there would be the other guys and they could pile up on him and turn him into a worse fool than he already was. He began crying bitterly when he thought this and felt like knocking his head against the brick wall. It was no good, he decided.

Exhausted by his inner fury, he began moving down the street.

P A R T T W O

When he was thrown out of Laurie's club, Ronald turned more ferociously inward than ever before. As he walked to school each day, or sat in his seat and day-dreamed, he imagined he wasn't the outcast he presently found himself to be, but a well-liked, generally approved-of youth with wealth, outstanding intelligence, fine feelings, flourishing in superb happiness. And when the unreality of his daydreams clashed with the desperate realness of his predicament, he went back to his notebook where he had carefully deposited observations on his own character. He noted the resolutions he had made to reform, to be different, to be friendlier, to be more amenable to the wishes of his parents, to be more courteous and considerate. All these resolutions had failed. He had not changed a particle, he felt. Wasn't that the reason why they had thrown him out of the club? Wasn't it because he was boastful, foolishly proud, horribly ill-natured? He grew to hate himself intensely; he began desperately wishing he was someone else, someone like that bright white flawless image of young manhood his imagination persisted in creating.

Ways of spending his idle hours, when he grew tired of devouring books and doing his algebra, preoccupied him more and more. But there were few classmates who were willing to spend their leisure time with him. He found his week-ends long and uneventful.

One evening a classmate did ask him to come down to a club at the "Y"; he was introduced to the club, and told that he was going to be given a chance in a three week trial at the end of which they would vote

him in or out of the club ; Consequently he didn't bother coming down to the next meeting because he figured it was hopeless anyways.

Then one evening, a phone call came.

"Where have you been the past few weeks?" Yosef asked.

"I had a lot of studying to do," Ronald replied, "A whole bunch of exams."

"How did you make out?"

Ronald's spirits were buoyed up with terrific energy. He told Yosef of the latest book he was reading, and Yosef was terrifically interested. Ronald said he found an old chemistry book where there were some interesting equations, and Yosef, without being asked, said he would show him how to work them, if he still remembered. Ronald was delighted, and promised Yosef he would be down at the Bayit punctually at eight.

He waited impatiently for Friday night to arrive.

"Ma, I need a shirt to-night."

"I just gave you a shirt this morning."

"But I need a white shirt!"

"What do you need a white one for?"

"I'm going to a Zionist meeting and they all wear white shirts there."

"You're going to a what?"

"Oh what's the difference - it's a Zionist meeting - Ma, come on, it's getting late."

She went into the bedroom, wrenched open one of the drawers, and

found a creased white shirt. "I'll have to press it first."

"Oh well press it then - press it. Come on, make it fast!"

Mr. Green, seated on the new sofa in the otherwise bare living room, was trying to suppress one of his rare talkative moods. Unable to do so, he got up and came into the kitchen. He seated himself at the table which was cluttered with several strata of unwashed dishes and noted his son's impertinence.

"What's the matter big man, where's the rush, where's the fire?"

"He's going to a - some kind of meeting, so he wants to go in a white shirt," Mrs. Green replied, adjusting the electrical cord in the iron.

"A what?"

"Ma, make it fast, will you?"

"What kind of meeting is he going to?"

"A Zionist meeting, a Zionist meeting - now you know?"

"Listen to him," the father said, regarding his son with a malicious glance, "the way he talks he tinks he knows the world. I knew the Zionists before you were born, big man!"

"Who are they?" the mother asked, bearing down on the press iron as she spoke. "They're not the Communists I hope! Because if they are, I hear on the radio every day that you should watch out for those people - they're living terrors!"

"No, no - where do Communists come to Zionists? The Communists say they want everybody should be under one and Stalin should be over everybody. The Zionists say there should be a place for the Jews in Palestine"

"Oh oh, is that who they are? They're the ones who get up and go to Palestine"

"Get up and go to Palestine? Not all of them get up and go - there are those who work for it and collect money - and there are the chalutzim - they are the ones who get up and go there ..."

"Yes, yes, I know a woman who was telling me to come to a meeting about Palestine and her son is on a kibbutz, I think that was what she said. She wants I should come and give money, so I said I have no money to give, my husband is just a worker, and I didn't go."

"Ma it's getting late!"

"What do you say Issie, is it safe for him to go there?"

Mr. Green cocked his head aside.

"I don't know. It depends which Zionists they are. There are the lefties who are Zionists, and there are ..."

"Look, never mind whether you want me to go or not! Does Eaton's bother Morgan's? Don't bother me!"

Presently he was buttoning his still warm broadcloth shirt. His mother set his supper on the table. He gobbled it down as fast as he could and quickly left the house.

The windows clattered with the slam of the door. Mr. Green, his hands in his pockets, moved out of the kitchen into the dining room. He stared at the Friday night candles and said to his wife: "Other boys are a pleasure to have in the house. They come in, they're nice, they say hello, they help clean up, they come and they go and you don't hear from them, but he, ach, I'm telling you, sometimes I can't even stand his face!"

Yosef welcomed him warmly and Barry and Yehudah and the others slapped him on the back and said "Hi pal." He stood in the corner with Yosef and told him about the crazy teachers at Baron Byng, while in the centre of the room the dust which hadn't already risen rose and the floorboards shook under the heavy group dancing. Later, all the members of Yosef's group clamoured about him and they decided to hold their meeting at Eli's house since that evening another group was using the Bayit and the group of girls led by Simcha were meeting elsewhere too. Eli went to the nearest phone booth in a nearby drug store and phoned his mother and asked her if it was okay and she agreed. They all sat - Yosef sitting on the floor - in Eli's parlour talking about their teachers at Baron Byng when Yosef interpolated, "How would you like to learn a new song?" Louis said, "Oh boy, let's." As a prelude to the song, Yosef said it was composed by a young soldier of the Palmach - everyone knew what the Palmach was - "The striking force of the Haganah, the Jewish underground army in Palestine," Eli said, in case someone didn't know - and this particular song was composed by that young soldier right after his kibbutz, the collective settlement of which he was a member, was attacked by the Arabs which the lousy British were infiltrating into the country so that they could start something

The song over, the meeting took a more serious turn. Yosef urged that it would be a good idea to have a planning committee which would plan and prepare activities for both groups of boys and girls - it would also be more democratic that way. After a good deal of oratory from Barry the members decided that he had many "constructive ideas" and so elected

him by acclamation. Then they scouted about for a second candidate.

"Say, why don't we elect Ronald," Eli suggested.

Yosef looked at the faces of the members, was satisfied that they approved the suggestion, and feeling that it was an excellent way of ensuring Ronald's further active interest in the Movement, he said, "I think that's an excellent suggestion. What does Ronald think about it?"

No, Ronald thought wildly, he didn't want to be elected to any executive because if he were elected he would be sure to be kicked out of the club just as surely as he was kicked out of Laurie's club. And he didn't want to be kicked out of this group for he wouldn't have anywhere to go, and God knew he wanted somewhere to go.

"For instance," Yosef said, "perhaps, since you're interested in Science, you might help arrange a program like a visit down to the Red-path Museum at McGill, or to the Botanical Gardens - things like that!"

When Ronald heard this he changed his mind immediately and wished with all his heart that they would vote him in as a member of the P.C. - they called it that for short - because they were a nice bunch of guys who were interested in things he was interested in, and besides they met with the group of girls, and everything.

The voting took place and Ronald was elected by acclamation. As the meeting broke up Barry came over to Ronald, shook his hand, and said, "Good show!" What we need on the P.C. is people with brains!"

Yosef overheard this remark, and good-naturedly said, "That's not the right attitude though, because I feel everyone has brains. What is more important, actually, is responsibility to the group." And he laughed his jolly, friendly laugh when Barry replied, "You know, you

don't remind me of my teachers at Baron Byng."

Before calling the first meeting of the representatives of both the planning committees of the boys and girls groups, Yosef met with Simcha. Simcha was the notably negligent leader of the girls' group which occasionally combined with Yosef's for the purpose of social activities. Simcha was of medium height and had a densely freckled face.

"But you're going to meet with the planning committees anyways," Simcha objected. "Ask them what activities they want, and make plans. What's the point of discussing it now?"

"We have to decide beforehand what we expect the kids to do in accordance with our program. Otherwise, what's the value of having activities altogether?"

"But you're going to meet with the P.C., aren't you? Have them decide what they want to do."

"We can't do things that way."

"Why not? What's the P.C. for anyways?"

"Look - don't be ridiculous - we've got to get the kids to feel they're the ones who are organizing it all, and that they're the ones responsible for their own activities. Otherwise how can you expect the kids to firmly identify themselves with the group?"

"Oh but there's an excellent film playing tonight at the University of Montreal. I want to see it and not waste time here planning their activities."

"But what about your responsibilities as a leader?"

"Oh that again," Simcha replied, shifting nervously on the bench where she was seated. "Do I have to give away my entire life for responsibility? I've wasted three nights at the Bayit with meetings this week already. Every night meetings, meetings, - if it's not meetings to plan the activities of the group you lead, then it's meetings to discuss how we're going to get money to run the camp; if it's not that, then it's to determine who's going to clean the Bayit next Sunday morning; or a personal problem with some individual who disagrees with studying Hebrew, or a million other things ... A person wants to have a bit of free time for himself, not to be choked to death with meetings. You have your personal life, for heaven's sakes, - since September I don't remember a single evening when I did what I liked to do, instead of doing what I had to do - it gets on my nerves! What about - about - the individual?"

"There's no such thing as the individual in a vanguard situation," Yosef replied firmly.

He began expounding the dogmatic tenets with which Simcha was so well familiar, having discussed them, quibbled over them, agreed upon them and disagreed time and time again. The Youth Movement was the vanguard of the Jewish people, was it not? It had a historic mission to fulfill; its duty was to educate Jewish youth to become pioneers in Israel, and the burden must fall on the shoulders of the few who had the true, clear, historic vision.

"How can you even bother questioning giving up your petty time?" Yosef continued exhorting, "especially in this terrible situation we're in? How can you even think of your personal life, as you call it?

All right, that's important too. But what about chalutzim? What about the shipload of sixteen hundred Jewish survivors of Nazi tyranny which exploded in Haifa harbour and sunk because the British bastards wouldn't allow it to land? How about the half million people rotting away in Cyprus, dying to get into Aretz? How about the corvettes and tiny frigates running the blockade, loaded up with ten times as many people as they can safely carry, and manned by inexperienced sailors - David Frieberg, you know him - he was the first mate on the boat that ran aground off Tel Aviv last week - for christs sake, how can you sit there and talk about your personal life - the movie you want to see at the U. of M., the little stupid book you want to read, or the lousy degree you want to take, when there is a world collapsing all about you - and you talk about personal life! Will there be any personal life left for you when they come and stone your windows? Or when you'll be kicked out of here, or"

"Okay, I know, I know, what's the point of?"

"There's plenty of point, because you don't understand!"

"I do, I do, I understand pretty well."

"So if you understand, why do you question every step you have to take? Do you have the convictions? You believe in the cause? Then go ahead and do what is necessary! Don't stop at every point and question and ask and question and ask, like a regular Hamlet"

For a moment they sat speechlessly, somewhat disturbed because they had flared up at each other. Simcha's freckled face unknotted its pout, and she put her pencil to her pad. Yosef sat staring at her for a moment.

"Well, come on," she said, "we're wasting time. Let's start."

Yosef dropped his anger. In a calm frame of mind they proceeded with a discussion of what type of activities would be best for the group at this "stage." Finally, after much time spent scanning the walls and ceilings for ideas and suggestions, they struck the idea that since the Feast of Lots, or Purim, was approaching, they might as well have a Purim party. This decided, they proceeded to lay out detailed plans concerning the food, games, stories and songs, the place the party was to be held, costumes for the masquerades, and all else related to a successful Purim party.

"Well, I'm glad we've finally laid the ground plans," Yosef sighed, rising and stretching backwards.

Tomorrow he would meet with the P.C. and ask them to decide what kind of joint activities the two groups would like to have.

The meeting was held at Barry's house. Ronald was the first to arrive. He pressed the buzzer and Barry smiled in the open doorway and gave him his thin hand to shake.

"Tell me, do you read?" Barry asked, when the two were seated in the parlour and Barry had offered the remnants of a bowlful of jelly beans to his visitor.

"Well, yes, I don't have much time to, though ..."

"You know, you should read ten times more than you actually do! Even if you read a good deal, you should still read ten times more! Do you know how many books there are you haven't read? Take a look at those books in the case I have. How many of those books have you read?"

Ronald jumped off the couch and crouched before the book case, squinting at the titles on the four shelves packed tightly with books. He asked Barry if he would lend him any.

"Sure - of course - that's how we are in the Movement. We help each other - not hinder each other, like people do in this society! But you know, there are only one hundred books in these shelves. Do you know how many books there are you don't even know about?"

"I know."

"It's amazing, but there are so many books, so many of them! And that's why you have to start reading as much as you possibly can - because in each book you'll read you'll find a valuable experience, and you have to have valuable experiences, because if not, as my brother says, you begin to stagnate, as people in this society do. Take Yosef, for instance, do you know how Yosef spends his time?"

Ronald was interested.

"Well, I mean he's a big leader in the Movement and he does a lot of work in it and everything like that - but do you know what he does with his time?"

"Well what?"

"I mean he goes to McGill, don't forget that. Imagine, just getting into McGill for Jews, you need seventy-five per cent, imagine that, ai? And the others only have to get sixty per cent, and they let them in. Imagine that for discrimination, ai? You know why that is? It's because of the economic status of the Jew in America, like my brother says. It's because we're in the needle trade instead of being bricklayers and steel workers and it's because we're salesmen instead of being real workers. That's why

there's discrimination. In Palestine that would never happen. Do you know why? Because in Palestine all the work is done by Jews. You know in Haifa harbour there are even Jews who are stevedores. Since the time of King Solomon, imagine - my brother knows a lot about Jewish history, he told me. If you want to read an excellent book by a writer called Borochoy, there's an excellent book, you should read it, it's terrific stuff. He's got a whole theory about what will happen to the Jewish middle class when there will be an economic depression."

His words were interrupted by the doorbell. Yosef entered and poked his nose, which was peeling from a wind burn, into the parlour to make sure that Ronald and the others were there. "Be with you in a second," he called.

He disappeared into the hall, said hello to Mrs. Stein, ambled in to the parlour, extracting his notebook from his back pocket as he went, and seated himself beside Ronald.

"Well, do you have any bright ideas for an activity this Saturday night?" Yosef asked.

"Sure, why don't we go to a movie?"

Yosef did not reply immediately. When he spoke his voice was mellowed with kindness. "What's the point of going to a movie with a group? A movie is a very non-participating kind of entertainment. You don't have to use your brains for that, and there's no chance to express yourself. It's much better to have an activity which comes from the group. See what I mean?"

Before Ronald saw, Yosef asked for the girls.

"Rita and Adele said they would be here on time," Barry said.

Just then the doorbell rang and the two girls entered. Barry

rose from his chair somewhat excitedly, and asked Rita whether she had brought with the book she had borrowed from him.

"I've not finished reading it yet," she told him, flashing her dark eyes at him as she moved to a seat beside Ronald. Then Adele came into the room but left several times, skipping as she went, making a loud fuss about a new pair of shoes she had bought. Ronald's eyes followed her to the couch; he fixed his eye on the expressions on her negroid face. The only contribution she made to the group discussion was to loudly laugh at whatever feeble jokes anyone attempted.

It was some time before the meeting got under way, and when it did Ronald decided that, come what may, he was going to contribute, he was going to follow the resolutions he had taken great pains to record in his notebook. He was going to suggest an alternative to a movie. He was going to suggest, as a matter of fact, an activity involving science, when Adele spontaneously suggested having a Purim party. Yosef acclaimed her original idea and then permitted Barry to elaborate on what Adele meant by having a Purim party. In the meantime he instructed Rita to get her paper and pencil to take notes should anyone else have any more brilliant ideas.

"A party is a terrific idea," said Ronald, changing his mind suddenly. "Will there be dancing?"

"Sure, there'll be group dancing," said Adele.

"I disagree with having a party," said Rita.

"But don't you think it will be an excellent activity if it will be well planned and organized?"

"I definitely disagree with you," Barry said to Rita. "I feel

a party is just what we need ...". And he went on to explain why that was so.

"As a change from the kind of activities lately on Saturday evenings," said Yosef, "like roller skating and tobogganing, I think it is time, as a matter of fact, to have a party. Especially since we should celebrate Purim. It's very important, it's the symbol of Jewish liberty, actually."

"I agree it's the symbol of Jewish liberty," Rita said, "but I disagree with it being made into a masquerade."

"But a masquerade is a lot of fun," Ronald seized the opportunity to say.

"I agree, I agree, I think we should have a masquerade. I definitely think so," said Adele, boisterously.

By degrees, Yosef managed to get everyone to agree, because, he believed, the success of an activity depended on everyone on the P.C. being unanimous in their decision. "If the P.C. doesn't agree in what it wants to do, how are you to expect the rest of the members of the group to agree," he told Ronald privately, while the discussion was flaring.

To this Ronald agreed. And when they finally got to that part of the agenda, he offered suggestions as to what sort of food there should be, and the others agreed as to group games and who would take charge of PIN-A-TAIL-ON-THE-MONKEY, and who would organize BROKEN TELEPHONE. The party was successfully planned and Yosef beamed satisfaction. Before the meeting broke up, he had, however, another item on his agenda.

"As all of you know, the Bayit which is the central headquarters

of the Youth Movement in Montreal, is in very poor condition. When it rains, it rains in. All this winter we've had very little fuel to heat the place. There's no equipment to speak of, and our state of affairs is pretty bad ... All this means is that I think it is time, that since this group is among the older, well organized groups in our branch, we should start contributing a small weekly fee of about fifteen cents per person. How would that be?"

"Let's make it ten," Adele said.

"Are you kidding, - ten cents? You cheapskate!" said Rita.

"We should pay twenty cents, each person, every week!" She spoke very emphatically.

The matter was thoroughly discussed, and they decided to implement Yosef's original suggestion.

"Now I suggest that one person have the responsibility of being the treasurer. Ronald, how would you like taking care of collecting the money from each person in the group?"

"Okay," Ronald agreed.

"Now don't forget to collect money for last week, and also for the party. It's a very important responsibility you've got on your hands, so will you do it?"

When the meeting was over Ronald rose to leave. Adele sprinted into the dining room to use the telephone. Having scanned the titles in Barry's bookcase, Rita straightened her hair and put on her ill-fitting coat. Ronald yawned and stretched so that his finger tips nearly touched

the ceiling; then he turned to Yosef who was seated on the couch, his notebook still open in his lap.

"Are you walking my way?" he asked.

"No, as a matter of fact I have several phone calls to make."

Ronald wondered whether he should wait for him. "Is anyone going my way?" Rita called, clapping her mitts together.

"Which way are you going?" Ronald asked.

"I live on Casgrain, near Fairmount," said Rita.

"Oh, that's not far from where I live. Come, I'll walk you."

He went to get his coat which Barry handed to him, telling him to remember to get hold of that book by Borochoy. "Where can I get it?" "At the Jewish Library." He fixed his scarf and then ducked his head through the parlour door. "So long," he called to Yosef.

Yosef looked up, smiled, and wagged a finger at him.

"Don't say 'so long', say Shalom!"

Ronald laughed. "Shalom!" he called.

They left the apartment and turned up Park Avenue. A cold wind blew, hardening what seemed the other day a last vestige of withered snow. They had to take short quick steps and keep their eyes fixed on the slippery ground before them.

"Boy, aren't you glad about the Purim party we're having?" Ronald ventured.

"Nahh, what should I be glad about?" Rita asked. She cocked her head to a side, and as she dribbled along, the cold wind dishevelled her hair. "All we've been having so far in the group this year is parties."

"What are you talking about? This is the first party we ever had!"

"We had plenty of parties all winter, mister, - I know because I was at every one of them. I prefer to have other activities. It's so silly having parties all the time."

"What are you talking about? It's lots of fun!"

"All we ever have at our party is Barry Stein cracking jokes and Simcha teaches us a new song and we play inky-pinky and silly games like that," Rita said. "You call that fun? I call it a waste of time. I think we should spend our time having discussions, not wasting time with parties!"

"But we have discussions every Friday night! How many discussions do you want to have every week?"

"We can have discussions Saturday night too - there are so many things we can discuss that are important too. Or if not, we can go to the Art Gallery on Sherbrooke Street. Were you ever at the Art Gallery? Oh, there is so much to do and so much to learn ..."

"But parties are very important too," Ronald replied, out of breath from the effort expended slipping along the sidewalks. "Remember what Yosef said just before ... our groups need a party to get to know each other."

"We can get to know each other if we go to an Art Gallery, like the one on Sherbrooke Street, and not waste time. What do you think a person comes to the Youth Movement for? Just for fun? You can go to the 'Y' or any old social club and listen to the boys there crack stupid jokes and

the girls speak about their new hairdos and their dates. You come down to the Movement because there is a purpose to it all. For a whole year before last all I was doing was having dates. I got sick and tired of going out on dates - they're so empty, and the guys who take you out - they're so empty headed and conceited - feah - then when I started coming to Simcha's group we started having terrific discussions at first - you should have heard what kind of discussions me and Simcha used to have after the group meetings were over! We used to stand on the corner and talk for hours - but now, I don't know what's the matter, but she always rushes off. Maybe she has a boyfriend and she sees him after the group meetings?"

They spoke for a while longer, and Rita used many Hebrew nouns which Ronald didn't know the meaning of. He was peeved because he had to ask her what they meant. When he said good night he decided he would go to the library and get the book Barry had spoken about and read and read until he would know more than all of them put together. He felt a surge of power and confidence uplift him. It presently began to dawn upon him that the Youth Movement to which he was now attached was really something. He was very delighted for having associated himself with really something!

"Ronnie, I have to go to Rachel Market tonight and do some shopping," his mother said, "I want you to stay home with Herbie."

"I can't. Don't bother me."

"When am I going to do my shopping?" his mother hollered, but he decided to escape while the escaping was still good.

Afterwards, when her husband came home and consented to stay with Herbie while she did her shopping, his mother thought it strange that he hadn't worn his new suit especially since he had mentioned that he was going to a Purim party. Ronald had already come to know that the members of the Movement, the leaders in particular, cared little or nothing for their personal appearance. He was a little puzzled about this matter and it irked him when one of the boys in his class mentioned that the club on St. Lawrence street near Marie Anne goes dressed like a bunch of tramps and the broads wear no lipstick and the guys never put on ties. He asked Yosef, and Yosef wasn't angry with him for asking such a question; he merely rubbed his hand on his three day old stubble beard and cocked his head to a side and calmly explained to Ronald that it was a good, an intelligent question: the group should discuss the whole matter of clothes - after all, there was a philosophy attending the fact that people like that girl Chana never wore a skirt but only slacks which were pressed, cleaned and altered once a year, and that even people like Nathan who studied bio-chemistry studied it in leather jackets and polo shirts, and why he, Yosef, disagreed with the whole idea of wearing ties. Finally Ronald grew bolder and asked, "Why, tell me why?" Yosef simply muttered, "We can discuss it later in the group - also, well, ties are the symbol of this society and we feel, as challutzim we don't want to wear the symbols of an oppressive society and that's why the girls don't wear lipstick or earrings or things like that ...". "Oh, I see now," Ronald said, and Yosef saw that he had underestimated Ronald, and that it was a very healthy sign that he did not accept things without questioning them

They waited for Adele, Barry and Rita to come. Yosef said it was getting late and they had better get busy with the preparations for the party.

"When you buy all the stuff bring it to Eli's house," Yosef directed.

"What about the money part?" Barry asked.

"Here's a ten dollar bill," said Yosef, pinching out a crumpled wad of ones from his pocket. "Now, I'm laying it out and I expect to have it returned not later than tonight. So Ronald, don't forget about collecting the money before the party begins tonight - we'll need fifty cents from each person besides the money in the treasury ..."

The trio started toward the door, but stopped when Rita showed no signs of budging. "Come on, aren't you coming?" Adele said.

"No, I can't help prepare the stuff. I'm calling on a new girl who's coming down to the party."

"Oh, so you can call on her later," Barry said. "Come on, we need your help making the sandwiches and everything."

"But I can't. I said I would call on her at a quarter to eight!"

"Oh that's Rita," Adele said, showing her irritation. "When it comes to talking about doing things, she's all there - but when it comes to doing ... "

"Oh look, come on, it's getting late," Ronald intervened and pulled open the door.

They all had a great deal of fun running about buying all the things for the party. Barry forced a joke for everything anyone said and

they were always laughing. When he saw them with their parcels Eli let loose an exultant "Oh boy, yippee!" and they all set to work. Barry continued telling jokes and Ronald was lazy and sat down on his job of buttering slices of white bread. Adele reprimanded him with a darkened, sour face, "Come on, why don't you get up from that seat and help? It's equality between boys and girls. You have to help, come on." To those Barry delivered a classic piece of mimicry; even Adele laughed so much she almost collapsed on the floor. Then the telephone rang.

"Yosef wants to know if everything is all right," Eli called from the phone.

"Yah, everything's all right!"

The Purim party that Saturday night was decidedly different from any Ronald had ever seen. It began with a masquerade in which they all disguised themselves in costumes, boomed and yapped at each other, ticked and clowned half the evening through; then Simcha organized a session of skits and three different groups dispersed into three separate rooms and came back to the parlour with skits portraying - each in a different style and manner - the intrigue of Esther and Mordecai and the fate of Haman. Later, in a different vein, they had a story session and sang songs. Afterwards food was served and they ate until their bellies ached. Everyone expected Simcha to suggest learning a new song, but she didn't; rather, she told them about the letter she had received that afternoon from a close friend of hers, a former member of the Movement who had now gone to Palestine.

Throughout the party Ronald had a lot of fun. He was loud and restrained only a very little and like everyone else sang and gesticulated as though he was standing in front of his bathroom mirror.

Suddenly he stopped. He became profoundly aware of what he was doing, what he was saying. Suddenly, as though she had just stepped into the noisy parlour, he became conscious of the presence of a girl he hadn't seen at any of the former meetings of the group. While the others continued to joke, jest, laugh and sing, he seated himself in a chair almost opposite hers. She sat quietly, her hands folded in her lap. She wasn't looking toward him so he kept his eyes fixed on her and noted her strange, her somehow utterly strange face. During the evening she rarely joined in the fun. Only occasionally did she join in the laughter. Ronald edged over to Eli, poked him, and asked him her name; but Eli didn't know. He found himself staring at her continuously. He was unable to tear away his gaze. She looked different. His heart beat even as he watched her laugh. She was strange, unusual, and he had just invented something insignificant which he would have wanted to say to her when Barry approached and drew him aside.

"You know Yosef laid out ten dollars for the party," Barry said, his face now settled into a cold business-like stare.

"So, I'll pay my share," Ronald returned.

"But you're the treasurer. You were supposed to collect the fees from the last two weeks - remember we decided? How much money did you collect?"

Ronald was confused. "Well, I don't know - I didn't collect any money ..."

"What do you mean you didn't collect? How are you going to run a

group without collecting fees?"

"How was I to collect?"

"But we made you treasurer and you were supposed to collect the money," Barry said acidly, more so than the situation might warrant.

"Oh, so I'll collect some other time!"

"For chrissakes man, don't you know what irresponsibility to a group means? It means we can't have a group, that's what it means!"

Spying out the rift from where he sat, Yosef arose, tripped over two pairs of outstretched feet, and approached the two. "What's the matter, what's wrong?"

"Well, so what, we guys can chip in and pay - Yosef," Ronald declared.

"And what about the girls? You were supposed to collect from them too?"

"What do you mean - do the girls ...?"

"Look, take it easy," Yosef intervened, bringing his hands out of his pockets, "there's no cause for excitement. Ronald, if you haven't collected the money the group owes me, go over to each person and collect it. That's all there is to it. What's the big disagreement about?"

Ronald began swinging his hands and an expression of intense irritation crossed his face. "I don't want to start collecting now," he squirmed.

"Why not?" Barry asked menacingly. In spite of his sense of humour there was something of a rat in him, Ronald observed.

"I'll collect to-morrow."

"But Yosef wants his money now, not tomorrow, or next year. Chrissakes man, how can you be a member of the P.C. and be so irresponsible?"

"Barry, will you stop shouting," Yosef commanded. "Now look, this situation can be easily remedied if you collect the money from each person now. That's all there is to it. And if you don't want to be treasurer, we can discuss it later, not let matters slide..."

Ronald pinned his eyes to the floor. He was hoping that the new girl wasn't by chance watching what was going on; then, in the event that she might see him, he moved further away from the living room door. He wasn't going to collect at a party again, he told himself, not after what had happened to him as a result in Laurie's club.

"Okay, so everything is settled."

"I don't want to be treasurer," Ronald said. "You collect the money."

Barry agreed to collect it with a heavy frown on his forehead. When he turned toward the living room, Yosef said to him, "Hold it Barry. I don't want you to collect any money from the new girl Rita brought down tonight."

"Who do you mean? Eileen?"

"Yes - is that her name?"

A sheet of paper in one hand, a pencil available in the other, Barry entered the living room where the rest of the group lounged about. In the meantime Yosef thrust his arm against the wall, trapping Ronald so he couldn't move away.

"Why don't you want to be treasurer?" he asked in a voice which was as soothing and soft as the purest butter.

"Because I have no time."

"But you shouldn't give up a responsibility in this way. It's not fair to yourself. We couldn't run a group with such an attitude, could we?"

Ronald's shoulders rose and fell. The new girl suddenly came out of the parlour, stopping a moment to look at them conferring in the corner. She put her hand to her mouth, then turned and went to the opposite end of the house, shyly prying open the bathroom door.

"Could we have one that way?" Yosef insisted.

"I don't want to be treasurer. I'll be something else," Ronald replied.

"Well, we'll have to bring it up to the P.C. But perhaps you can re-consider it. It's important for a successful chalutz to develop a sense of responsibility. Not that I'm holding what happened to-night against you, but in the future you've got to try, so don't forget to re-consider it."

In the parlour Eli was inserting a new phonograph needle into the phonograph. Simcha called for Yosef to come in and call everyone else. Ronald, looking somewhat glum, seated himself and listened to Simcha comment on the record they were about to hear. It was called Finlandia, said Simcha, and she proceeded to tell the story behind the music.

As her voice droned on Yosef reconsidered the chalutzic poten-

tialities which he felt Ronald had, in view of what had happened; of course he knew that a sense of responsibility was all a matter of time and the proper group education. Still, perhaps he shouldn't have given Ronald the responsibility of being on the P.C.

Simcha placed the phonograph arm on the record. At the crash of the first orchestral chord, the new girl entered the living room and seated herself on the empty chair near Ronald.

That night after the party he lay awake thinking. The lights from the passing cars flickered across the walls of his room, glared, and fell away. He kept thinking about the new girl Rita had brought to the party. Who was she, he wondered. How could he get to know her? She had seemed so strange. Of course he wouldn't make a fool of himself as he had with Annie; still, he must get to know her.

The following day he decided to ask Barry about her. Despite their argument he felt he could trust Barry to keep his confidence. When he finished his work he called Barry and said he was coming over to his house to borrow some books.

"You remember a certain girl who was at the last party," he finally brought himself around to say.

"What does she look like?" Barry wanted to know.

"I don't know if I can describe her - but she had auburn hair, no, not really auburn - and she wore them in bangs - and she had a funny nose, oh do you remember that time we were laughing at Rita's joke about the Chinese word for virgin, we stopped and watched the way she laughed -

do you know who I mean?"

"Oh yes. Yes, I know who you mean. Yes, I know. Well, what about her?" he asked somewhat wearily, since he had known her from childhood.

"Do you know her name?" Ronald asked.

"Yes, I know her well. To tell you the truth - she's a very mediocre individual."

"What do you mean?"

"I know her for a long time, yes, - but she isn't - well, suited for the group ..."

Ronald interrupted: "All I want to know is her name."

"Her name is Eileen - and she lives near Park Avenue, on St. Joseph Boulevard."

Daily now, he kept watch for her, hoping to spot her on the way to or from school. After three weeks of continuing vigilance, he saw her hurrying down the street toward Baron Byng, a pile of books in her arms. Excitement tore through his heart and his composure fled. He passed her without looking at her. She didn't recognize him. But she seemed strange and so different. He was sure she was rich and pure and that she had a lot of things he had been dreaming of and desiring in a girlfriend who would be true to him and different than other girls and rich besides, not like the girls who lived on his street.

But he didn't see her again in the weeks that followed, and through the month of June he wondered whether she had a boyfriend already; if she did he wouldn't have a chance in the world!

Then school was out and Yosef said that the Youth Movement wasn't going to be able to run the usual summer camp that year owing to the Movement's poor financial situation. Ronald wasn't interested anyhow, since he had to get a job and earn some money.

But throughout the summer months he saw Barry very often. He got to know Sarah and found she was a nice girl, but Barry was there first so that there wasn't much use in trying. Most of the other girls were away in the country and when Rita left she said she would write, but she didn't, because, as she said at the end of August, she had so little time to write with all the reading she had to do.

When September came Ronald wasn't sunburnt and he didn't look any healthier for lack of country air. But he had saved thirty dollars for school and clothes. He was glad the school term was near and that the group would meet regularly once again. He began thinking of Eileen again.

When he began ninth grade she was continually on his mind. He decided once and for all that he was going to get her to come down to the group. That would be the best method. But how was he to do this? After she hadn't come to any of the meetings since the Purim party.

One Friday night when Yosef sang out that they were going on a hike and all the group whooped up a wild spirit of adventure and song up to Van Horne woods, he had an idea. On the way he kept alongside Rita who was glad to walk beside him since Yehudah hadn't shown up that evening. "I want to speak to you afterwards," Ronald said to her. "Sure," Rita replied.

They threaded their way through thickets and after ten minutes of plodding found a clear space to build a fire and roast weenies. "Every-

body start gathering brush," Yosef commanded, and all scurried away. When they had enough dry brush and sticks piled up beside the fireplace which Yosef and Louis were building by piling up rocks one on top of another so as to prevent the fire from spreading, they stood about and watched Louis expend a dozen matches before an orange blaze flurried into being. The flames began to reach up and Yosef rose with a sense of accomplishment; but he forgot about himself and put out his arms as if he were calling the others to dance a hora. They all knew it was impossible to dance a hora here because the ground was uneven and jagged with rocks and stubble growth, so they merely stood erect with their arms about each other, swaying and joining in with Simcha's songs concerning Zion and Land and Liberty. Meanwhile the fire rose still higher and Louis, who didn't care to sing, worked assiduously adding more brush. When the first spurt of flame had spent itself, they sat on the ground and Louis brought out sticks for Eli to sharpen with his ready knife. Each person was given a sharpened stick on which to roast a weenie. Then Yosef produced two cellophaned packs of marshmallows. "Don't grab, there's enough for everybody," he said, trying to inculcate the spirit of co-operative living even in the matter of eating charred marshmallows.

They were absorbed as their teeth worked against the gluey candy, but Louis said, "I just remembered something that happened to-day," and they all hushed because Louis spoke urgently and Sarah stopped humming the new song Simcha had taught; they listened to Louis tell how he had been walking down St. Lawrence when all of a sudden he had heard shouting. Looking around, he saw a big two ton truck speeding sixty miles an hour with a couple of guys sitting in the back near a gallows on which an effigy of an old man with a

long beard of straw was swinging. Some passers-by who had witnessed the outrage had complained and written letters to the Editor in the local newspaper, and some people were sure it was some damn English from Westmount, for they were protesting the shooting of two innocent British soldiers by the terrorists in Palestine where the British have no right to be anyhow, because of the Balfour declaration.

They were all silent and grim and they gazed into the fire feeling angered and solemn. After a moment Barry began voicing their bitterness and sense of outrage at their people being kicked around like that. Yosef said nothing at first, but later readily used the situation to point a lesson. "That shows what difficulties we are up against redeeming the Homeland in Palestine!"

When Yosef finished each person wanted to say something, but no one spoke. Louis stealthily stirred to get more brush for the fire, Frances coughed, and they all relaxed. Some sat on the ground because it was only September and the stars were full and resplendent in the early autumn sky. They watched the flames leap higher and grow warmer and Simcha started a song they all knew.

It was cool and windy as they hopped over the hills of petrified garbage and found the loop where the tramway line ends and boarded the streetcar. They sang loudly and vigorously, and the sleepy passengers looked at them, regarded their bright flashing faces, and settled again into their boredom. "I'll walk you home so I'll be able to speak to you," Ronald said to Rita. "Okay mister, as you wish," she said, and laughed. The street-

car rattled along. After ten minutes, Louis got up and said, "So long." Two stops later, Sarah got up, Barry tentatively with her, and both said, "Be seeing you all next week." Finally Eli, Frances, and Adele pressed the button for the car to stop, leaving Ronald and Rita sitting with their two leaders. The car came to a stop at Fairmount. "Are you coming to the Science group on Tuesday?" Yosef called to Ronald. "Yah - sure." "Be seeing you."

They walked down wind blown Fairmount. Only then did Ronald work up enough courage to ask her about Eileen.

"You know that girl Eileen you brought down to the Purim party we had last spring?" he asked. "She never came to a meeting afterwards. How's that?"

"How's that?" Rita shrugged her thin shoulders. "How should I know?"

"Well, you must know something about her, don't you?"

"Yes - I do know something about her, if you can call it that."

"Well tell me - what's she like?"

"I don't know what there is to tell - she's a very plain girl - she's not terribly good looking - you saw her. And she's not extremely intelligent either."

She stopped and waited to be coaxed on.

"It's true what you said though," Rita continued. "There is something different about her - but frankly, I don't know if ~~she's~~ worth bothering about!"

"But why doesn't she come down to the group?"

"If I knew why - how should I know why? She hardly ever goes out with boys and she has few girlfriends. I know, because she's in the other class and none of the girls think very much of her."

While she disclosed her unenthusiastic views on Eileen, Ronald was stirred to his roots with emotion. This was the girl, this was the one, a megaphone in his ear kept blasting. Mediocrity, Barry had said; worst in her class, Rita now told him. And she looked so strange, so different, so unique. Oh, he must get to know her!

"Look, I don't see why a person like that doesn't come down to the group," Ronald was saying. "I think that for a person like that what she needs is a group to work with, to develop her potentialities. Why don't you bring her down?"

"If she wants to come to our meetings, she can. I don't have to drag her down, do I?"

"You don't have to drag her - no, all you have to do is to convince her. You know what? I've got an idea. Are you her friend?"

"I'm not exactly her friend, if that's what you call it ..."

"So who brought her down to the Purim party last Spring?"

"Well, I saw her around school and Simcha asked me to bring down new members for the group to the Purim party, so I asked her to come."

"Okay, that's what I want. Look, do me a favour, will you?"

She listened to his idea of having her phone up Eileen and become friends, so that she would be able to insist that she come to the Bayit Friday nights.

"And if that won't work, I've got another plan. You can phone her up Sunday afternoon and say you want to come to her house. You know - tell her that several of us want to listen to the N.B.C. symphony - okay?"

She pursed her lips in silence and Ronald began prodding her for an okay.

"But I'll tell you what she's like - she's very plain and there's really nothing much to her. She talks fast and sounds so stupid and childish, - if you'd talk to her, you'd see - and besides, I don't think if she came down to the group she would be able to understand our discussions on Zionism and Chalutziuth and things like that. I don't see why we should want to have her in the group even."

"I want her in the group - do me a favour!"

"Oh - so you want her in the group! That's different then. But let me tell you frankly there are some awfully nice girls in the group. Take Frances for instance, and Adele ..."

"I told you I'm not interested in her - personally - all I want to do is get a new member for your group. You believe in Zionism, don't you? So if you don't get new members for your group, how are you going to spread your beliefs?"

Rita smiled, then cocked her head to a side and drew her fingers through her dark tresses of hair.

"All right - if you want her in the group so much - I'll speak to her.

"Imagine wanting to do such a thing," Rita said to Yehudah. "And he was so serious about it. I tried to convince him - you know - take Adele - she's dying to have someone pay attention to her, but no - he doesn't want - only this Eileen."

"Who is she?" Yehudah asked.

"Ah - she's some dumb girl who goes to Baron Byng. I can't understand you boys - you're always interested in a girl if she hasn't got a mind, or if she's dumb altogether." She broke off and laughed.

"That's not true - take me for instance - I'm interested in a mind. A mind, a mind, a mind," he started singing, yodelling and mimicking an aria from The Barber of Seville.

"Oh, will you stay quiet and listen? He wants me to approach her and bring her down to the group. Do you think I should?"

"Sure - bring her down, if he's interested - besides, maybe she'll be good for the group!"

"How can she be good for the group when she practically fails in all her studies in school? - ah, don't be silly!"

Yehudah sat back and held her at arm's length.

"You see, to think that to believe in chalutz you have to be a brain, and you have to know philosophy and stuff like that. Let me tell you something, when you sit on a tractor in the Galil you don't need philosophy. You're a worker - a hard worker - and the less philosophy you know, the better off you are. I'm not saying a chalutz shouldn't know anything about world affairs and politics and things like that. But you definitely don't have to be an intellectual to be a chalutz. The best chalut-

zim aren't intellectuals at all - as a matter of fact - they're real workers!"

"Yes, I know," Rita replied. Shortly afterwards she added, "Maybe I'll speak to her."

The following week Rita called after Eileen in the corridor at school.

"Hi - which way are you walking?"

"Up," Eileen said.

Rita said she'd walk with her because she had something very important to tell her. She could say nothing for awhile because Eileen continued telling her about how much work that awful Miss McMahon gave the class, and she felt like cursing the eighty year old virgin, but she didn't because she felt it wasn't fair.

When the torrent of complaints about the school ceased, Rita said, "I was going to ask you why you don't come down to our meetings? We've been having such excellent discussions lately!"

"Oh, but I have so little time - really. Last June I failed in my geometry and I have so much catching up to do. I'm telling you - it's terrible - I don't know what I'm going to do!"

"I see - well, perhaps I shouldn't be telling you this ..."

"Tell me what?"

"Well - that a certain tall and very handsome boy in the group likes you."

Eileen's face flushed a deep scarlet. "Wh - who is he?"

"I can't really describe him to you - but if you remember he was at the Purim party you came to last Spring - he's very tall, just your height, and he has brown hair - oh but what's the difference, would you like to meet him?"

Eileen grew panicky. She did not know what to say.

"I can arrange it very easily, you know. Perhaps we all can come up to your house on Sunday afternoon?"

"I can't - no, I'm busy, I can't!"

"Oh but there's nothing to be busy about. I'm telling you he's a fine boy, and he's intelligent and very interested in you. I'll tell you what, you don't have to worry, I'll ask someone else to come up - and it won't be like those - you know formal meetings, like in bourgeois society. All right?"

Eileen still shook with dismay and apprehension. Rita's matter-of-factness did little to reassure her. They were standing at St. Joseph Boulevard.

"I'll be up at two thirty. Okay?"

As soon as she came home, Rita telephoned Yehudah, but his mother recognized her voice and said Yehudah wasn't home. In five minutes she called again, disguised her voice, and asked for Isidore.

"Hello," Yehudah's voice yawned across the wire.

"Hi," she returned. "I've persuaded her to meet us at her house on Sunday. I told her I'd come along with someone else, so you're expected to be there."

"I can't. I have to work this Sunday."

"So you'll work some other time. Oh come on, it'll be a lot of fun!"

"What do you mean 'work another time!' I've got to make some money. I'm flat broke."

She was very exasperated with him and told him she would never speak to him again. Then she called Ronald. He ata-girled her when she told him of her success, and he told her he'd call Eli and tell him to come with them.

"But I want to play chess Sunday afternoon!" Eli said.

"Look, what's more important, you're playing chess, or getting a new member for the Movement? You'll play chess at her house. That's all!"

"Eileen, didn't you tell me you're expecting visitors this afternoon?"

"Yes, they're coming at two."

"Then why don't you start getting ready, Eileen?"

Lackadaisically Eileen went through the routine of getting ready. The telephone kept ringing all morning and her mother had to give her husband instructions on how to get to the house of a certain customer while the other party was kept waiting. Then Mr. Rudner disappeared at lunch hour and didn't show up until one thirty.

"I wonder where Daddy is," she said. "I expect to be at that customer's house on time for a change."

Eileen kept fussing. When the doorbell rang she almost jumped

out of her wits and beseeched her mother to answer the door.

"Eileen, don't be so shy. After all, they're only your friends."

But when Mrs. Rudner went to answer the door it was only her husband carrying a box upstairs. Eileen went back into her bedroom and continued combing her hair.

"I have a bargain," her father called, and when she came out of her room she watched him rustle apart the tissue paper in which six sample sweaters lay neatly folded.

"Oh, they're beautiful - wee," she cried, as she nimbly held up the pale blue sweater. She nestled the wool to her cheek and then ran to the mirror and carefully drew together the buttons at the front.

"Do you like it? It's a real cashmere," her father said.

"Oh yes, I like it! I like it very much!"

He took out another sweater from the box so she could have the pick of the colour she preferred. She chose a pale pink, and he began re-wrapping the remainder.

"Mama is getting a raincoat for you too, Eileen. I was seeing a man to-day. I think I can get some nice jumpers for you."

"Oh thank you, thank you very much," she cried, and leapt upon him to kiss his grizzly cheek.

Mrs. Rudner examined the sweaters and then told her husband about getting some extra pairs of nylons for Eileen. Mr. Rudner said he would see to them the first thing in the morning.

"Come, are you ready?" she said in the meantime. "We told them we'd see to the drapes."

A good deal of fussing and excitement took place before Mrs. Rudner found the right hat and gloves to match and saw to it that her coat hung straight in the back and that the Jello was frozen in the refrigerator in order that Eileen would have something to offer to her friends. Then she said to her husband, "Hurry up, it's getting late."

"Have a good time," her parents cried as they left the house. They walked down the stairs, smiled and said hello to half a dozen neighbours casting glances at Mrs. Rudner's new fall coat. They climbed into their old fashioned Chev, and all the street full of lockers-on joined in breathing easy when there was not the usual fuss and commotion to get the car started. The car sputtered off without more ado.

Mr. Rudner's efforts at steering consisted of steering, keeping to the right, watching out for careless cyclists, listening for blow-outs, and to his wife's ramblings about their unpaid bills, their failing business, and the efforts of the women's group she belonged to in securing funds to help equip the hospital in Jerusalem.

"But you know," she said, finally turning to their daughter, "I'm so glad about Eileen having some friends up to the house this afternoon. Aren't you?"

"Of course. She's a big girl already. She should have boy-friends," her husband agreed.

"You know, I've always told her, "Eileen, not all girls have slim figures and look as if they have prospects in Hollywood. That is not an absolute necessity for a girl anyways. After all, boys have liked

girls if they were intelligent, because they were nice, not only because they were bathing beauties.' But, you know, she's very depressed. Last week she went down to Simpson's and bought a pair of shoes. They were size nine and a half, so when Eddy saw her, he started joking about them and said they looked like a pair of boats. Some people don't realize that jokes like that are harmful. The poor kid was unhappy for a few days about how big her feet are."

"If Eddy wasn't your brother, I'd say something ..."

"Well better say nothing ... But you know, I don't think it's so much that as it's school. School makes her nervous and tired and terribly upset. She gets so that she doesn't want to see people, or have friends or anything. It's terribly depressing for her! Last month - when she got her report, the poor kid felt terrible! I don't understand it. Remember, in elementary school she used to be good in her work, and all her teachers thought very highly of her. They used to admire her leadership qualities - remember what the teacher told us. 'You've got a fine daughter, Mrs. Rudner,' she said, 'She has outstanding ability as a leader.' Remember? Then why should she change like she has in High School? I mean, I know one thing, Eileen is more grown up in many respects, more than girls her own age. You know, I can speak to her like I can speak to a grown up person about the business and everything, and you know - she understands. Sometimes I ask her, 'Eileen, what is it?' And she said to me last week, I told you, I think, didn't I? - 'I feel like jumping out of the window sometimes.' 'Eileen,' I said, 'why should you ever say such a thing? I mean the experience she had last summer - well, she's not the

first girl it happened to, and God knows, she won't be the last. I mean if there was money enough we'd take her to a special doctor, but even when I mentioned it - she said, 'No,' she doesn't have to." As they turned the corner, she sighed with a show of courageousness. "But in some ways - maybe it is - because you know yourself - she's still a child."

The doorbell reminded Eileen of the visitors she was expecting that afternoon. Tensely she went to the door, opened it and pulled the cord, "Come in," she called in a thin childish voice.

Eli, Rita and Ronald dashed up the stairs and Eli said, "Boy it's really getting cold," and Rita added, "I'm almost frozen."

Eileen smiled and half turned away when she saw Ronald. "Put your things in here," she said, standing in the open parlour door.

As she invited them into the parlour Eli dismissed any pretense at being polite and tumbled onto the nearest sofa. Rita was coy and demure. Ronald watched Eileen stiffly move across the room and seat herself opposite him.

"All I need is a chess board," Eli said, "and I'll be perfectly content."

"Do you want to play chess?" Eileen asked.

"Do you have a set?"

"Sure," she nodded, and disappeared to the other end of the house.

Ronald was able to say, "What a sharp place this is, ai?" while Eli recruited Rita to play chess with him.

"But what's the good, I can't play chess," Rita replied.

"Don't worry," Eli assured her, "I'll teach you."

Eileen returned with a box of chessmen and a board and Eli dropped down onto the carpet. Rita sat down beside him and the lesson began. Eileen clasped her hands on her lap and listened to Eli explain the difference between a pawn and a bishop. Then she leaned over sideways and clicked on the radio. Presently an autumnal rush of orchestral music swept through the loudspeaker.

Ronald watched her with the utmost attention. Several times he almost but not quite got to the point of making some significant remark to her. Eileen was conscious of his eyes on her, and she rose to leave the room several times, each time with a different excuse. Once she left the room purposefully and returned with a cut-glass bowlful of candies, and he rose and seated himself near her place.

"Do you go to Baron Byng?" was his first remark to her.

She cleared her throat for what seemed like a long time, turned great brown eyes on him and then managed a thin, "Yes."

"Tenth year?"

"Uh - huh."

A moment's silence followed. Then she moved closer to the radio.

"Listen to this, oh listen," she suddenly cried to a passage of lyrical orchestral outpouring. "Isn't it beautiful? It's by Tchaikovsky. He's my favourite."

Though silent, he wished he could comment learnedly on that particular passage, and wind up in a discourse revealing how much he knew

about the life of the composer. She held the palm of her hand flat against her mouth and hid her blush.

"You were at the Purin party last year?" he said when the clatter of radio applause signalled the finale of the music, "weren't you?"

"Yes, I was."

"How come you never came to meetings after that?"

"Well you see ..." She paused to clear her throat. "It was because I didn't feel it was right if I kept coming to a group I didn't intend to join."

He was somewhat dismayed by the apparent sincerity of her remark. She seemed so grown up, so intelligent; perhaps Rita had ridiculed the thought of her being in the Movement because girls were jealous of each other as cats.

"But why don't you want to join?"

"Well - I have so much homework to do." She cleared her throat again. "And I have so little time."

"But you should try to come down to a meeting. Then you would see how important a Movement like ours is!"

Eileen made no reply, but let her gaze fall to the solid oak coloured rug. She crossed her legs and resumed listening to the radio concert. Rita was catching on how to play chess, and said she would soon be the world champion. Eli croaked, "Don't worry, you've got a lot to learn yet." Ronald thought about what she had said. Yes, he liked her a great deal: through the corner of his eye he watched her as she sat quietly,

tensely, immobile. He stole glances at her dress and saw that her breasts were better developed than Rita's, and he shifted his eyes nervously to her legs each time she went into the kitchen. He decided that she was very beautiful.

In the meantime, Eileen wondered if she should invite them in to have something: her mother always repeated the rather sage observation that if one wants to have friends one has to feed them.

"Sure, boy, I'm starved," Eli said, when she offered her further hospitality.

Shyly they entered the mirror clean kitchen and slipped into the red plush chrome chairs about the table. Eileen busied herself at the refrigerator and then brought forth four small bowls in which multicoloured jello topped with whipped cream wiggled and radiated cold as it sat on the table before them. Ronald shouted an enthusiastic oh boy and they set to work. Before Eileen even seated herself, Eli and Ronald had emptied their bowls. She asked them if they wanted some home-baked chocolate cake.

"Sure, are you kidding!" Eli shouted.

"Let's go to it," Rita laughed.

"Okay. If you want it, you can have it," Eileen said, through thinly pressed lips which broke into a delicate smile the very next moment. She brought out an immense chocolate cake and lopped off huge chunks, making sure none of the inch deep chocolate icing was lost in the process.

After they finished they slouched around the table. Ronald's eyes wandered to the white refrigerator, silvery sparkling toaster, and electric kettle standing on the pantry shelf. He thought how comfortable

this house was, while Rita and Eileen discussed school and the teachers who should only ... Then Eli started talking about the events that were taking place in Palestine.

Soon they stretched and Ronald looked outside; the sky was violet and evening rapidly approaching. Eileen wondered whether her parents were going to be home for supper. They began pulling on their coats.

"So, will you be down on Friday night at the Bayit?" Ronald asked somewhat nervously.

"I'll try." She smiled faintly, but then cackled happily when Eli made a fool of himself and tripped down the stairway.

He was thoroughly enraptured with the idea of her. She was such a wonderful girl, so really different - and beautiful, and her house was nice and clean and her father evidently was rich. What more could he want?

Friday afternoon he telephoned her. A thrill coursed through him as her thin, child-like voice came across the wire.

"I think you'll find the discussion very interesting if you come tonight," he said.

"Well, my friend Marion is going to come up tonight," she said, terribly excited lest she should say anything which would make him realize what she was really like - insignificant and childish, immature.

"Tell your friend Marion to come up another night," he added boldly. "You won't be sorry if you come. You want me to call on you?"

She paused and Ronald was ready to curse himself because he was certain his audacious question had miscarried.

"I'm eating supper at my grandmother's, so my father will drive me over to the ,... "

"Bayit," he coached.

" to the Bayit in his ear."

"Good. So I'll see you there."

That Friday night it rained heavily. The winds whistled through the streets and the decayed leaves cascaded aimlessly from the trees. Ronald turned up his collar and went to the Bayit. Yosef smiled when he saw him and casually asked him to join in with the circle dancers, but Ronald said no, his feet hurt.

"Where were you last Sunday morning when there was a Jewish National Fund collection?" Yosef asked.

"Oh well, what do you expect," Ronald said, "I'm a busy man. I have to work, of course."

"But don't you think a JNF collection is just as important? That's how the Jewish Agency in Palestine buys land. How are they going to do it if we don't collect money?" Yosef preached.

"Yeah, yeah, I know all that bull." He didn't notice Eileen drift in through the door that moment.

"But you must be more responsible!" Yosef said. "Last week you told me you were reading Pinsker's Auto-Emancipation and you agreed full heartily. So if you agree you must carry out your principles in the

things you do. Don't you see?"

Later he moved away from Yosef. He felt uneasy, and he paced about the room from huddle to huddle to find ready conversation. Soon the whistle blew and everybody collected in the traditional circle and a white tablecloth-covered board glistened under the candles ready to be lit. Yosef was calling him into the circle when he caught sight of Eileen beside Rita at the other side of the room. He somehow overcame a sudden impulse to dash over and greet her and managed to feign indifference to her presence.

The Oneg Shabbat sang and danced itself to a close. Ronald's heart pounded violently as he drew up to her; she smiled when she saw him. He felt immensely awkward. She seemed not to notice him after a first glance, but fixed her attention on what Rita was saying; she seemed to disregard his presence. He didn't know whether he should stay near her. He felt like moving away, but he remained where he stood.

"How do you like it here?" he said at last.

Her lips pursed and she seemed to be on the verge of turning to Rita again. "It's nice," she said and smiled at him.

He heard Simcha's voice rallying her group in the corner.

"Our groups are meeting separately to-night," he explained when Rita tugged her by the sleeve and said, "Come on, Simcha's calling us!"

She started moving away without looking at him. She held her hands before her mouth. As Ronald watched her a fleeting, though powerful flash of emptiness and pain seared through him and he was naked in a climate of sullen, silent confusion. "I'll see you later," he called.

"Okay," she said, or seemed to. That saved his day and he smiled happily as she moved toward the girls in the corner gathering under Simcha's protective wing.

At ten thirty both groups ended their meetings. He found Eileen and drew her aside and asked her how she liked the meeting.

"It's very - interesting," she replied, wide-eyed.

"What did you discuss?"

She put her hand to her mouth and stammered a few remarks, intermittently shaking with hoarse coughing. She wished to convey the fact that she thought everything here was wonderful, so expressive of people and things, but she couldn't speak. Just then Barry hoisted his lanky form onto a bench and bellowed that his group and Simcha's were meeting at the local delicatessen. Eileen darted off for her coat.

"It's very interesting what we discussed," he told her outside. "What about your group?"

"I found it - " she paused to clear her throat, "interesting too!"

Afterwards he said, "By the way, do you ever read good books?"

"I hardly have time. During the summer I had to study for a supp and I used to read a little, but now I have so much homework to do ..."

They walked along silently, listening to the others chatter. In the store Ronald wanted to talk to Eileen but he couldn't say anything or speak impressively against a background of laughing and joking. He was reduced to sit and listen to the others tell how they nearly flunked

that Algebra examination and how they were reading an excellent book about the Negroes which showed that America wasn't a real democracy. Later, he thought when they would get up to leave he would pay her bill. But she beat him to it by having a coin ready in her hand.

"It's so important that we get a National Homeland," he told her as he walked her home. "Otherwise we'll simply disintegrate because of the persecution and because the same thing will happen here as happened to the Jews of Europe."

Eileen was impressed and she had a warm feeling similar to the kind she felt when she would gulp down a small glassful of her grandfather's homemade wine. Ronald talked on with self-assurance, carelessly throwing about names with a ring and a dignity as if he were speaking of his own kid brother.

Finally, before she ran upstairs, she said, "You know, this may sound silly in a way, but I have so much work to do for school. Last report I failed in my geometry and I have to - really, I don't know if I can come to meetings often, because I have to study."

"Oh, you don't have to study on Friday nights, do you?" he said, his self-assurance now lifting him off his feet. "Besides, I'll tell you what: if you want, I'll come to your house and help you with your geometry."

"Would you?"

"Sure. Why not?"

"Oh, I'd be grateful to you, really I would."

"When do you want me to come up?" he asked, wishing to see if she was really interested.

"Whenever you have time," she suggested.

"On Monday night?"

"All right."

"On Monday night then at seven," he said, choosing that hour because he realized that he would be able to spend more time with her than if he had suggested the more customary eight o'clock.

"I'll be seeing you then," he called, as she began to mount the stairs.

Eileen mentioned Ronald's proposal to her mother; she hoped her mother would drop the matter without further discussion.

"But who is he?" her mother wanted to know. "How do you know he'll be able to give you satisfactory help? Eileen, if you need help, I'll get you a tutor. There was a woman in the store to-day and she says her son goes to McGill and he tutors and he's really going to be a teacher."

"No, I don't need anybody. He's very good at school Rita told me and he'll be able to help me fine."

"You know I don't like to butt into your affairs, Eileen, but after all, dear, - Daddy and I want you to have the best. If you feel you need help, then Daddy and I are willing. We realize you're having difficulty at school and we'll be only too glad to help. I only wish I could sit down with you and help you with your maths, but to tell you the truth since I've finished school, I've forgotten it all."

"It'll be okay," Eileen said, and concluded the matter by going to the telephone and dialing Marion's telephone number.

Mrs. Rudner didn't refer to the matter again. Monday afternoon, when her husband learned about the plans, he folded his arms across that part of his chest not obscured by his pot belly and commented:

"Well, listen, if she insists, maybe it's because she likes him. No?"

"I don't know who the boy is. She says he belongs to that group she went to Friday night. Do you know what kind of group it is?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "I drove her up in the car, but I couldn't park, so I couldn't take a good look."

"Well, maybe it's a good sign. Maybe, as you say, she likes him. It's about time she became interested in boys. She'll be sixteen soon - and then seventeen is not far away, and eighteen not much further .."

Ronald had never been to a house which seemed so bright and clean as Eileen's that evening. Eileen had pencilled a thin coat of lipstick on her lips, to harmonize with the auburn bangs curled over her forehead. Her school tunic had been freshly cleaned and she wore a starched white blouse.

"Come into the living room," she said to him when he arrived.

He followed her into the parlour and took a seat beside a dropleaf table. He hunted about for some common places with which to fill the vacuum. Then he sensed that someone was hovering in the hallway. Eileen asked her mother to come in.

"Ronald, this is my mother," she said hastily. "Ma, meet Ronald."

"Hello, how are you?" she said, in a loud, firm voice.

She scrutinized him in a single glance, and while she told her daughter if she wanted she could move the other lamp with the yellow shade over for more light, she decided Ronald was a nice looking boy. She wondered what his father did for a living.

"Well, I'll leave you kids alone. I have work to do," she said.

Ronald settled down beside her, far away enough so that nothing would look wrong. He asked her for her text book and she handed it to him. He proceeded with the geometry and showed her that deductions were a cinch and theorems were as easy as pie. She marvelled that he understood mathematics; he must be brilliant, she thought.

"I think I'll find it much easier now," she said, afterwards sitting back in her seat and relaxing somewhat.

"Oh sure! You bet you will. It's very simple - once you get the hang of it," he said, to awe her further.

They sat and talked about school. When the clock on top of the piano ding-donged nine times she invited him in to have something. His face grew red and he felt immensely uneasy because her parents were at the table, and although her father was very friendly and her mother even more so, he could not really enjoy the cakes and fruit placed before him. He feared they'd notice his dirty finger nails; he trembled lest he make a terrible mess with the whipped cream-topped strawberry short cake. He felt so uneasy that he wished, damn it all, he wished he hadn't come here in the first place.

But the ordeal passed with only a fork dropping which he was

too embarrassed to pick up and Eileen's mother said to her husband, "Lean back, open the drawer, and give him another fork, what are you waiting for?" and Eileen jabbered on about her teachers and so didn't seem to notice the catastrophe.

When he stood with his coat on before the door she asked him if he wished to be paid for the lesson.

"Pay me!" he replied, astounded. "Don't be are you kidding? Of course not! I mean the way we are in the group is that we help one another. Barry Stein - you know him - he loaned me a whole pile of books yesterday. Besides," he continued, "I like explaining things. When can I help you again?"

Her gaze fell to the floor. The morning-glew orange of the lamp flooding the hall threw the asymmetry of her face into exquisite relief. He was now sure that she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

"Any time you will," she offered.

They decided that it would be Monday night, although Ronald figured this wouldn't be the best plan; he preferred to have it Wednesday nights because in this way he could see her on Friday and Saturday nights and so see her more often. However, not wishing to seem too bold, he said Monday night was perfect.

He turned to leave. He lifted his chin to fix his scarf. Shyly she looked away.

"Are you going to come to the meeting Friday night? I think we're having a discussion with both groups. I'm on the P.C. - that's the

planning committee - we plan hat box discussions, and activities like that - do you think you'll be able to come?"

"I'll try my best."

"But you have to be there for sure, you see, because we need every member of the group to come all the time ... if we are going to have good activities ..."

She didn't reply. She was swept away by what was to her the novelty of a boy being interested in her in what she fancied was a disinterested way - without looking for advantages, without being ... well-low, and things, like boys were. She was attracted by what seemed his non-chalant manner, the notion that he was perhaps a lucky, strangely exciting person, a wonderful embodiment of all those girlhood dreams gilded with purity, grace and charm. She didn't know, really. It was too hard to figure, so she blushed a silent yes, she would be there.

"Why didn't he take any money?" her mother asked.

Eileen clasped her palms together in front of her face.

"He said it was against his principles," she said.

"Principles? What principles does a young boy have when he gives a private lesson not to be paid for it? We can afford to pay for help you get!"

"He must be a rich boy!" her father said, looking up from his Yiddish paper.

Eileen shrugged her shoulders. "He's not rich. He belongs to that group and hardly anyone in that group is rich ... "

"Oh oh, the one Barry Stein belongs to. They're the Zionists, aren't they?"

"Uh - huh."

A moment's silence passed while both parents digested the significance of that comment.

"Well, all I can say is that it's very nice of him to help you," her mother declared.

He was very disturbed to find Eileen away from home Friday night. He felt lost and disconsolate, gypped in the best fashion of that familiar emotion. Saturday morning he telephoned her.

"I had to go away," she told him.

"But what about the group?" he said. "Don't you know the whole group depends on everyone's coming to the meetings?"

"I know - but I couldn't help it."

He allowed her to soothe him with further explanations, although he knew he had no right to be upset. She could still get up and leave him flat as Annie had, couldn't she? He asked her if she was planning to come down to the onion chase the group was having that evening.

"I'll try," she said.

She was home that evening when he called, and he walked her to the Bayit. That night the onion chase took them to all parts of the city, but Ronald let the others do the sniffing at poles and trees for traces of onion smell the first team had left in its wake, and beside her, he listened to her tell of her problems at school and he told her more about

the Youth Movement. Then, after the game and a round of folk dancing back at the Bayit, he walked her home.

Monday night he came up to her house, and after the lesson they sat on the couch and talked.

"We had an excellent discussion Friday night," he told her. "It's too bad you couldn't be there." He waited for her to excuse herself again, and continued: "Tell me something, why don't you join the group officially?"

Eileen was very uncertain about it all; she had been puzzled by what her cousin Alec had told her when she had been at his house Friday night.

"You know, in a way, I was thinking," she began. "It's not really fair."

"What's not fair?"

"Well ... your family expects things of you, you can't get up and go off to Palestine just like that." She paused uncertainly; her troubled eyes fell to the rug. "I mean," she looked up again, "You have obligations to your family and they want you to ... "

"Obligations! That's a bunch of baloney! Can't you see your obligations don't mean a thing if you can't live in peace? Can you live here in peace, you mean to tell me, with all the anti-semitism and everything like that? Besides, they need young blood in kibbutzim, you know, the settlements in Palestine. That's the real, important thing!"

"I know, but my cousin, Alec Berecovitch - he's in medicine at McGill - and he was telling me, you know Palestine is the spiritual home

of all the Jews and any person who considers himself a Jew should be interested in what goes on there, and should try to be aware of - but you can't expect people living in a different climate and everything to get up and leave willingly because, you know, Alec was saying they have swamps and malaria and the soil is hard and rocky and it is very difficult, I mean ... "

"That's a bunch of bosh, if you ask me! And coming from a guy who's taking up medicine too, yet!"

"Alec is a brilliant boy!"

"Still, that doesn't mean anything. Don't you see the point? In Palestine you have a chance to do something with your life, to accomplish something. You have a chance to work the soil and to feel the soil under your feet. You have a chance to be rooted. Nobody can push you out when you're rooted in the soil. Don't you know that? And besides, you live on a kibbutz. Do you know how a kibbutz is organised? There's no rich man or poor man on a kibbutz. Everybody has as much as everybody else. And you don't have to worry about not having enough. There's a place for everything there, and everybody. You can be an engineer, or a doctor, or a painter, or a ditchdigger, and you're the very same. You are given a chance to do something, to be somebody, not to kill yourself in making a living. Don't you see the point?"

"Yes, I do see, but ... "

"But what?"

"Oh, I don't know, I'm all mixed up!"

The entire group was reading the Daily Compass because in it

they thought were to be found the only true accounts of what was happening in Palestine, how the British imperialistic rats were precipitating a war. On the first Friday night in January an older group put on a play depicting the historical tragedy of 1648, known as Kiddush Hashem. When the play had finished a tall stalwart youth called Mordecai got up and made a speech about the necessity of everyone coming to the collection Sunday morning which would be held at the Cartierville cemetery.

"Everybody must be there. This is very urgent," said Mordecai.

"And I expect you to be there too," said Yosef to Ronald later.

"This is no time for sleeping in."

"Don't worry. I'll be there," Ronald assured him.

Later, he walked home with Eileen and stood at the bottom of the stairs and talked with her. When he was about to leave, he said, "I'll meet you here Sunday morning, okay?"

"All right."

He called for her early and was satisfied that she wore a pair of blue jeans and looked like any other member of the Movement who would come to meetings regularly; this renewed his hope that he would see her Friday nights and Saturday nights, and perhaps during the week at the Bayit as well. They took the street car, and when they got off, they were almost in open country. The air was brisk and the leaves were wildly falling. They crossed the highway and took the pathway toward the cemetery.

Yosef and Simcha and several other leaders had already arrived at the cemetery. There they stood under great weeping willow trees, arms extended, holding out their collection boxes. When Ronald saw his leader he dashed towards him, and Eileen tagged along. She heard Yosef say: "Well, you made it, eh?" Yosef told him to stand near the iron fence painted grass green, but Eileen shuddered and said, "I don't want to be so near the graves!" "What to heck," Ronald said merrily, "You'll end up there anyways!" "Oh no she won't," Yosef called, "if anything she'll end up on a hill in Gilead or in Ephraim!" They all laughed, but Eileen was stubborn and Simcha said, "Oh sissy," but agreed to give up her post under the great umbrella-like trees to Ronald and Eileen.

Meantime they waited for the crowds to arrive; they cast angry glances at the few, bedraggled beggars standing with pleading eyes and opened purses ready to take the money which would otherwise go to the Jewish National Fund. Then, as Simcha moved close to one of the old women, she was told, "Go away little girl, I need the money more than you do!" Simcha felt very bad and she thought of the injustices of this society, but she didn't move away because she knew that this was one occasion in the year when you didn't have to explain to people why they should support the Jewish National Fund because it buys lands in Palestine for settlers going there. On this Sunday before the High Holidays the white and blue boxes would be filled rapidly by people who gave because giving alms brought luck, and joy, and protection from future bereavement.

Very soon a stream of cars moving bumper to bumper rolled by and arms thrust out of windows dropped coins into the boxes. It was ten o'clock; the greyness of the morning had dissolved and the sun sat smiling in the sky. The first group of mourners returned from the gravesides, their eyes redder than before.

"Open up your hearts and pockets to the Fighters of Israel!" the canvassers shouted. The coins danced in the box; the sun was sunnier; Eileen cried with a thin voice and smiled cute thank-yous to the troubled contributors.

The boxes slowly grew heavy and they managed to fill up six boxes brimming full so that the pennies and nickels and dimes were falling out when they re-crossed the highway. They sang the songs of Zion, now that they were allowed to sing; they talked and laughed excitedly, compared takes, and then they headed for the man-sized orange shell by the roadside and sipped thick foaming orange julep. Again they sang on the streetcar back to the Bayit. Everybody was excited and happy, but when they entered the Bayit Mordecai confronted them with a frenzied, pale face. He told them the morning's news that a platoon of Palmach soldiers had been ambushed and killed somewhere in the Negev, the southern part of Palestine, and among their number was a certain Montrealer who was known to several of them personally. The shocked, solemn words silenced them; then, they swore they would go out and collect money again and never stop collecting or doing or being Builders and Fighters for Israel.

Eileen and Ronald both forgot the sad news and jumped with

glee later when they learned that their take amounted to more than any other pair had collected. Ronald clasped her by the arm and said:

"Why don't you join up officially? Come on, it's only fifty cents you pay to the World Zionist Congress and you're a full fledged member!"

Eileen puckered her lips and hesitated. A few others heard Ronald make this suggestion and they joined him and helped him. Surprised and abashed, her face trembled into a smile and she was glad they were coaxing her; she wanted a bit more coaxing, and finally she said, "All right, I will!"

"Ata - girl, now you're a regular member," Ronald exulted as he walked her home. "So you have to come to the meetings regularly now!"

Eileen smiled and was strangely happy; she hardly knew if it was because she was now an official Zionist, or whether it was because of him.

Next Saturday afternoon he didn't think an excuse was necessary in order to see her. Since a stormy wind made the outdoors uninviting, they went to a movie. On the way, as they bent forward against the wind, he took her under the arm; he was tremendously stirred that she didn't take her arm away.

At the box office of the theatre he asked her to lend him fifteen cents.

"You won't mind, ai?" he apologized. "After all, you're a member of the group now, so it's equality between boys and girls."

"I know," she smiled.

"I'll give you back your money to-night," he added as they walked into the inner lobby.

"But you said it's equality, so I want to pay my share."

"Oh don't be silly."

The movie they saw was The Grapes of Wrath. He could not enjoy the film's grim reality because Eileen persisted in squirming and gasping at the plight of the dispossessed farmers. Her sensitivity and compassion for the sorrow of others upset him and made him irritable.

When the movie was over they left the theatre, and the first snow was falling. They decided to walk home and Ronald felt called upon to offer an explanation of the movie's meaning.

"In Palestine such a thing can never happen," he said, "because there the farmers aren't individualists; they live collectively and if ever anyone tried to kick them off the land they could fight back."

"Oh it's terrible ... do you remember that woman? And the old man? I've never seen such poverty!"

"That shows - maybe the world will get smart yet and realise that the best way to live is on a kibbutz where everyone is friends and helps one another ... "

They could spend but few afternoons seeing movies, because, as Barry pontifically insisted most of the movies made in Hollywood were pure trash; they didn't show real life. So they took regular walks through the streets of a nearby fashionable suburb and they gazed at the rich homes and talked of their aunts and uncles - friends and fami-

lies and teachers, of the things they hoped the future would hold and of the things they wanted to do. He told her that he wished to go to college, and what he expected to find in college. And when he realised she wouldn't make fun of his ideas and plans, he told her everything. This made her feel sure that he wasn't like other boys - so she told him everything too. Having made their mutual confessions they began to feel closely knit, and as they walked they held hands, at first loosely, then a little more audaciously. When they had said everything there seemed to be to say they would walk on silently and he would press her hand a little more tightly. She was glad that he wasn't like the other boys.

Towards evening they would linger at her doorway and lean against the bannister. The traffic always moved by slowly on both sides of the tree-lined boulevard; the dark shadows and blinding shafts of light would shift and glare upon them as they stood, irresolute and silent, finding it hard to say the final "I'll be seeing you," not wanting to leave just now, just now, a little bit later, and then that little bit later edging closer until the later was now, and all the wild poetry and music of a romance to be somehow dissolved, disappeared. Then an "I'll be seeing you," and she would walk up the stairs, feeling dejected, and he taking his long, slow steps until he would reach Park Avenue and lose himself in the raucous noises of shuttling streetcars and lights monotonous and cold, wishing he could remold the world, be the Creator perhaps of another world, so that he might rebuild it all from the first, the second, the third day - all, so that there would not be any good-byes, any "I'll be seeing yous," and remain forever in that

unimaginable bliss of a girl who was nothing much, not highly thought of, a mediocre individual, not pretty by ordinary standards, but by all other counts, divine.

After meetings he walked her home so that he could stay with her longer and press a bit closer and yet closer. Once he put his arms about her and she didn't resist. Then he put his cheek against hers and found it was cold and spicy. He felt her stir and feared that she was going to move away, so he relaxed and drew away of his own accord and tried to say the "I'll be seeing you" in order to be dramatic, but he couldn't bring himself to do it. He merely stood and looked at the sky and tried thinking elevated and detached thoughts, remembering the location of Sirius, the Dog star, Lord of the winter sky. He couldn't find it, shrugged his shoulders, and drew close to her again.

No matter how late it was she always asked him up to her house, particularly when later the winds bit savagely and the snow packed hard. She was encouraged by her mother who told her she preferred her coming upstairs with him than standing at the doorsteps so that the neighbours would talk. Once, when they had lounged at the chrome edged kitchen table nibbling cake and sipping hot tea, they got up, stretched with muffled yawns and stood in the dim orange lit hallway before the hall door, he laid his cheek against her warm forehead and brushed his lips against her face. He was afraid to move his lips to let her know he was really kissing her. When he prepared to leave they both felt awkward and depressed. Neither knew what to say.

Soon he began to wonder if he could kiss her on the lips instead of on the cheeks. Ardently desiring her, he held his breath as he moved toward her lips but he hadn't yet mustered up enough courage. He didn't want her to crane her face away from him. He tried several times, each time in the orange-lit hallway before the hall door. Finally he succeeded in meeting her lips and they stood there wondering what they were supposed to feel; then he said a hurried good night and hurried downstairs suffused with an unforgettable feeling of triumph and accomplishment.

From then on he could taste the sugary wetness of her lips whenever he wished. After the geometry lesson on Monday night they sat on the couch. The radio hummed softly and he drew her to him, slowly, in order not to seem too bold or perhaps too desirous, and kissed her freely, learning the rise of her nose from behind her eyes, the relief of her chin below her lips, and the tiny marks on her cheeks. He would kiss her avidly, folding her in his arms and making her broad shoulders and bosom disappear in his thin, fleshless arms.

But when he left her, he always felt empty. The emptiness and pain of misunderstanding all drained him of hope. And after he had spent a whole evening at her house kissing and fondling her, he did not know what there was, or where to find it.

One evening he asked her to turn on some music. When the insinuating music streamed forth he took her in his arms and asked her to dance. She opened her eyes wide with surprise.

"But I heard you say couple dancing is bourgeois!"

"When did I say that?" He gazed at her as though he was trying hard to remember.

"Last Saturday night. Don't you remember we were discussing 'What is Society' and you said ... "

"I never said that," he lied.

"Oh you said it all right. But you forgot!"

Nevertheless she flew into his arms, and so they moved to the rhythm of the music. They danced awhile, skirting the far edge of the room so that her parents wouldn't see them. When the broadcast commercials came on and the music stopped they waited and felt clumsy before the music started again. And as they did not know how to follow the next number they sat on the couch and waited for another number to come on, or for the telephone to ring, or for something ... Soon he stood with his coat in the passageway, and they wondered if the silence from the kitchen meant that her parents had been listening to what was going on.

"Eileen, I'm awfully surprised at you," her mother said to her, some time later. "It's all right to kiss - but the way you were carrying on!"

She said nothing more, but left Eileen to brood over the matter. That night Eileen lay in bed thinking that she was becoming like those other girls, that she was losing the respect of her mother, and since he was not like the other boys she would lose his respect too if she went on like this. All night she tossed and turned. Her throat felt dry at school all morning, and her French teacher reprimanded her twice for

losing the place. She told Marion that she wished - oh she wished - she didn't know what she wished until she began thinking about those girlish vows of celibacy which at the age of twelve she had made when she found out what married people do. When Ronald saw her again she appeared listless and she didn't understand the geometry theorem he was trying to explain. This made her feel even worse because he would think she was stupid; besides, she couldn't speak to him all evening because her throat was parched. She drank more and more water, but that didn't help either. Then Ronald began to get worried about her protracted silences and asked her what was wrong.

"Things," she gasped.

"What things?" he insisted. "Tell me."

She didn't reply, but her gaze remained listless and glued to the carpet. Anxiously she switched on the radio and turned it off again, and when the telephone rang she rose quickly and answered it, but didn't laugh the way she usually did when she learned it was her Uncle Eddy, or her friend Marion.

Ronald began to think seriously about the matter. He didn't get anywhere until the next day when he went to Kresges and bought a fifteen cent notebook like Barry's and later wrote down something which he titled "Thoughts", in which he felt he understood the reason why she wasn't the way she usually was.

"I'm seeing her too much," he wrote, "way too much. All the time we talk and talk about the same old thing and the same old story about what her mother says and about what her mother thinks ... " At

this point, his imagination excited, took flight. He dropped his pencil and mused, "Yes, I see it, I see it, we shouldn't be spending so much time sitting and talking, especially me, since I'm supposed to make good marks at school and win a scholarship - and also I should be spending more time with the group, because I agree with what Ashad- Ha- am says about culture. Yes, I think Yosef is right when he says we should spend our time in creative activities, not like in this society ... "

When he discovered this he felt immensely relieved. He phoned Eileen immediately, but while doing so his mother told him to take in some coal from his shed, and he said, "Wait a minute!" His mother began to shout, "I have no time for that lousy girlfriend of yours. I need it right away, do you understand?" and he put down the phone.

"Will you wait one minute?" he mustn't get sore, he mustn't get sore, he had promised himself.

"Ronnie, take that girlfriend of yours and dump her into the river. I'm not interested you should have a girlfriend at such an early age anyways. Now look, I have no time. I need the coal!"

But this provoked him too much; he put on his coat and left the house. For five minutes he walked the streets, smouldering with fury and anger. Returning home, his mother was quiet, so he dialed Eileen's number. The line was busy, and it was busy for the next hour.

The Sabbath candles quivered when the whistle blew and the leader stepped forward into the middle of the circle.

"We have here with us a person most of us know," he began. "Zvi Bereovitch is spending his last Oneg Shabbath with us here in Montreal. He is going to be a pioneer in Palestine, work on the land, and redeem it ... I want Zvi to come up and say a few words."

An anxious scuffle of movement pressed against Ronald and Eileen who stood near each other as they watched Zvi's muscular, gangling form come forward. His hair hadn't been combed for days, it seemed, but his face was clean and shaven. He wore a white shirt rolled at the sleeves. He placed himself awkwardly in the middle of the circle.

"I want to tell you," he said, "that it has been awfully nice working with you. I know that I'm not really leaving you because I'm sure that some day all of you will come to Eretz Israel to work, and live there. It's a strange feeling when a person gets up and speaks to his chaverim like this. I can remember so many evenings, standing where you are now, listening to my older chaverim speaking before they were going to leave. I can remember Chava Wiseman, particularly, back in 1939 before the White Paper came out, how she told us what it felt like, leaving your home, your family, going off possibly never to see your parents again, and knowing that you are going because you want to go and not because you are forced to go, right now, like European Jews are; and I can remember Sadya Boxenbaum who many of us here knew personally and who quite recently died fighting for the Homeland in the platoon that was ambushed ... Often, when I used to hear a chaver speak his farewell, I used to wonder 'Will I someday be in his place? Will I be

going too?' I must admit it gives me a funny feeling telling you this, because I remember how I first came down to the Bayit. We had just moved in here, and we were setting up, that is, the other leaders, most of whom are now in Aretz, were setting up - and I remember standing there at the door, before I had even come in, wondering what it was all about. It is a very strange feeling thinking back to those early days, and realising that I and the chaverim who are going across with me can truly say in the words of our poet Bialik, 'The way of the chalutz is long and difficult, but it is the only way!'"

There was a tremendous ovation of shouting and cheering when Zvi had finished speaking, and they all put their arms to each others' shoulders and raised their voices in the traditional farewell song. A crowd of chaverim pushed and wedged their way toward him in order to shake his hand and to promise him that they would be seeing him in the Promised Land. He smiled happily, envelepped by a mass of people, his comrades, chaverim. Moments later the inevitable stamping of feet and syncopated rhythm of the hora began, the wide shoulder to shoulder circle broadening as a few lusty shouts stirred up their blood:

Emek emek Ayodah!
Emek emek Horah!

And the wildly veering, swinging, stamping, shouting dancers whirled about in a moment's unforgettable bond of purposefulness and idealism.

"You don't believe ai, you don't believe?" Eli was shouting at Barry as the dancing petered out and while the noise and confusion remained. "I'm telling you. If you won't take my word for it, ask Yosef!"

"But you're kidding!" Barry smiled, doubting the kind of doubt which is pleasant to the doubter.

"What are you talking about if you don't know," Louis insisted. "We're telling you, so what do you think? Look - if he's not going over because he's a pilot, he'd leave after September, after camp and everything!"

Barry said nothing for awhile, his doubt growing into a wide grin. "You're kidding! Wow! You're kidding! He's going to fly a plane against the Egyptian Air Force. Wowee!"

"Sure, Yosef was telling us not to spread it because it's illegal!"

"Yeah - Jews fighting for their own country is illegal," Louis groaned, trying to appear sardonic.

"And there's a whole bunch of them. Five guys who used to be in the Air Force in the States, and two guys who used to be in the RCAF .. and they're all leaving, or left ... "

That moment Yosef swung over to them and placed his arms about Barry's and Louis' shoulders.

"We're not going to have a meeting to-night," Yosef said, "because Zvi is leaving Montreal to-morrow morning. The leaders are spending this last night with him, so make sure you plan a good activity for the group tonight without the help of Simcha or myself."

"Good show!" said Louis. "Let's have a couple of good shots of run-shee-run!"

"Nah, let's have a discussion!"

"Come on, let's go for a walk," Ronald suggested to Eileen.

"I have something important to tell you."

She hesitated to move, and looked up at him uncertainly.

"I think Barry and Rite are organising some activities without the leaders," she said, haltingly.

"Nah - it'll be a lot of junk. Come on, let's go for a walk!"

She left the Bayit with him and they walked some distance until they reached Park Avenue. They walked silently until they reached the railyards in the northern section of the city. They stood beside the fence near the tracks and gazed into the night drawn and made long and lonely by the ever grinding, puffing and whistling of the trains in the dark. It was cold and Ronald held her closely by the arm and started once and then again to tell her about ... but Eileen spoke first.

"Gee - isn't Zvi lucky?" she said. They turned and began walking towards home.

He didn't answer. His eyes felt sore at the sight of the neon signs and the dreadful bareness of the streets in a nighttime when there should have been the magic of a million mysteries suspended high in a star studded sky.

"You can't imagine how really lucky he is," he managed to say. "Sort of like being able to do something with his life ... get away, not just piling up a stack of days to his credit - empty days - christ, I don't know ... "

She sighed with him and didn't speak. She gripped his arm tighter as they dribbled across the icy sections of the sidewalks. A

cold wind blew making her bend slightly to disentangle her coat and dress caught between her knees. He saw that it was inappropriate to ask whether he could come upstairs with her, but he took her key and opened the door. As usual the house was spotlessly clean and on the cabinet in the dining room the Sabbath candles were glowing their last, fuming pungent paraffin to accompany the tenuous whisps of trailing smoke.

With a hint of weariness Eileen set the layer cake upon the table and slipped down onto the chair facing Ronald.

"You know - I was thinking," he said, fiddling with his fork. "I think I found the answer to why you were blue last time."

She remained silent, stiffening in her seat but slightly. She raised her eyebrows to ask why.

"It's because - we, we sit around too much ... and don't do anything - I mean, we should start doing things - become, maybe 'active' like Yosef says. Do things around the Bayit - you know, for the Movement."

She was unmoved. He continued.

"You know, that's the way we should carry on our relationship since we're both in the Movement. You know, last week Louis and I were making posters, and I'm telling you, we were having so much fun ... it really is fun ... you can't imagine how much fun it is!" He paused a while.

"Don't you agree?" he asked, noting her thoughtful silence.

She nodded her head, but the way she did it suggested to him that she was falling into a mood. He got up, hands in his pockets, and

paced the inlaid linoleum floor. His movements made her edgy.

"Eileen?" he finally asked, "you don't feel bad because of what I said?"

"No."

"Then what is it?"

She tried gathering herself together, to reassure him that she was merely considering his suggestion, but his urgent, anxious manner didn't help any. He repeated the question and she became gloomy.

"Nothing," she whispered.

"Oh, but there is something the matter!"

"No, there isn't - nothing at all!"

Saying so she arose from her chair and walked over to the sink. He followed her and embraced her while she faced the steaming tap.

"Is there anything wrong though?"

She turned and faced him.

"No, nothing is - really!"

She looked at his worried expression; she tried to smile. He drew her away from the sink and seated her on his lap. He kissed her over and over again. The clock ticked past twelve.

"I'm afraid it's late though," she said, afterwards.

"But you don't feel bad about my idea, do you?"

"Oh silly, of course not."

He kissed her again, drawing the soft flower of her lips into his mouth.

"Eileen, it's time to go," her mother's sleep-ridden voice croaked from the bedroom.

Both whitened. Eileen nervously tip-toed to a chair. The reassurance they had just given to each other was blotted away, destroyed. They felt their pulses battering at the walls of their temples and wrists. In a few minutes he managed to collect himself and put on his coat. They stood at the doorway for a moment. He kissed her violently, hardly aware that she desired to be cuddled and treated tenderly, not hugged and mashed.

"I hurt you that time," he said, fussing to wipe the hurt away.

"I like it though," she brought herself to say, and she convinced him by reaching for more.

"When will I see you?"

"Will you come baby-sitting with me on Sunday night?" she asked.

"I need the money. You know my father has such expenses, and since the war, business hasn't been too good. Will you?"

"Of course."

"Good - I'll be seeing you then."

He started kissing her again and said he wouldn't anymore but then he kissed her a half dozen times before he staggered out into the night air.

"Ronnie, where have you been so late?"

"I've been out."

"Where have you been? What do you mean coming home so late at night?"

"Oh - leave me alone!"

"I'll leave you alone when I'll be in Cartierville cemetery! I don't want you coming home so late, ah! Or else I'll lock the door and you can sleep outside."

He slammed the door of his room shut and stood before his bed which now seemed so lonely, empty and unconsoling. How much longer would it be that he would be able to marry Eileen and have her all the time? He heard his mother getting back into bed. Now the house was quiet. He undressed, climbed into bed, and though it was late and he was tired, he tossed and turned. How much longer, he asked himself before he fell asleep, and dreamed something which seemed to give him an answer. But when he awoke he couldn't, although he tried hard, remember the dream.

Friday night few customers came into the store. Eileen's father worked assiduously, straightening the stock on his shelves. His wife leaned against the counter. The cellophane wrappers and heavy brown paper rustled as her husband worked.

"You know Benny, - I'm certainly glad Eileen has a boy-friend. It gives a girl a lift. You know how girls are at that age. And she has changed quite a bit. Have you noticed?"

"Sure, I've noticed."

"She puts on nice clothes more often, and she's not as moody as she used to be when she never went out altogether. I mean the girl wouldn't walk on the streets alone months after it happened."

"Certainly, I remember,"

"Poor girl, it really shook her, although the doctor said it was nothing serious, there really was nothing - although I'd rather not

talk about it, thank God it wasn't worse, - but since then she hasn't been the same. I mean, remember when she graduated from public school the teacher told us she has had fine children, but Eileen was among the finest; and remember, she used to be a leader wherever she used to go. She used to get up and speak, and not be afraid; but lately, since it happened ... "

"Well, gradually she'll forget about the whole thing."

Mrs. Rudner heaved a deep sigh. "I hope to God she does. But you know, the group she belongs to did her a lot of good. What do you think?"

"Certainly, it did an awful lot of good."

"Yesterday I met Mrs. Sankoff while I was waiting for you to come with the car and she stopped and we talked for a moment. So she said, 'I saw your girl with a boy - such a fine looking boy.' So I said, 'Yes, they're friends. You know how it is with youngsters!' She said she has a girl who's thirteen years old, so already she wants to go out with boys. 'She's boy crazy,' she said so I said, 'That's how girls are at the age.' What should I have told her? That a girl should develop other interests? Look, the way things have turned out, you can't be too clever. I never thought that when I got married and have children, that my child would have the kind of difficulties Eileen had the first two years of High School. I'm not right?"

"Certainly."

"So that's what I said. 'You can't be your own judge, much less being another's.' So long as things turn out right. Last week she came home, they were out on a walk - and she looked so blue, so I asked

her, 'What's the matter?' So she said, 'Nothing, nothing is wrong.' So I started asking her, 'So if nothing is wrong, why are you so blue?' Anyways, to make a long story short - it seems as if they had a little argument, the purfolg, and he loses his temper easily. So I told her, 'You know Eileen, he's not the only boy there is in Montreal. There are plenty of boys,' - am I wrong telling her?"

"Certainly not."

"I mean I have nothing against the boy, he seems to be very nice. But kids - you can't tell them anything. Still, a girl, she'll be sixteen soon, and then seventeen, and before you know it ... so I told her, 'A girl has to think of a future!'"

Sunday evening they walked up to Bernard street and came to the apartment Eileen was to mind. The couple was a little distressed to see their sitter accompanied by a boy friend since the last regular sitter they had been having on Sunday evenings was now in a special hospital, it was rumoured among the couples who had had her in for baby sitting, convalescing from the effects of an abortion. They only made faces and said nothing.

When the house was empty Ronald sat closely beside her on the couch. The radio played; he fondled her hands.

"Not now," she cautioned. "Let's make sure they don't come back right away."

Later they discussed matters which made their lying side by side on the couch seem more casual. He embraced her tightly, and she

smiled when he looked at her, but didn't move. Afraid of themselves, they got up and danced and Ronald asked if there wasn't anything for them to eat, and Eileen said she would look and see.

They came to this same apartment next week and the week to follow. Since the couch in the living room was too narrow, they lay together on the soft carpet. She felt a brisk draught of cold air when he pulled up her dress and rubbed the finely blond hair-sprinkled softness of her thighs. She did not blush to help him to remove her panties. She watched him carefully, her eyes watery with love, as he sat up and gazed at the flower of her nakedness. He kissed her warm pulsating flesh and breathed the faint intimations of her body's perfume. She was wide-hipped, though supple, soft as a feather. He revelled in this softness, in the marvellous texture of her skin. He fingered her belly, he kissed the counters of her breasts, but he couldn't persuade her to remove her brassiere. Then he laid her across his lap: he said he was going to spank her and she agreed: her buttocks flushed deep red. The room resounded with sharp thwacking sounds and she asked him not now - the baby might wake up.

They used every opportunity to lie together, on carpets, on couches, and as the May sky grew red with sunsets he carried her into her bedroom: she protested mildly, but he kissed her fears away and swore he would love her forever. Then she began to change in front of him. He noted the kind of underclothes she wore, he became interested in why she wore a girdle.

"Because a girl has to wear one," she told him.

"Oh, I know, you wear one because you're fat!"

"I'm not fat," she pouted.

"So why do you wear a girdle?"

"Because a girl has to wear one - so she shouldn't spread."

He laughed as she sulked and she asked him what he was laughing about, but he kept laughing. "Well, if you don't believe me, I can't help it!" and she shrugged her shoulders.

Saturday afternoons, when her parents were in the store, they would secure the safety catch and go into the bedroom and draw the blinds. After he had fondled her so that his arms ached they would listen to the clock tick the hours by. Often he would want to get up and do something while she still wanted to lie there. She would feel depressed and listless and he did not know what to say.

"Is there anything wrong?" he asked, crouching over her. Are you sure nothing is wrong?"

"Nothing," she said finally, and jumped up and straightened her nylon slip under her creased skirt. She combed her hair before the mirror. She felt raw, and her arms ached. He stood behind her and surrounded her with his arms.

"Isn't there anything wrong, but?"

She tilted her head back and he kissed her on the mouth. Her arms around his shoulders, she leaned against his unsubstantial chest and looked at him, but she couldn't tell him she felt she was giving all of herself and received nothing. She felt that she loved him and if she gave all and received nothing it was all for love anyway.

"You feel empty, don't you?" he said softly.

"No, I don't," she said, jumping to her tip toes and kissing his lips in little geometric patterns.

"Oh, but you do - I knew that you do! "

"It's not true," she repeated. She gazed at him solemnly. The pale light from the window had slowly transformed her face into a trembling leaf of innocence. "I like doing things for you," she breathed.

"Oh I love you, I love you so much, I really do!"

"It's about time we started getting after Ronald and Eileen and start influencing them," Yosef remarked to Simcha on the evening they met to plan and discuss the forthcoming discussion of the P.C. "All they live in is their own nutshell. We're accomplishing practically nothing with them, from the point of view of the Movement."

"I don't see why we should interfere with their private lives," Simcha returned. "If that's the way they want to have it, let them. We can't force them to be active in the Movement if they don't want to."

"How can you speak like that after being a leader in the Movement so long? I can understand your present difficulties and doubts about the Movement and so on, but you have to realize there's an educational problem to work out here. Ronald and Eileen are wasting themselves on each other, the way I see it. In fact it doesn't take more than a casual observer to see that. Now our problem is to get them active in the Movement, and out of each other!"

"You don't have to force the Movement down their throats, you know. I disagree with the whole business of Movement pressure. If a person doesn't want to become active he's practically excommunicated. A person can agree with the principle of the thing, without becoming so - so involved."

"I think you're being immature in your approach," Yosef assailed her, "because your personal problem is making you short sighted. I feel it's impossible to create chalutzim unless a positive effort is exerted by us. If we don't exert pressure, then outside society will exert it. It's not a neutral situation. It's either them or us. And I think it should be us. It must be us, otherwise, how can we fulfill the needs and tasks of chalutzim?"

"The problem here at hand is whether we're going to let them shlep around, do nothing in the Movement, or whether we're going to use their energies creatively. Especially since our concert is three weeks away. I think our aim should be to get both Ronald and Eileen to participate in it."

Yosef didn't find it hard to recruit Ronald to take part in the play which they were putting on as part of a three hour program which was to be held at the Monument National theatre the following month.

Excitedly he told Eileen about his role. Eileen felt somewhat anxious when she learned that the play they were putting on was written by a very great playwright and that it was about the position

of the Jew in middle class America, and how necessary it was for them as a people, if they were interested in true liberty and freedom, to emigrate to Palestine. Secretly she wished her leader had also asked her to participate, because she would have felt funny asking for a role. No she didn't have time to take part anyways because of school and everything; but she wished - she hardly knew what. When she had been eleven and twelve years old she had always been so active in the clubs she had belonged to then; she used to get high marks, and was the brightest and most popular girl. She remembered what the social worker who had led the group she had been president of had said about her; she had real leadership qualities, there was no doubt about that. Then why didn't she ever do anything? Why did she sit around and mope instead of letting that urge to be someone and do things take hold of her once more, and ... oh, she didn't know, why she felt so ...

For two weeks Ronald couldn't see her as often as was his habit. As the date of the performance neared, the number of rehearsals continued to multiply. Finally, two weeks before the play Eileen learned that he was fed up.

"I don't know why I started bothering with all that nonsense and stupid junk," he told her. "Christ, those rehearsals can get you sick to the stomach."

Vaguely because she was accustomed to doing so, she sympathized with his distress.

"All I've had for the past two weeks is rehearsals," she heard

him say, "rehearsals, rehearsals! I want to spend my time the way I like, not the way I'm told to!"

She cleared her throat in order to say something. In a way, she was going to say, she felt he was being, well, childish about the whole thing. Just because there was a little responsibility involved, a little bit of putting himself out, he didn't have to act so childishly.

Instead, she said, "But the play is soon going to be."

"Yes, but all the time I've been wasting at rehearsals, I could have spent the way I like. All because of Yosef. 'It's very important that the Youth Movement present itself to the community once a year,'" he mimicked scornfully. "Fat lot I care whether the Movement presents itself once a year, or once in ten years."

She didn't reply immediately. She thought, then cleared her throat and said, "The Movement does demand much of an individual's time."

The first advance of a summer's breeze stirred the new leaves on the trees of Mount Royal. Yosef's group left the stuffy Bayit and trailed up above Fletcher's Field and sat on the new grass.

"As everyone knows," Yosef told his group that evening, "we're having a camp this summer. Last year it wasn't possible for financial reasons. Of course we expect everyone to come to camp, regardless if you plan to work, or go to the country with your parents. The camp lasts for five weeks and there'll be loads of fun. Eli, tell us about your experience in camp five years ago."

In incoherent ejaculations Eli began to tell them about the goings on of camp, and why in this camp everything was different, because here you learned a good deal about Zionism and becoming a true Zionist yourself. Yosef prodded and sparked his enthusiasm and soon those who had been to camp before joked and laughed and recalled roaring bonfires and the raids they had planned and pulled off against the girls' groups at night, how they had stolen everyone's shoes and re-sold them at a nickel a pair and how the proceeds went to the Jewish National Fund. They tickled their memories with thoughts of how the food tasted terrible but about which no one complained because this was a real camp, not like the sissy camps where you paid five hundred dollars for the season and got a counsellor to tell you when to eat and when to sleep and when to burp. Soon they were roused to the point of shouting and joking and wishing it was June already and they were all aboard the bus headed for camp. Yosef controlled and directed their enthusiasm with skilful devices of group direction he had picked up in group leader's manuals. He suggested that they do all they could to be out at camp this summer; it was very important that they all come to camp because in this way alone could they live like real ehalutzim, free, in the open air, and learn the principles of ehalutziuth, of self-reliance, and scouting. In this way they could learn to live together in a group with others and not be selfish as a pig like in this society.

After the meeting they learned a cheer they could use in camp and Eli said he knew some code words they could employ while raiding the girls' tents which he would teach them the very first night at

camp.

Dazzled with delight when the meeting was over, they drifted over to Park Avenue where they met Simeha's group returning from a late meeting.

Ronald moved over to where Eileen stood chattering with Rita. He drew her away from the rest to ask what her group had discussed.

"She told us about camp," Eileen replied.

"Won't it be terrific?"

"Superb! Really - I'm looking forward to it already!"

Then Eileen put her hand over her mouth and said, "Simeha hardly told us anything - it was Rita who told us the most - I don't think Simeha is going to be at the camp!"

Afterwards he walked her home and since her parents weren't home he went upstairs with her. Eileen switched on a single shaded lamp and they sat by the open parlour window. A faint breeze lifted the sheer curtains, billowed them, and curled them. The air was fresh and as she nestled against him, there seemed to be dew in her hair.

"I'm so glad we'll be in camp together," he said.

"Oh me too."

"You'll be sure to come, ai?"

"Of course."

"I'll be able to see you every day. For five weeks - imagine - every single day."

"It'll be wonderful."

"And you know what else?"

"I know."

".... What?"

"Nothing ... "

"Why nothing?"

"Because nothing - oh bend down, I want to kiss you - oh you!"

After her kisses, he said, "Eileen, why do you hide your thoughts from me?"

"But I don't hide anything. I'd hate to think I did. Really - I would!"

"I don't want we should keep things from each other ... you won't hide anything, ai?"

She gazed at him for a stricken moment, then she flung herself into his arms again.

"Of course not, I love you, I love you with all my heart," she cried.

Mrs. Green was very suspicious about camps. Everytime Ronald raised this subject - and he followed a policy of mentioning it morning, noon, and night so that she might get used to the idea - his mother sourly rejoined that she didn't care what he said: she didn't like camps, that's all.

"I'm not taking chances," she said. "I don't like camps. Do me something, I simply don't like them! They're not responsible people and the counsellors are not the kind of people I want to trust my child with."

"Ma, you're so old fashioned!"

"Call me what you like, whether I'm old fashioned or new fashioned, I trust them as far as I can throw a piano. Ronnie, do you think I forgot what happened to Abie?" referring to an infamous family legend in which a far fetched cousin had received a sun stroke at a charity camp years ago. "I'm not sending my kids to these camps."

During the first week of his let-me-go program he screamed and raged.

"Mind your own business," he hollered. "I'm going whether you like it or not!"

"You're not going."

"I'm going!"

"You're not going, and when I say you're not, you're not and that's all there is to it. You think I'm so foolish as to let you go to camp? When grass will grow in the palm of my hand I'll let you go. Look Ronnie, you think I don't know what you're up to? I know, I know, I'm not so dumb as you think. If it were not for that girl you wouldn't think only of going to camp and you'd study more. How do you expect to win a scholarship with that girl? Besides, you're too young to have a steady girlfriend. So cut it out while the cutting out is good."

"Damn it, mind your own business and leave me alone! I'm going to camp!"

By the second week in June his mother hadn't changed her view, nor had Ronald re-planned the strategy of his nagging. The third week, ten days before camp opened, Mr. Green was notified of his son's outland-

ish idea.

"Camp?" he replied indifferently. "What has he got to do in camp?"

"Who knows? That boy hasn't been the same lately. Everyday he gets a new crazy idea. Last week he comes and starts talking about going to Palestine and yesterday he was telling me he's going to hitch hike to California. If you ask me he doesn't know whether he's coming or going!"

"How can he go to camp when he has to get a job? What's the matter, he expects me to support him all the time?"

"That's what I tell him, 'Ronnie, your father is sick, he can't work so hard. You've got ten weeks of vacation, earn some money!' No, he wants to go to camp. I don't blame the kid. I'd like to go to the country myself, but in our circumstances, who can afford it?"

"He thinks he's the only one in this house. Tell him if he's such a big man with camps, let him go to work better."

"I was going to tell him, go to camp for two weeks, for three weeks - but for five weeks? what do you say?"

But his father did not say anything. Matters rested.

Eileen's going to camp was attended by lavish preparations. Her mother offered no objection to her going, and her father, as always, held the same opinion as his wife. All that remained was to outfit her appropriately.

Every afternoon for a week she visited store after store. When

she couldn't get the exact fit or the precise colour her father took her to the factories, and then to a dressmaker. Gradually she acquired a wardrobe of summer apparel: slacks, skirts, beach wear, blouses, under and outer paraphernalia which would satisfy the taste of a fashion queen. She enjoyed buying clothes; the colour, the style, the texture and contrasts in material and shade delighted her; and her father's generosity in this, as in all matters, did all to encourage her.

Friday night Ronald came early to the Bayit; Eileen wasn't with him because an aunt had invited her for supper, though she said she would be over later. In the meantime Rita was telling him that the Klu Klux Klan is really a Fascist organization which shows what is really happening to American democracy.

He saw Eli enter the Bayit, red-faced with excitement, seeking someone to whom he could convey the news of the calamity he had just heard about. Seeing Ronald and Rita, he dashed up to them and beckoned them into the back room.

"Did you hear what happened?" Eli stage-whispered excitedly.
"You haven't heard?"

"No - what. Tell us!"

"Simcha has left the Youth Movement!"

"What do you mean?" they asked, astonished.

"She's left - she's quit - she doesn't belong anymore."

"Why not?" Ronald asked.

"She says she can't be a chalutz. Imagine - she actually quit!"

"She can't be a chalutz?" Rita repeated in amazement. "What in the dickens does that mean?"

"I don't know," said Eli. "Oh, here comes Yosef."

Yosef could see from their expressions that they already knew, hence he approached them warily. He had hoped that the news should not leak out prematurely, that is, before he had the opportunity to provide a clarification and a correct approach to the event.

Eli barged towards him and began pumping him with questions. Ronald and Rita did likewise.

"Wait until we have our meeting to-night," he persuaded them.

"What about the girls' group?" Ronald asked. "Now they have no leader."

"They're getting a new leader. But tonight, the two groups will meet together."

The following week Rita called and told Eileen their new leader was going to be at the Bayit. When Eileen approached Barry and asked him if he knew who the new leader of the girls' group was, Barry replied, "I hear she's from Toronto."

"All the way from Toronto to be our leader!" she squealed.

"Sure - that's what Yosef told me," Barry said.

Several others were discussing what their new leader would be like when a girl with bloated red cheeks entered. They stopped talking and stared at her curiously. She waited for no one to greet her, but pulled off her raincoat, rubbed the palms of her hands together, and went about introducing herself to everyone.

"My name is Tzipporah - I'm going to be your new leader - come on - let's dance a hora!"

They all joined in and in wild excitement stamped about the room until they were exhausted and gasped for breath. Tzipporah then rubbed her hands together and was prepared to dance another one with any comer.

The two groups of boys and girls sat on parallel benches that evening as Yosef introduced Tzipporah. When he gave her a chance to utter a few remarks, she suggested that they choose a joint name for both groups.

"It has to show the spirit of the group," she insisted.

"And it has to be in Hebrew," she declared.

Finally, after wrangling good naturedly they decided on the name Ha-Koach. This meant "strength" and it would symbolise the strength of the Jewish people.

"Good," said Tzipporah, "now let's get up and dance another hora."

Eli and Barry couldn't help turning their faces away and laughing inside themselves at the way Tzipporah's hefty shanks and telephone-pole legs beat out the one-two-three rhythm of the hora.

"They've got to be worked on," Tzipporah said to Yosef when the meeting was over. "They haven't got a strong enough feeling for the group. That's what we have to give them. I feel we have to apply more symbolism, more songs, names, things like that ..."

"Yes, but what is more important is that they understand the

ideology of the Movement," Yosef put in.

"Ideology, ~~ab~~ideology, the important thing is chalutzie living. Now that camp is almost here we'll really be able to work towards giving them a general understanding of the Movement. By next September we can expect them to become leaders around the Bayit - go out and organise Youth Groups - things like that ... " Tzipporah broke off. "Ahh, I wish it was time for camp already. I'm just waiting to breathe the country air. Fesh - I hate the city. And this dump is no better than Toronto!"

"Ronald, Pa and I don't want you to go to that camp!"

"Will you stop bothering me? Where's my pyjamas? Chrissakes, they aren't in this drawer ... why in the hell don't you ever have things ready in this damn house?"

"Ronnie, I don't like camps. They're dangerous. Listen to me, don't go!"

"For chrissakes, why can't I do what I like around this place, ah? Where's another pair of pyjamas?"

"I'll have to wash the other pair - Ronnie, I don't want you to go."

"Oh, damn it! I never have things ready in this house - here, wash them fast. The baggage is leaving tonight ... "

His mother picked up the soiled pyjamas crumpled on the table. She turned toward the kitchen. "Ronnie, if you go to that camp and anything happens to you, then don't come crying to me. I'm not going to spend three years nursing you if you get sick. Don't say afterwards I

didn't warn you!"

The telephone rang. He dashed over to it. "Quiet, will you! All right, I heard what you said. Quiet!" He lifted the receiver. "Hello, oh - Eileen - hi ... "

"If I would have known that that's what that lousy organisation does to kids," his mother's voice moaned from the kitchen, "I would have sent the police there and closed down that bunch!"

"... I just got a pair of slacks tailor made. You should see them. They're grey flannels. They're really terrific!"

"Eileen, wait a moment please!" He pressed his hand over the mouth of the receiver. "Ma, will you for chrissakes shut up!"

"Your girlfriend screams at her mother like that too?"

"Hello - Eileen - there's a racket going on here - Eileen? Are you still there?"

"Yes."

"What were you saying? So - go on ... "

"If she knew what sort you really were," his mother grumbled, "she would drop you so flat you wouldn't know what hit you!"

"Yes, - I'm still here."

"Never mind the racket. It's my mother. So ... "

A leaden silence.

"So - you were telling me something ... "

"Ronnie?"

"How much did you pay for your slacks?"

"Why do you speak to your mother like that?"

"Oh nuts! What's the difference. You were telling me something about your slacks. So go on."

"You should try to be polite to her."

His next words caught in his throat and in the dense silence, he felt the demon creeping up on him, the choking red-faced pre-sentiment he had come to know every time her scruples forced her to cross-question his short temperedness, probe into his unrelenting selfishness.

"Eileen, are you free now? ... Good, I'm coming over, I have to speak to you right away!"

He dashed over to her house and found her arranging the clothing she had bought that afternoon. He pulled her away and threw himself upon her and kissed her vehemently, without pause. "Ronnie, my father is home now," she gasped. "Please, not now."

He slipped off the bed and sank to his knees, still gripping her tightly as she pulled her skirt down and re-arranged her dishevelled hair. "Eileen, you're not sore at me?" he pleaded.

She bit her lip. She resisted her desire to cuddle him.

"No, really," she whispered, as he pressed his question over and over again.

"What then? Answer me darling!"

"Nothing. Nothing at all," she said, rising against his obstinate clasp about her hips, holding her down. "It's just that I feel terrible when I hear you speak to your mother like that."

"But all that happened was ... "

"Never mind. I don't want to hear about it. Really I don't."

But you shouldn't. It really isn't fair."

A vicious gloom thickened in him until she bent down and kissed him. She looked at him with tenderness and drew her arms about him. He kissed her back, and she cuddled him and smiled. In a moment everything was all right.

"Let me see your new slacks," he asked, on his feet now.

She scampered into the living room and quickly returned with the gabardines spread over her arms. "Feel the cloth - isn't it terrific? And look at the style. It's the latest."

"They're really sharp - do they fit?"

"Of course, they were made to order."

"Try them on - I want to see them on you."

"Okay - wait, I'll go into the bathroom and change ... "

"No, I want you to change in here!"

"But I can't - my father's home," she protested. He gave her a quick peck on the cheek, and in a moment, she reappeared in the handsomely tailored slacks. "You look beautiful," he exclaimed, and muffled her insistent questions as to whether they fitted well with a volley of back-bending kisses.

"I'm glad you like them," she said. "You know my mother wanted me to get another pair, - they were corduroys - but I knew you didn't like corduroys ."

"Eileen, you know what, you're too good for me," he said suddenly.

"Why do you say that?" she asked; it came out as an afterthought.

"It's true, isn't it? You know - when I think of it - there's hardly a fault in you I know."

Her eyebrows lifted in a ridge as she listened and he drew her up on her tip toes and she threw back at just the right angle. She was dizzy when he let her go, and she started folding up the articles she had been showing him. She moved to the opposite side of the room and looked at him.

"There's plenty of faults you have," she said, standing now on the other side of the bed, but seeing the intimation of trouble in his eyes, she knelt on the bed before her and reached out for him standing on the other side. "But I love you so much, I love you - so what's the difference ...?"

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P A R T T H R E E

The camp that the Youth Movement owned lay five miles north of the little French Canadian town of St. Jerome. Set off some five hundred feet away from the dirt road skirting the North River, the camping grounds straddled a piece of level grassy ground which would be trampled down firmly after the second day of camp. Surrounded by a forest, the camp's premises were poorly equipped, without electricity or showers, refrigerators, or bunks for that matter. Khaki U.S. army tents served as the sole shelter besides the long plank-boarded dining hall (whose walls bore pen-knife inscriptions dating back to 1936). There was a shack which served as a kitchen, the walls of which were as black as the fir trees standing all about the area, but not quite so romantic, with the tin sink which got stuck with a nauseating conglomeration of waste and grime in the drain pipe, or the helter skelter tier of boxes containing the camp's basic menu: sardines, noodles, (the cheese was delivered fresh once a week) beans, barley, canned vegetable soups, and lemon extract for punch.

Outside the dining room the camp grounds were distinguished by the lack of regular camp equipment; at the far end of the field near the cow pastures two sticks which had eroded to fragile pulp served as goal posts and home plates and occasionally as a sort of Maypole about which the campers folk danced Swedish, Danish, Russian, American and Palestinian folk dances. In the center of the field, not far from

the bleached pine flag pole, on which the symbol of the Youth Movement drooped with typical midsummer exhaustion, a wilted volleyball net hung unresponsive to the most violent winds. The novel gateway leading into the camp was certainly most distinctive: two whitewashed posts leaned against each other with smaller triangles stuck on upon the arms, thus producing the effect of a quasi-Star of David which, since a barbed wire fence kept the farmer's cattle out of the field, served as a gateway with limited charm for such people as Barry and Ronald, both of whom spent a half an hour rubbing the bumps they had received the first time passing through it, not having bent down low enough.

The leaders had spent all of June flattering their charges' imaginations about what camp really looked like, and as they swayed and bumped about in the packed chartered bus whooping up song after song so that the seventy five campers arrived in St. Jerome somewhat exhausted yet happy with the prospects of this paradise. Ronald remained near Eileen during the entire trip and when they passed through the obscuring brush up the path to the dining hall he didn't let out a yell as Barry and Eli (who had been to this camp before) did. But he didn't fail to notice that Eileen was very excited. She heeded everything her new leader Tzipporah told her: she selected a cot from the pile behind the dining room so that the canvas wasn't ripped more than half way across, otherwise it would collapse the first night; she helped dig the garbage pit, set up the missing pegs to hold the canvas of the tent steady, built a clothes rack: and when she

was through with the group responsibilities she put her own clothing in order.

Yosef didn't find it as easy as Tzipporah to get his crew busy; while they lazed around and ran to see the swimming place or had a look at the tool shed, he tried to reason with them to get busy. When that failed he simply reasoned more. Ronald had his first opportunity to grumble at the first badly prepared meal. For some fifteen minutes, they stood before the table hands to shoulders, singing energetically about the Land and the Pioneer and the Work, smelling the burnt cocoa the volunteer waitresses, attired in unwashed aprons short enough to expose their fat thighs, carried to the table on whose centre places were piled matterhorns of white bread about as tasty and as crisp as unbaked dough. Yosef explained this was the first meal at camp and things were not perfectly organised yet; in reply Barry bent down, chin to table and proceeded to give them the real low down.

"Oh yeah," said he, "in this camp you eat crap and we know it!"

Tzipporah laid down her unpolished spoon on the table, glared at him, and seemed ready to tell him to stand in the corner. Instead, she expounded: "If you want to criticise," she snapped, "criticise constructively! Don't be destructive. Besides, there are younger groups you have to consider. They learn their attitudes from you older chaverim. You have to be very careful what you say or do. And besides, I definitely disagree with you that the food in this camp ... "

"Hey Tzip," Eli interrupted. "If you don't want your soup, I like spinach, so hand it over!"

Ronald's hands were sticky with pine resin when he finished helping lug the timber needed for the huge bonfire they intended to light the first night to celebrate the opening of the camp. The air was cold and the sky bleached with stars. Eileen put on two sweaters and wore her new gabardines so that when she squatted down on a log they stained with resin and she wanted to run to the tent to change, but Ronald didn't let her go because it was dark and it would be all right anyways, he said.

The first wild sparks in the center of the great edifice of wood, intricately piled so that the gasoline dampened core would create a flame hot enough to kindle the rest of the brush and timber, burst out with an exciting concussion. The wide arc of campers had to move back because the flames were so hot; then they broke into the familiar and oft sung songs and choruses and sat on the damp ground and watched the little orange and red sparks fly upwards and trail off into nothingness like shooting stars. Mordecai stood as near the bonfire as the heat permitted, and when the singing had gone on long enough he burred his whistle softly for silence.

"I know we're going to have a perfect camp this year," he said, "with plenty of fun and activity so that we'll all enjoy ourselves and learn a good deal. It's the spirit of the thing that counts most because when we get to Aretz that'll be our best weapon, our most efficient tool

in building and redeeming the land ... "

Afterwards, a thick-calved girl stood up and read a poem in Hebrew with r's that were deep throated and genuine. Then someone else got up and told a story, and after that a story was read by several of the older leaders-to-be who passed the script from hand to hand under a dim flashlight. When the presentation was over they sang again. When they had exhausted their repetoire they sang the same songs over again until the whistle sounded and they all got up, stretched, and felt the dew on their seats; they crossed wrists and held hands, singing "taps" in Hebrew.

"I think I'm going to like it here," Eileen said, as they crossed the fields towards the shadowy tents. Ronald didn't reply. He pressed his elbows to the sides of his chest. He wished he could put his arms about her, but the others were flocking all around them. He was vaguely unhappy. Later, when they neared the tents, he put off saying "good night" until Yosef came outside in his pyjamas and ahemmed a few gentle hints and Tzipporah called Eileen's name loudly so that all the camp could hear. Ronald felt torn and mutilated to his roots.

The following day the regular camp schedule started with a bugle at seven thirty blasting into every single tent to make sure that all the lazy heads got out of bed. Then the incessant round of discussions, games, hikes, folk dancing, arts and crafts, choir and swimming in the muddy North River began. The ten leaders (one for each tent) convened almost daily to see that everything was functioning smoothly. These ten, along with three or four others, were responsible for the technical and spiritual machinery of the camp. No middle aged director in full length

trousers ordered them about; nor, for that matter, did an elderly chaperon supervise their morality and curtail any Margaret Mead inspired notions on sex. Youth ran and organised the camp; they ran the camp for five weeks of their own time, unpaid and unprovided for by beneficent charities and parents' organizations. They were devoted to the task because it was more than a mere task, a healthy activity in the sunny outdoors. There was a cause not only worth fighting for but worth dying for as well; there would be no taking orders from anyone with whose opinions they disagreed; no compromise with what they felt were shabby moral values, or unrealistic dogmas, or, in a word, unchalutzic notions with regards to a hundred and one matters of day to day living.

The third day of camp the leaders met under a low elm tree which was particularly useful and comfortable for its shade and the bench-like rocks studding the immediate vicinity. Mordecai, eighteen years of age, was head counsellor and educational advisor to the others. It was he who presided.

"I feel that it's very important that we all understand what we're up to if we're to educate kids to believe in the things our Movement stands for. We have to make sure of our approach. All leaders, if they expect to create chalutzim from the raw material of kids we get, must be friends with the kids. Intimate friends - that is the most effective means. You win their confidence in that way. You get them to like you. To believe in you - and then you can use your influence and bring them, when they mature intellectually, to the realisation of chalutzith. But in all this

we seem to be forgetting something."

At this point Tzipporah began waving her hand for permission to speak.

"Can't you wait a moment until I finish what I want to say," Mordecai said.

"But it fits in with what you're saying," Tzipporah declared.

And before a further reproof from Mordecai she said, "I want to say that you are forgetting how important it is to stress symbolism. We must stress symbolism; it's the crux to everything."

"Yes, that's what I was coming to," Mordecai interrupted, "and that's what we've been falling down in so far. We must use symbolism as Tzipporah said. The name of the group is very important in instilling a sense of belonging ... You know, a feeling of identification with the group. The lowering of the flag, and the blowing of the bugle are also very important. Rivkah, I noticed that it took you five minutes to get your kids to the flag pole this morning."

"Yes, I know," said Rivkah, a husky girl whose close fitting shirt fairly burst at the seams. "It's because of that Ruthie-kid - I think I'm going to send her home. She's so destructive - it's terrible!"

"Look, I think we shouldn't break our agenda. We can discuss that under Personal Relations!"

"But the point is still made," Mordecai claimed. "If it is going to take you five minutes to get to the flag pole every morning our whole schedule will run short. And besides, what's the point of going to all this trouble of having a camp, if we're not going to teach the kids

such things as punctuality and responding to a whistle and also camping spirit and things like that. I simply can't see it. I simply can't. If we're not going to instill them with the chalutzic spirit, it's simply negating the whole idea of camp, the way I see it ... "

There was an uproar of opinions, notions, and emotions after this brief interlude, and before they came to any agreement the bugle blew, re-assembling camp. Mordecai insisted that they would have to meet after "taps" and iron out the difficulties.

Camp had started smoothly and Yosef had found his little notebook in his valise, ticked off those activities which had run off successfully, conjured up improvements for those which had failed. The routine which started in the morning was not always uniform; there was something different to do every day, and Barry started a joke that all day long the only thing the groups ever did was prepare the "presentations" they were to put on at night, and everyone laughed that it was true. During their daily discussions they felt proud talking about the destiny of their people and analyzing "this society", and learning why Kibbutzim were model worlds.

In the discussions, instead of listening to Yosef drone on continuously, Ronald found the opportunity to participate and offer his own point of view, and for this reason alone he found the endless talk interesting; but the arts and crafts, sports, the endless number of field days which invariably took place three or four times a week, bored him frantically. Moreover, he hated the regimentation which these field days often called for. He disliked pretending that he was a chalutz defending the kibbutz against Arab attacks; he disliked carrying heavy logs of dry wood

for the countless bonfires which were held every other night; even in sports, volleyball, baseball, soccer, he began to dislike because they too were played with monotonous regularity, "How else can you run a camp?" Yosef explained, when Ronald began voicing his complaints.

Ronald became less and less interested in obtaining Yosef's approval. Even though Yosef went to McGill and smiled very amiably and very seldom gave him an argument when his ehalutzic performance in the multitude of camp details and activities was defective, he began to feel that he wasn't such a nice guy after all; nor was he terribly intelligent, because intelligent people, he felt for some deep and vague reason, don't behave like automatons, militarily, and Yosef too often showed that he could stand at attention perfectly when Mordecai barked "Amud-Don" which was the Hebrew for "Attention!"

One afternoon, finding the current camp field day unbearable, Ronald wandered off into the woods and sat on a log and dreamed his irridescient dreams of the future. When he returned to camp, his spirit buoyed up by the sweetness of his solitude, Yosef reprimanded him for being an individualist.

"We can't run a camp on that basis; either you participate in the activities, or leave camp."

"Oh, I had to go away for a while."

"Well, I don't feel it's fair to the group, or to the entire camp for that matter, if you simply go off like that. You have a responsibility to the camp. What would have happened to the Field Day if everyone would have decided to do as you did?"

Ronald was not impressed, and in his notebook Yosef noted that he seriously doubted whether he was chalutzic material after all.

Ronald felt somewhat disconcerted and unwanted, because, it now seemed to him Yosef did not pay as much attention to him as he used to. He didn't care terribly though, because he had Eileen, and they were inseparably together all day long. Nevertheless he grumbled and complained more often than before about all the stupid things they were doing and all the time they were wasting. He told Eileen that they were going to stop wasting time and they were going to do what they wanted to do.

"Come on, let's go for a walk on the top of that hill," he said to her pointing to the great shoulder of forested mountainside immediately behind the tents.

Eileen pursed her lips and pleaded: "But it's not fair!"

"What's not fair?" he asked, irritated.

"Going off like this. After all the leaders have worked so hard preparing this camp and organising and everything. It's only right that we should participate. And besides, I wanted to go to the arts and crafts group. They're ... "

"Oh, so you don't have to go to the arts and crafts group," he persisted. "Come on, I know a beautiful place right on top of that hill. Go get a blanket."

She paused uncertainly. "But Tzipporah is so awful whenever someone in the group doesn't want to go to an activity."

"Ah - nuts to her. Go and get a blanket!"

She moved into the tent, rustling the dry canvas as she bent

low to enter through the sagging doorway. He sat on a great corner peg and listened to the conversation floating out through the tent.

"I don't think it's right going off," Tzipporah said. "What would happen if everyone would go off like this? You haven't come out like an individual to a private resort, and the activities here depend for their success on everyone participating."

"But I don't feel like participating in an activity right now," Eileen replied.

"What do you mean don't feel like. You have to. You must realise that! It's your responsibility! If you go away now, you are evading the responsibility of the group. Therefore I think the whole group should discuss it ... "

Eileen remained where she stood, a woollen blanket folded over her arms, immobile with uncertainty. She thought of Ronald and then said, "I'm sorry, I'm going."

She bent through the door and swiftly approached Ronald. They walked a moment without comment. Then, having scissored across the barbed wire fence, Eileen remarked, "She's awful, Tzipporah. She makes so many demands on you!"

"Ah - tell her to go to the blazes!"

They strode up the hill over the fallen stumps, weaving their way as they climbed past the sun-baked boulders strewn along the hillside. Soon they were on top of the hill, so high that the circle of tents seemed like small plastic toys.

"I wouldn't want to be in her boots," Eileen remarked, speaking

now with a note of sympathy as they followed a path which Ronald had found the previous day.

"You'd have to be crazy to want to be in her boots," Ronald replied. "Simcha was really nice compared to her. She's a first class dictator!"

"But in a way, you know, Tzip is better. Simcha was hardly interested in the girls of the group. She hardly cared what happened. Maybe that's why she left the Movement. Tzipporah is really interested in us, so in a way it's better."

They went through the shaded pass in the forest and he drew her up beside him and put his arms about her sun-burnt shoulders. She jerked away and he told her he was awfully sorry.

"That's okay. They're feeling better. But this morning!"

"Come. Let's spread the blanket down here," and he dropped down on what promised to be a soft patch of grass.

The blanket billowed in the breeze. They sat down, momentarily still. He felt warm and good as they lay back, his hands in a pile beneath his head. She lay down beside him, placing as little pressure as she could on her shoulders. They talked about the camp, about the others in their group, particularly about Yehudah and Rita, who, Eileen said, were conducting a relationship very much like their own.

Soon he kissed her. Her face twitched with pain every time he touched her shoulders and he panted a volley of I'm sorries, which only increased her distress because she hated making others feel sorry for her. Even so, another afternoon they avoided the notice of Yosef

and Tzipporah and returned there. Here in the seclusion of the forest he pulled off her shorts. Her feather soft belly, white and untanned, was touched by the sun filtering through the leaves of the forest, and her body gave off an aroma of sweetness. He kissed her vehemently and protested that he would love her forever and that they would never leave each other; they would never part. They would grow up and he would go to college, they would get married, and all the world of charm and poetry and joy would belong to them and be theirs. But having spoken these words over and over again, he didn't know what else to say or do, so he looked at her shyly. Each time he came near her and kissed her and panted over her, something went wrong. First she lay on her back and sulked and felt hurt, then he lay on his back and was silent and felt hurt and sulked. Finally one of them drew closer or stirred and they tried again, but it was no good until, after many afternoons and twilight evenings, they learned what made it good. So they became less shy, until Ronald wondered what his mother would say if she saw him making love to a girl. When these thoughts came to his mind he feared everything, and sat up and thought someone had come to discover them. He made her nervous too, and once she got dressed against his protests, and said, "Come," but he sat there silent, sulking and hurt, and she stood there and stirred, but couldn't move, until she came and sat down under the trees again and tore out handfuls of grass by the roots. But when it went well, and they were contented they wondered what time it was, and she said she would write her mother and ask her to have her wrist watch repaired and sent out to her. Then the bugle blew and they went scampering back to camp

and were late for supper; when they stole into the dining room, everyone in the group turned and looked at them. All knew where they had been, and a few of them giggled when they guessed what they had been doing.

"I don't think you should have brought it up without my being there," Yosef said, when Tzipporah reported to him the results of a discussion the executive, the Hanhala, had had one rainy afternoon. "Besides I don't agree with your decision."

"Well, we discussed and we saw that there isn't any other way but to ask one of them to leave camp. They're ruining each other's development in the group. I can't see it, I simply can't. Instead of participating in group activities, they run off to the woods. It's simply ridiculous, and what makes it worse, the whole group knows about it. How do you think they feel?"

"Look - the same problem exists for my group too - but I disagree with your method of going about it. We can't stop them by force, can we? Anything drastic will estrange them both from the group."

"I think you're being dogmatic about it. We can't allow two people who are having a relationship to ruin the activities of the group."

"I'm being dogmatic about it?" Yosef said. "That's just what you're being! It's a very delicate situation, actually, and you have to be very careful how you handle it, and not charge in helter skelter ... "

"Well, so what are we going to do, let it shlep along?"

"It doesn't have to shlep along," Yosef returned. "If we have to, we can be subtle about it," Yosef continued, in spite of his annoyance

with her. "I'm sure you can influence her constructively; catch her off guard - make her feel indebted to you - I'm sure she'll begin to participate in the group as soon as she feels she owes the group, or you, something ... and that goes for Ronald too. Look, let's not kid ourselves, I've been working with Ronald in that group for almost two years now, and since he brought Eileen to join the Movement too. I can predict his every movement and reaction like a clock, and I know what I'm talking about when I say we can't afford to tell him what to do. The point is, so far as it seems, he's in the Movement because of the advantages it gives him with Eileen. But I'm sure that as a result of camp his interests will expand. It's sheer folly thinking of sending one of them home just for no reason at all. Wait a while. Camp has been on for ten days only. Give them a chance to develop ... who knows? I'm looking forward to the overnight hike next week. You know, that usually brings changes "

Ronald was less disturbed by the attitudes his leaders took than by the intimate world of his relations with Eileen and the problems it began to pose. Each time they went off together, they moved closer to each other. They grew wrapped up in their mutual passion and were overwhelmed with its compulsion. The sex and marriage manuals they had blushingly read told what happens and how, but no data was given about how to broach the matter, how to go about it, especially when you were young and, well ... unmarried.

One afternoon the group had a discussion and Yosef said that in the Movement if you had a personal problem you went to your leader and

he would be more understanding than your parents or anyone else could be. He wanted to go to Yosef, but he knew that Yosef was angry because he always skipped out on activities. He didn't know what to do. A few days went by. He tried not thinking about it, but he found that Eileen was thinking about it too, thinking about it seriously, and he felt ashamed that he didn't have the courage of a real man and not ask questions or worry about anything. But these thoughts left him cold. Finally, he found the courage to ask her, and she thought about it and replied: "I don't know."

The question did not leave their minds, though; each time they returned to the shaded forest and smelled the pine resin deep in their nostrils, the question didn't need a verbal form, for all nature questioned and cross-questioned and choired the answer.

Again, one afternoon, he clasped her small oval face in both his hands and turned her sideways to him. Her eyes swam out to him and met his smilingly; he drew her near to kiss. She giggled with tenderness. He propped himself up a moment, and gazed into her smiling eyes. She lifted herself to his lips and kissed him lovingly, but when she lay back again the frivolity had gone and he knew she was waiting.

"Eileen, should we?"

"Yes - oh yes - I love you! I love you, oh so, so much!" she breathed, and buried her face in the chasm of his neck below his chin.

A deep congealing fear and frosty silence moved over him like vast solemn icebergs in northern seas. He tried to forget his fears as his long, slight body fastened upon hers.

Meanwhile she concealed her face and drew him toward her with long kisses. She ruffled her hand through his tossed hair and pressed him tenderly. She drew back and held her breath and waited. She waited for the pain which she knew would inevitably be, then for the relaxing draughts of fatigue and sense of wonder which might finally transform her flesh and climax those years of her girlhood's inexplicable blossoming and awakening. But the release didn't come. After a few minutes she felt him slip off, out of breath, and unsuccessful. For a moment she wondered if this was the glorious unfurling she had secretly dreamed of.

He lay beside her with a dull draught of pain in his head. The images of the greenery about him and the spotless sky between the leaves fluttering on the trees merged and became white and colourless. He felt his pride and manhood disintegrate, and he almost broke into tears. She turned uncertainly towards him, and he quickly looked away. He relaxed a moment and continued panting hotly. She embraced him tenderly and for a moment he felt relieved. But soon he wished he were away from her, he wished he had never known the disgrace and the devil of disbelief snarling mockery at him.

He returned to the camp with black spots before his eyes and wished that he could go away from her and be all alone. He wished that he were somewhere afar, distant and forgotten. He wished for some future day when Eileen had forgotten him so that he could look backwards and smile and accept himself.

That night the group gathered for a tent party. Everyone

laughed at Barry's jokes, and the games that Yosef and the newly elected P.C. devised went off well. When taps blew, Tzipporah suggested that the boys go out of the tent for a few minutes and let the girls get into their pyjamas whence they should return and all would listen to a story she was going to read. Afterwards, the coal-oil lamp was blown out and a powerful flashlight shone upon the printed page.

Ronald sat upon the edge of Eileen's cot. She lay under white covers, her hands cushioning her head. Tzipporah began reading, and bit by bit he stretched out; first upon a propped elbow, then so that he felt her body pressed to his under the covers. The first story over, Louis and Yosef left the tent, but Tzipporah searched under her cot for another book and found one.

Barry said, "Let's hear it, come on, everyone - quit it at? Quiet!" and Tzipporah started reading again.

"Cover me," Ronald whispered, and she twisted and turned and rearranged the blankets. Tzipporah's voice droned on, telling about an Arab raid in Palestine. He heard Rita's cot creak, and he knew that Yehudah was sitting on it too, so he felt he wasn't the only one.

"Are you warm?"

"Yah."

"Me too."

Then the story was finished and Tzipporah wondered if she should read another one, but everyone seemed to be asleep. Barry got off Sarah's cot and brushed his head against the tent roof and yawned good night. None

of the other boys were in the tent, she thought. She lay down.

He kissed her avidly, stroking her neck and cheeks with his tongue. She embraced him with all her might and he undid the button of her pyjama and drew off the lower half. She shivered with cold for a moment but he rubbed her zealously and she was soon warm again. They waited until they heard Rita whispering something to Yehudah and watched in the dark of the tent as he got up and crouched low through the flap door. They heard the rustle of covers and they held their breath; a moment later there was perfect silence. He tried changing his position but when he moved the cot creaked noisily. He lay numb and still for a few moments, then moved again. They held their breath as the cot creaked noisily. "Don't, not yet. Tzip's not asleep yet." He lay quietly without moving.

Then he moved again. The cot creaked, and the canvas rustled, but he didn't care. He didn't care for anything. "No - not there," she directed. The seconds creaked on; someone coughed hoarsely. They lay breathless and she thought Rita was sitting up.

Suddenly the husky voice of Tzipporah called, "Who's there?"

They heard her fumbling around for her flashlight. "Is anyone here who shouldn't be?"

"You'd better go," Eileen whispered, and felt his head go limp against her shoulder.

"Come on, it's late - if you want to play tricks, play them before taps blow."

The floorboards shook as he found his way between the rows of cots. Tzipporah swung her flashlight toward the clothes-rack at the centre

of the tent; in a moment the full glare of the light caught him. He avoided her eyes, and ducked through the door. He felt the cool night against his sticky brow.

"You know what she told me this morning," Eileen said to him as they strode down to the well to wash. "I was so surprised. You know - she was so nice. She said, 'I know how it is between two people who are close like you two are, but you should have consideration for the others in the tent. If you want to be together, go off by yourselves ...! Isn't it nice of her? I mean, to take that attitude ...'"

He shrugged his shoulders in silence.

"I think it's awfully nice," Eileen continued. "The more I find out about her, the more I like her. You know, she's not what some people think of her - a dictator! I think she's warm and really human when you get down to it...."

His wild torment of disbelief in himself continued to grow. He feared that he was really incapable; he wondered if it was because he was so young - really. Then, perhaps it was her fault. Maybe there was something wrong with her.

"The doctor said that I was very healthy," she returned.

There was a heavy pause.

"Oh, you know - I wish we could get married - I hate this sneakiness."

"Yes, I know. It's terrible."

He felt hurt and upset and he vowed that he would make more vigorous attempts in the future; finally the late afternoon came when he lay exhausted but happy beside her, and she kissed him and said she felt perfect. They fell asleep under the tree in the forest and when they woke they felt somewhat cold and slightly numb, for the bright blue day had grown violet with on-pressing night. As they returned to camp some of the members of Hakoash smirked and Yosef made a sarcastic remark, but Eileen was sure that Tzipporah bawled her out in front of the group for being late for supper only because it wouldn't look right otherwise.

Both Yosef and Tzipporah informed the group about the greatly anticipated overnight hike. They started working up the spirit necessary for a successful and creative hike. After Tzipporah finished speaking to her group on the importance of going on a hike such as this because, as she put it, it would prepare them for the later challenges of being chalutzim in situations which demand self reliance, inventiveness, and co-operation, Eileen decided she was going to participate in the group full heartedly. She liked Tzipporah because Tzipporah had been so nice when she could have been simply cruel, and she knew Ronald would feel just the same way too.

The morning they were to leave the bugle blew on the earliest breeze of dawn. The sun had scarcely begun to thaw the frozen dews of night when the whole camp scampered about, rolling blankets into portable packages, tying knapsacks, searching for hatchets, knives and camping equipment of every name and sort. At breakfast Tzipporah insisted that

everyone should put on a white shirt and neckerchief, like scouts. When she ambled into her own tent she heard Barry making fun of her suggestion,

"We're too old to be Boy Scouts!"

"Look," said Tzipporah, not without fierceness. "We're not going to march down the road like a bunch of tramps."

They marched out of camp singing and shouting spiritedly, wearing white shirts and neckerchiefs. They jogged onto the dirt road which flanked St. Jerome and continued up the dusty road, climbing hills, dropping into valleys, skirting unpainted barns, past gaping, half dressed farm children. The first complaint about the packs being too heavy or the pace too fast came after fifteen minutes. After the first mile, while the sun wasn't blazing at its hottest, the first water bottle was emptied. At eleven o'clock the nearly exhausted company flopped down under a tree and called for the nearly empty canteens. They had covered two and a half miles.

Ten minutes after they had stopped Tzipporah arose, thrust out her obtrusive bosom, hammered her fists to her sides, and blew her toy whistle.

"Come on," she commanded, "On your feet everybody!"

Eli groaned. Louis moaned in a higher register. Barry and several others called, "Wait a minute, take your time. We've got all day."

Only Eileen rose, a stalk of wheat between her teeth.

"Well - come on, everybody," yelled Tzipporah, and Yosef saw that it wasn't educationally proper to continue lying flat on his back, so he too got up.

At five o'clock they passed a two mile stretch of bush and a beautiful expanse of lake came into view. When they saw the blue waters docile under a mirroring sky, they whooped up a feeble hooray, and before they would move one inch further, they staggered down under the nearest shady tree. This time it was Yosef's turn to induce them to get up and occupy the narrow field bordering on the lake. An hour later enough wood was gathered and stray rocks collected for a fire-place. While eight members of the group lounged about, two did all the work. Eileen volunteered to prepare the soup, and Eli built a lively fire. After ten minutes of persistent persuasion Tzipporah was able to induce Adele to peel the frankfurters. Barry started double talking Yosef when he was told to get up off the ground and go and get some brush. Ronald felt uneasy, lying as he was like a dead man, doing nothing, as he watched Eileen zealously stir the soup and tell a famished Louis it will be ready any minute.

"Supper's ready," the cook called, and the ten erstwhile exhausted scouts leaped to their feet and clamoured around the steaming pot of soup and boiled frankfurters.

"All right - is everybody finished eating by now?" Tzipporah called. "All right - we have work to do before it gets dark. I want two volunteers to clear up and put everything away, wash the mess tins and clear the cutlery. I want three people spreading the blankets. We'll need at least two people for that. The rest of us can go and gather brush. We're going to keep a fire going all night, so we'll

need quite a bit. All right, everybody! Okay - who wants to clean up? - all right - Eileen, you can clean up. Who's going to help her?" she called. There were no volunteers in the offing. "Well - it's getting late. There's work to do. Come on - what's the matter with you all? Just because you walk a short distance, you act as though you were dead!"

"Short distance!" Louis exclaimed, his mouth muffled by a big bite of a green apple. "Listen to her - short distance!"

"Last year I took my group in Toronto on a twenty two mile hike," Tzipporah returned, "and they were twelve year old kids. You should have seen the spirit."

"Big thing," Barry began to boast. "Two years ago we were fifteen miles gone through bush - cutting straight through brush - no roads - and then we discovered we were lost - have you ever gone through straight bush, no roads, no nothing, only by compass?"

"I suggest we stop living off our past won laurels," Yosef put in. "It's soon going to be dark, and Tzipporah and I thought the group would like to get settled. Then we could sit around the fire and have a discussion and read stories - or something like that - not waste time arguing. All right Barry, you can help Eileen clean up, wash the mess tins, and put the food away under the tree there ... "

"Aw kripes, I don't want to do that. Let someone else mess around with the food. I want to gather brush better."

"All right - Sarah, you help Eileen, and Barry, you go off with - wait, let's see - Rita you go with Adele, and you three with

Tzipporah's help can undo the blankets ... "

"Come on, it's getting late, let's go to it," Tzipporah yelled, and jumped over Louis' prostrate form in the direction of the pile of blankets.

"The rest of us can go for brush," Yosef added, and waited for Ronald, Frances and Louis to get to their feet. "Well - come on Louis - are you coming? What are you lying there for ... come on - you too Frances - well, how much do I have to beg you? We're supposed to be chalutzim, not a bunch of shlumps ...!"

"I'm tired," Ronald yawned. At that moment he caught the hard glare he fancied Eileen fixed on him, so he rose, stretched, and set to work.

As they went about their tasks, the first stars glowed in the eastern sky. The lake was silent; the soft breeze stirring over it presently rose. An ominous silence of mystery and darkness came from the forest across the lake. The blankets were all spread out, two layers thick lying on the flattest part of the ground near the fire place.

Yosef organised the turns at guard.

"We don't need guards," Sarah said, "Who's going to come here anyways?"

"We need guards to add more brush to the fire," Eileen said.

"Besides, in Palestine chalutzim often have to spend the whole night on guard, with rifles by their sides," Tzipporah explained. "So I think we should get used to it, on principle."

While preparations continued, the headlights of a '36 Chevrolet

wobbled on the wire fence setting off the road five hundred feet from the spot the group occupied. Monsieur Desjardins, proprietor of the surrounding eight square miles of unfarmed lands, had just been telephoned that a band of intruders had invaded his premises beside the lake. Approaching along the road he could see the haze of smoke above the fir trees. He gritted his teeth.

Yosef confronted the group and said, "I suggest we all take off our shoes. There's no need to take off your clothing - and get yourself a place under the blankets - I have an excellent story by John Steinbeck to read ..."

While everybody scattered for what seemed a favourable space, Adele moved over to Tzipporah. The latter thought the best way to deal with Adele's particular distress was to disregard it; however, Adele, who was queasier about boys sleeping beside girls than Tzipporah thought, had to face her: "I think the boys should sleep on that side of the blankets and the girls on this side," Adele said.

"Oh, come come now - what's the difference where you sleep? After all this is a group, and we're all here together - besides, you don't have to sleep near the boys - here, lie down beside me ... "

In the meantime Ronald insured Eileen's proximity, but realising that Louis was going to snore on his starboard side, he raised a row about moving several blankets nearer to the fireplace since there were rocks protruding under where he lay. Just then Eli saw a man crossing the field toward them. He signalled to Yosef.

"Quiet everyone - shhh!"

They all rose and watched the gaunt Frenchman approach. Swaggering towards them with the assurance that this was his land, the property of his ancestors for more than seventy five years as traced by the parish register, he drew up to where they were encamped. His hands at his hips, he scrutinised their faces. He spat tobacco juice and peered around at their blankets and at the glowing bonfire.

"Who gave you permission to come here?" he asked in acrid French.

A confusion of replies broke from several different lips. Tzipporah shoved her elbow against Yosef and told him to handle this, but since they don't teach French in engineering, Barry decided that since he received seventy two per cent in French oral, he would give them a hand.

"We are scouts," he told the belligerent farmer.

"You got permission to stay here tonight?" he asked. "Who gave you permission?"

"But monsieur, we are scouts. We would like to spend the night here, and in the morning we will go." (He didn't know how to say "Move on" in French.)

"I didn't give you permission. This land is mine. Very well - give me five dollars, and you can stay here tonight."

Barry was confused. "But we are scouts," he persisted.

"Five dollars - you can stay here one night - two nights - ."

There was confusion and excited whispering; several others wanted to bring their oral French into the fray.

"But sir," Eileen said, "if you wish, we can buy butter and

milk from you. We haven't got enough money to pay you five dollars ..."

"That's not my business - this is my land!"

Now Yosef stepped forward again, having decided he must take control of the situation. First he told the farmer that he didn't have to worry about the fact that there were boys and girls here: the boys were going to sleep a good distance from the girls ... but that didn't seem to interest the Frenchman. So Yosef started explaining that they were scouts, in terms no different than had been explained before. The farmer, however, persisted in shrugging his shoulders and drawling, "That's none of my business." Yosef finally concluded that the farmer was not susceptible to his logic. He was at a loss what to do.

"Let's discuss it in a group," Tzipporah said. Yosef turned to the farmer. "Two minutes, all right,"

"Ah oui," the farmer said, and anointed the ground with another jet of tobacco juice.

They started posing the pros and cons as to whether they should give him the five dollars or not when Yosef held up his arm and asked for quiet: this was to no avail. Tzipporah tried stepping in, but Barry and Eileen were vigorously and loudly at odds with each other's viewpoints. They talked on in spite of Tzipporah's insistence that this was a chalutzic situation and must be dealt with by action, not talk.

"I definitely disagree with giving him one broken cent," Eileen said. "I think it's wrong of him coming to us in the first place. If he doesn't want us to stay here, we can find another place."

"You're crazy," Barry shouted. "How can we find another place if it's dark already!"

"I agree," two voices shouted.

"I think ... " said Tzipporah, but she was cut off.

"Besides," Barry insisted, "what is five dollars among the twelve of us? Be practical for once in your life! We can't find another place. Besides it's so dark, we could hardly find half of our things all over the place."

"Can I get in a word?" Tzipporah shouted.

"I agree with Barry," two other voices shouted, in agreement with Ronald, who, however, said nothing.

"But it's the principle of the thing," Eileen cried, her thin voice sounding shrilly. "How can you allow such a thing to be done to you? If it's against every one of your principles to pay a broken cent for the privilege of staying here? If he doesn't want us here, we can go - not beg, or pay for it - like we always do, as Jews in the Galut."

"Look, can I get in a word," Tzipporah shouted. "Barry - all right - quiet! We have heard you express your opinion. Now give someone else a chance to talk. Eli - will you keep quiet and let me say something? Now - I'm in full agreement with Eileen I think - Barry, will you please ... "

"We have two minutes more," Yosef said.

"It's not a chalutzic way of doing things," Tzipporah continued, "giving in when the principle of the thing, as Eileen has pointed out, demands otherwise. The threats of the Arabs under the Mufti didn't make the settlers abandon their settlements. They faced the historical situation and made of it what it has become. We have to do the same - now, obviously, this land doesn't belong to us ..."

In the meantime Ronald remained in the background, his cold hands in his pockets, vastly annoyed because Eileen had spoken up and he had idly stood about saying nothing - he, who made better marks in school had not spoken a single word! He felt bitter. He was irritated by Eileen's voice. Why, she spoke as if she really knew something! He listened to her speak: as if she were another Tzipporah, a chalutzah! Unrestrained, he felt he could bash her over the head! He struggled with his emotions.

"Let's tell him we're not paying him a broken penny," Eileen said, "and we'll leave immediately!"

"But where will we go?" Sarah whined.

"Don't worry!" Eileen replied, and put her arm on Sarah's shoulder, "we'll find another place. It's not that late! It's more important that we should show him and stick to our principles than to worry about where we are going to stay."

When the farmer heard their decision, he told them they had better get off his land in five minutes or else he would set his dogs after them.

"Come on, everybody - here's the road," Tzipporah sang out, after they had trudged over wet grass toward the dirt road, and three flashlights shone on the barbed wire as it was twisted and lifted in order to allow them to step through.

Yehudah and Tzipporah marched down the road, singing vigorously. Ronald kept up beside Eileen, but remained silent. Several times,

she started saying something to him about how right it had been of them, leaving, but he gave no sign of interest. Finding him apathetic, she was glad when Yzipporah and Yehudah stopped and she was able to catch up to them and march alongside, and join their spirited singing. Her pace quickened and in a few minutes Ronald's was the last figure labouring along the dark road.

They found a barn after an hour and a half's walking, and then negotiated with an English farmer who said he was jolly glad to let the boys have the hayloft and the girls sleep in the hay. After they settled into their assigned quarters Ronald sneaked over to where Eileen lay and spent the night beside her. When he began to kiss her she said she was tired, but he persisted and when her lips ceased to kiss him back, he felt as though she really didn't belong to him and that she didn't care.

He had a bad dream, and in the morning he sulked and refused to eat breakfast.

Seven o'clock in the morning they marched up the path to the dining room. After supper they had a bonfire and each group took turns to feature its odyssey in skits, puns, slapstick, and song. Then they sang the sad and triumphant melodies of the Homeland they would all leave for one day; they sat and swayed to their music until the stars went out and a wind blew, sending a great surge of forest song. Then Mordecai blew his whistle and they rose; cross wristed and watery-kneed, they sang taps in Hebrew, and through the dense dark struggled towards the tents.

"Can't we get anything to drink?" Adele asked, as they re-

turned to the tents.

"There must be some punch in the kitchen."

"If someone wants to come with me," Tzipporah said, "I'll go to the kitchen and bring it."

"I'll go," Eileen volunteered.

The two found their way to the kitchen. After a few minutes Tzipporah said, "I want to tell you something I was thinking about. I want you to do some thinking about it too." She stopped, and through the corner of her eye saw Eileen's lips pursed in thoughtful anticipation. "You see, I have been watching you carefully since the start of camp, and particularly during the hike. And I can say that you - more than anyone else in the group - behaved in a very chalutzic way."

"Why? What did I do?" Eileen asked.

"Well, it's because basically you're a leader, and you have been unaware of your abilities. I can say that right out because that's what I feel. I feel you should start thinking of doing worthwhile work in the Movement when you get back to the city and we start having regular meetings in September. I really feel that you can be a very valuable asset to the Movement!"

An uncontrollable heat of bashfulness welled up in her cheeks, and she was glad that it was dark so that Tzipporah couldn't see how she felt. She felt wonderful, thought a flowing sense of power rushed through her, and she felt big, important and mature.

"You know," she confessed, "I like working very much - I like doing things - really, I can't express it - I wish I could ... "

"You mean you like being creative!"

"Yes, that's what I would call it. It's so important - it makes me feel different - somehow - you know - better."

"Yes, and your attitude last night really revealed how creative you can be. You were a real leader last night! Do you realise that were it not for you the group would have followed Barry and compromised its principles! That's real creativeness, to be able to lead, to show direction - in the group ... "

Eileen swelled tighter with pride. She basked in the warmth of her newly won self esteem. But she must abide by her principles, and so she said to her leader, "Come let's get some juice - the others want to have a drink."

"Ah, that's Tzipporah! The other day she told me, 'Ronnie, do you realise that you can become the head of the Movement here in Montreal in Mordecai's place when he leaves for Eretz, if you would start applying yourself! Give up my life just to live on a farm and farm some cockeyed ideal! It's all a bunch of baloney if you ask me. There's very little sense the way I see it - people were made for different things - there are more things in the world than simply being a farmer, or something like that, and going to Palestine. A person can do"

"I don't think so," Eileen ventured.

"What do you mean, 'You don't think so?' What do you know about the matter that you don't think so?"

"Please don't shout at me!"

"I'm not shouting - I just get sore when you start telling me about the kibbutz and Zionism and all that. Remember, it was I who first told you about it all"

"I remember."

After this there was a moment's silence. He felt deeply at odds with himself. He had already noted his hostile emotions toward Eileen. He remembered the acute revulsion he had felt for her when she had stood up and was a hero about not paying the farmer. And now, while the distrust and resentment knocked at his heart, he feared that it might get out of control. He knew he had a bad temper. Sometimes he hated himself for his unreasonable yelling and screaming at his mother. It was a pent up fury though, because he had lost the sympathy of his father, in some way, long ago. And what was the pent up fury against his mother that he continually felt, and so often gave voice to? Perhaps it was that she had let his father father him...? And now the same pent up anger and voiceless fury swelled in him; by sheer will he made up his mind he must behave. He must master the situation, not let her master it. And besides, (this thought occurred to him like the remembrance of who he was, echoing through the corridors of a remote dream), he loved her, didn't he?

"I'm sorry for losing my temper," he said, and drew close to her and kissed her. "I really am. I never want to argue with you. But really, I'm telling you - can't you see through it all? I'm sure you can if you'll only think about it. Half of the time I hear Tzipporah talking about Palestine - you know - it gets me, - I feel lousy when I hear her

speaking like that! What does she know about it? And besides, she wouldn't at all be interested in Zionism, were it not for her romantic love for kibbutziuth, as she so fondly calls it. If you ask me all she's interested in is living on a collective farm, and if she could do it in Canada she would be a great Canadian patriot; instead, she's a great Zionist. How can you call her a real Zionist? She can't even speak Hebrew. She doesn't know the first thing about Jewish history, or anything. You hear the way she talks. All the history she has ever heard of occurred since the French revolution and pertains to barricades and workers behind them and stuff like that. She makes me sick - in fact, if she had to write a history examination, I'm sure she'd flunk. Oh, but what's the good of arguing about it? Let's not argue, - let's not! Eileen - let's promise we'll not argue about it. Promise? We're not going to then. Eileen?"

"Yes?"

"Do you love me?"

"Oh, of course."

"How much?"

She gazed up at his sun-burnt face. The wind swished through the pine forest. There were sounds in the forest, and music in the trees. The great sky was blue, but invisible in the trees of this forest. Momentarily she felt cold, and she cuddled closer to him.

"Oh - so much - with all my heart - with everything!"

"I do too."

He sealed her lips with a kiss and held the delicate sweetness

of her lips to his mouth as long as he could. Then she lay down beside him, her cheek against his, and she pecked at his ears with the sort of kisses he said he liked best.

"Darling - we can get along so well - you know - you know how? Oh, I know how - if, if you see what I see, understand what I understand, believe in what I believe - we can get along wonderfully like real lovers should!"

"We get along well though. Tzipporah commented that she thought we were having a healthy relationship."

"Yes, - well, I mean - really get along - oh, you know what I mean - don't you?"

She didn't answer, and he kissed her, and then repeated his plea.

"Oh, of course, of course I do, of course!" she sighed, to the melody of the forest, to the wind wrapped trees, and the smell of the moss on the ground where they lay. And saying that they kissed as though they would never part.

P A R T F O U R

The second week back at Baron Byng, in her eleventh and final grade, Eileen consulted a calendar. Later, she tried not to think of it, but she automatically found herself figuring out the number of days; she could arrest her thoughts with nothing else. What if it would be? When she met Ronald that afternoon and walked home with him, he saw she was worried. He questioned her, but she wouldn't tell.

"Well, if you don't want to tell me, I don't want to know," he said playfully.

At night she couldn't sleep. In the morning she didn't feel right and she could hear nothing and think nothing above the clamour and confusion in her head. She tried to speak to Ronald Friday night, but she was afraid he would be angry with her.

When he came to her house the following day he noticed that she didn't fly to him with open arms and greet him the way she usually did. Quietly she asked him to put his coat in the closet and he followed her into the kitchen where her father sat over his finished meal, reading a Yiddish newspaper. Her father smiled hello and sniffed heavily with a cold. Five minutes later he left the house and told Eileen to tell Mummy when she called that he was going to Aunt Myra's.

While waiting Ronald tapped out a broken melody on the piano. Twenty minutes had passed before she cleared the dishes off the table and silently came into the room.

"What took you so long?" he remarked, as he watched her slip down onto the couch.

"I had a lot of work to do," she said.

He got off the piano stool and went over to where she sat. He began telling her about someone he had met on the way over who had graduated from Baron Byng last year who was now at McGill. She listened to him, not out of much interest, but because it partly chloroformed her inward distraction. She smiled automatically when she heard him repeat that next year he too would be at McGill. But she grew limp and felt terribly listless when he embraced her and kissed her. She kept her eyes fixed at a distance.

"Is there anything wrong?" he asked, after a while.

She couldn't bring herself to reply, even if to reply evasively. The thought that he might not react favourably if she told him troubled her deeply. What would she do if he took it to heart? What would she do if he got up like some men in the Confession magazines and disclaim responsibility.

"If there's anything wrong, I want to know," he demanded.

She stalled, playing with her hankie.

"I think - I'm late," she gasped.

He did not know what she meant. He grew taut with fear when she explained, and he pressed her arm.

"How do you know? Are you sure?"

"I don't know for sure - but I think I am!"

"But are you sure? Do you know for sure?"

For the next few minutes she remained speechless. She hardly knew how to reply to his frantic tone. A dense stone sank into her heart and she felt horribly sick and faint.

"Oh Ronnie, I hope nothing is wrong," she cried, and with all her might pressed herself against him.

A strong, strange fear quivered through her. He withdrew from her anguished embrace and contemplated her white face; her nose was strangely contorted, her eyes bleated confusion and pain.

"But how do you know? You don't know for sure?"

"No - not for sure," she whispered, and tried burying herself in him again.

He felt warm and sweaty and his throat clogged while he laboured for a fretful minute to free himself of her efforts to cling to him. He stood up and looked away, then turned toward her, gesturing the pain and anguish of not knowing what to say.

"But - but how are you going to find out when you're okay for sure," he said to her, as she cowered on the couch. "How long does it take to know?"

Her face was frightened. Her lips hung apart as her shoulders rose and fell in reply to his question.

"Are you always regular?"

"Yes."

He dropped down to the couch beside her, exhausted as by a thousand yard dash. She stared at him through a frightful mask of pain

and confusion. She was no longer beautiful to look at: her pleasantness was ghosted. He moved toward her, but afterwards he sat down and covered his face with his hands.

"Darling," she cried, in an effort to console him, "I only think, I am not sure though!"

That night a hurricane of nausea and doubt roared in his brain. For the first time in many years he mumbled the Hebrew prayers he had been taught as a child, to which he resorted only when he was down at his lowest ebb. Hope against hope whistled weirdly through his brain telling him that this was true, this was true, this was true: it wasn't merely Eileen's wild imagination. Now all his dreams of college, his plans for the future, his aspirations for a rich, proud, free life would be obliterated and dashed to nothingness.

All night Eileen lay awake hoping and believing that she would be all right. Yes, she would be all right. But what about if she wouldn't be all right? What about his attitude? Should worst come to worst, in him she would be able to find hope, stability, and encouragement.

When she saw him the following day his spirits were as shaken as before.

"Oh I wish we hadn't gotten into this!" he raved, over and over again.

"But it really isn't our fault," she said, "there wasn't anything we did we shouldn't have - out of love."

"Oh, we were utter fools, utter fools! We should have thought

about the consequences. Now look what's going to happen! Oh damn, damn, damn damn!"

On Friday night Yosef was chummy with him, and since Eileen clung for protection to Tzipporah's side for what seemed the better part of the long evening of speeches by a delegate from Palestine, Ronald was delighted with his leader's attention. He wondered if he dare tell Yosef about his predicament. He wondered how he would take it. Last year he had seen a girl who had been at the Bayit on a Friday night and Eli whispered to him that she was going to Palestine because she was having a baby and she wasn't married. Perhaps Yosef would give him some very helpful advice. He might be able to tell him how long it takes before you can really be sure. He wondered if he should tell him. He remained undecided. Finally, he forgot the idea.

When he met her later in order to walk her home, Eileen was in high spirits. She had a new idea.

"You know, I was thinking," she said, "maybe there is a way out!"

"What way out is there?"

"I was thinking that maybe if it really has happened - then maybe if we could get somebody to perform an abortion ... "

He hardly listened to her suggestion. He persisted in probing his own feelings. He remained entirely involved in himself, hardly aware that she existed too. She repeated what she had said, but he gave no indication of having heard her. How strange was everything about to happen to him! Was it really happening to him at all? Strange that it should have been happening to him!

"You know, I heard my mother talking today," Eileen continued, "and she was saying how one of her friends had one last year and it was really nothing, I heard her say, and it doesn't cost much ... "

She noticed that he wasn't listening to her. She stopped speaking, buttoning her lips, and said nothing for a few minutes. Then he realized she wasn't speaking any more.

"What were you saying?" he asked.

"Nothing,"

"But you were saying something!"

"Never mind," she said, weakly.

"Oh, don't get!"

He stopped. He watched her closely, then looked away. But he saw it was no good like this. He tried lifting himself out of the pit of his listlessness. He panted with exhaustion. He asked her if he could come up to her house.

"It's late," she said.

"Eileen - you were saying something though. Why don't you say it now?"

"It was nothing - really!"

"Why 'nothing'?"

She braced herself up suddenly, and moved more closely towards him.

"Ronnie - don't be so - oh, I don't want you to be so afraid - oh Ronnie," and she threw her arms about him and clung to him wildly.

They lay on the bed together and comforted each other and afterwards drank tea and tasted the cake her mother had baked. Ronald spoke more calmly; as they stood at the doorway she hugged him and he let his arms hang by his sides and looked away when she reached to kiss him, so that when she heard his footsteps move down the passageway and the door close, her heart closed somewhat with it. She felt cold and she shivered, but her Daddy who now came home told her the oil stove was giving enough heat. She went into her bedroom and started undressing. She hardly thought of Ronald, considering only her own predicament, while watching in her mind's eye a weird monolith retreating, growing smaller, and in bed she half sat up once because it seemed as if it were in her very room. But then it was very strange finding herself thinking that an image in her mind might be real and tangible.

The following day he called her and she spoke in clipped, evasive tones. He asked her what was wrong and what was the matter, and her voice was thin in replying "Nothing," nothing was the matter. He asked her whether, if and she said, "No, not yet." And when she finished talking with him she had a severe headache and decided to take some 222's.

In the meantime her mother had been noticing her waning appetite. She mentioned it to her husband who said that perhaps it was her boyfriend, and her mother decided it probably was. She spoke about it to her sister over the telephone on several different occasions, and mentioned it to an old customer at the store, before she approached Eileen one

evening and sat on the edge of her bed. At first she spoke about the business, then about the family. Finally she started asking more personal questions. Was she having difficulties at school? Perhaps there was some trouble in the group she belonged to? What about Ronnie?

"Nothing's wrong, but," Eileen said.

She began to wonder whether she could safely confide in her mother. She realised that her mother was an intelligent woman and that she had the most liberal and indeed what seemed the most sensible attitude to things a mother could possibly have. Telling her openly and frankly about her fears would give her the assurance and confidence Ronald failed to give, and if anything were really wrong she could get the needed encouragement and help.

"But Eileen, I can tell by your actions lately that something is wrong. Tell me child, what is it? After all, the world isn't perfect. It has its faults and people make mistakes. The sad part of the world is that it won't accept people's mistakes. That's where the tragedies start. But with a mother it's different. I know, when I used to be in a difficulty and in doubt I used to go to my mother too. To whom else can you go? To your husband? There are certain things you can't even tell your husband. But a mother will listen to anything. That's what a mother is for. Tell me Eileen, what is it?"

"It's just," Eileen began, hesitantly, with complete uncertainty.

"What is it child? You have been acting so strange lately. Tell me, what is it?"

"Oh, but it's nothing," Eileen breathed. "I'll be okay. I know I will."

The following day an event took place at Baron Byng which for its sensational value was unequalled by any other in the school year.

"Hey Green, didja hear what happened to Ralph Bercovitch?" one of his classmates called to him as he seated himself at his desk in the morning.

"Which Ralph?" asked Ronald.

"You know - that shmuck Ralph Bercovitch - he was in our class last year. The little short guy - you know, ai? So you know what happened? He got himself a broad, and he took her, and guess what? You'll see in The Herald this morning - kripes, it's so funny!"

"What in the dickens are you talking about?"

"You shmuck, I'm telling you! He has to marry the broad! The girl's father grabbed him by the pants and he has to marry her. Isn't it funny! The guy told me he wanted to go to collitch and be a phyziacist - christ, to be caught with a broad!"

During recess the boys paraded copies of The Herald to each classroom and the feature article concerning the "elopment" of Ralph Bercovitch and his bride Sylvia Slotkin was read aloud everywhere.

As Ronald listened to the jibes and to the behind the scene stories of the luckless high school lovers they all knew, a vision of what might be his fate unfolded itself before his eyes in all its pitiless realism. He shivered with terror at the prospect and wished that he had never

been born, that he had never been alive so that this shameful, unutterable thing would never happen to him. Already he could hear the loud, oily haired boys joking and guffawing as they repeated the tale about himself and Eileen; he could hear the restrained tittering of the girls pecking at the bones of his defeat as they huddled, four to a booth, in some meet-and-eat restaurant; he could hear the women's societies moralising collectively that they had better start watching to see that their daughters come in before one in the morning. All these people, whom now he cared not one whit for in his exclusive Youth Movement ideology, rose in a chorus of humiliating voices and ridiculing laughter to trap him and confound the very day he was born.

"What does her father do? Is that right? He owns a store on Bernard? Children these days! In my day a boy and a girl weren't left together for five minutes! Nowadays!"

At twelve o'clock he waited for Eileen at the girls' gate, but she had left already and when Barry strolled up the school yard Ronald decided to walk with him. Barry was very eloquent about the significance of the latest news.

"Do you know this guy Ralph? And this girl Sylvia? She's only fifteen, imagine! Can you imagine what happens to a girl of fifteen when she becomes pregnant?"

He waited for the reply Barry would give his own question.

"She starts losing her hair - and her gums get soft and her teeth start becoming crooked and her skin becomes yellow and her face starts getting wrinkled and her breasts start sagging and she becomes

like an old woman! Do you know that only one of every three women who give birth is healthy and normal afterwards? If she's not twenty, at least! That's a fact. A scientific fact that I read in a book. I'm not joking. It's really horrible for a girl to get pregnant when she's young. She's not young any more. She becomes ... "

He continued, then stopped to see if his descriptive powers had wrought any effect over Ronald. Then he continued.

"You don't believe me, ai? You think I'm talking out of my hat? Well, not only did I read this in one book, but I read it in another book I have at home. It's a book about obstetrics. Do you know what obstetrics is about? Well, in this book, they tell you everything that happens!"

Ronald wanted to ask him more about the books he had mentioned, but he didn't dare, lest Barry get any ideas. That afternoon, while he fiddled with his pen instead of working algebra, he decided that should his fate be similar to Ralph Bercovitch's he would either take poison or jump off Jacques Cartier bridge. (While contemplating the practicality of both means of suicide, he remembered that somewhere in a cupboard at home he had stocked away some chemicals he had once rifled from a drug store he had worked at as a message boy, and that among the bottles there had been one marked "Poison" and labelled "Potassium Sulphocyanate." Poisoning himself did seem more convenient than leaping off the bridge.)

He began thinking dark thoughts about his death now. In the evening paper he found a description concerning the body of a woman found in an open lot. He began having visions of himself being found in an open

lot. The day would be dark grey; big bellied clouds traversing the sky would suddenly burst and drench his dead body. The wind would blow fiercely, but he wouldn't feel cold of course. Thus he would dispose of himself, in one way or another.

Eileen saw him that evening. They sat on a couch together and they tried to distract themselves by doing geometry, but they couldn't, so they laid down the book and stretched out together on the couch. She lay with her arms about him tightly, but she could not arouse him. Every time she came near him he withdrew. Wherever she touched him his body ached. Finally she moved away, a white pallor on her face. She sat listening to the thoughts hammering in her head. If he loves me why is he so afraid of what might happen? I'm sure my mother will help us if anything is really wrong. Why is he so afraid if he really loves me?

She looked at him with frightened eyes. She moved toward him again, but only touched him lightly on the shirt sleeves.

The cold barren field appeared before his eyes. And the funeral. She didn't speak, but gazed solemnly in his face, acquiescing somewhat, why she didn't know, because for a few lightening moments her fears did not bother her: she scarcely cared whether she wasn't or whether she was; now he was her concern and she fixed her eyes upon him and thought of the appropriate words to say to express her meaning clearly and tell him that he was weak, tell him that he shouldn't feel hurt because it was against her principles to hurt anyone - but she couldn't tell him anything of the sort when he got up and stamped up and down and then sat down beside her, his feet

wrinkling the carpet. She felt annoyed with him because he was behaving like a child. She was going to tell him that she was going to forget about her principles of not hurting people and tell him that to make him understand, but she felt inept, incapable of doing or saying anything when he placed his head against her lap and moaned that he wished the world would come to an end. She put her hands to her lips, animated by fear, and said, "Ronnie, you know I feel so wrong saying this, but I feel it's not only about myself I have to worry about, it's about you too!"

"What do you mean?" he said, raising his head.

"Ronnie, you won't do anything rash!"

"What is there to do?" his lips asked without moving.

"I don't know - darling - but you look - oh but you look ..."

He waited for her to finish but she didn't finish. Instead she dropped her head into his lap and clung tightly to him; he was aroused out of his lethargy and kissed her again and again and then lifted his face with both hands and looked at her: for a wild moment she started into his face, and then she threw herself down on his lap and groaned: "You look like you were planning something terrible!"

The following evening he phoned and she gave him the pre-arranged word that she was the way she was. He said he couldn't come over because they were nagging the life out of him at home and he had better give in just this once and help his mother. "I'll call you in the morning," he said.

Her hand listlessly replaced the receiver and she went into the living room. She wondered how she would spend the evening. She didn't feel like studying; the fact that she was behind in all of her school work made little difference now. She took her fall coat, said a curt "I'll be back soon," and left.

The sky was clear, deeply dark, and unbroken with the exception of a few untwinkling stars. A brisk wind drove the first occasional scattered leaves down the street. She hardly thought of anything as she began to walk. Then she collected herself, and told herself she must find some solution to this. She simply must. She tried thinking logically, placing the possibilities under one column in her mind, the probabilities under another, and any lurking alternatives under a third. She began to examine her predicament coldly. She tried remaining detached, "objective" was the word Tzipporah used. She started outlining the possibilities. Then she considered the probabilities, and finally the alternatives. Afterwards she started listing the good side of the possibilities and but these didn't require any categorisation. She had to figure out what to do in the event of an unfavourable outcome. If there shouldn't be anything to worry about, then why worry?

She came to the conclusion that firstly she would have to see a doctor, and from there take steps. Waiting around and worrying like this was no good. She would have to analyse, evaluate, and then act, as Tzipporah always said.

These were the decisions she conveyed to Ronald when she met him the following day,

"I was thinking," he told her, "that maybe we could find out something by looking up a book. Barry says that he has a book about it."

"I don't want you to ask him for it," she said firmly.

"Why not?"

"Because I know Barry. If he'll sense anything is wrong, he'll start spreading it to everybody. You don't have to tell me. I know Barry Stein for a long time."

"But who's going to tell him? I won't say a thing."

"I don't want to take any chances. It'll be very bad for the Movement if a scandal breaks out, and if he'll know, then we can be sure ..."

"But ..."

"Never mind - we have to see a doctor. I've decided ... "

When Saturday afternoon came they had no reason to change their minds about seeing a doctor. Ronald called for her and before they left her house they lay down together on the bed and kissed. He found her uninteresting and dry. In a few minutes he said, "Let's go now."

They took a bus to Sherbrooke Street. There, in the French Canadian section of the city, Ronald hoped to find a doctor who did not know them from Adam so that everything would remain perfectly secret.

"His house must be a block from here," he said, as they got off the bus opposite Lafontaine Park. "I found his name and address in the phone book."

Presently they approached a large red brick house on the corner of a street which took a forty five degree dip to the next intersection below Sherbrooke. As they stood before the stone steps Eileen shifted

from foot to foot.

"Well, shall we go in?" she said.

He bit his lip and looked away. He started shuffling and stamping his feet.

"Well, do you want to go in now?" she repeated. "Come." She started moving towards the stairs. "Aren't you coming?"

"Eileen - darling, I can't go in there with you - really I can't."

She looked at him with pained and wide eyes.

"Oh darling, then he'll know. I can't go in there, really I can't!"

"He'll know anyways."

"Yes, I know - but think how it would be - I'd be going to a doctor to find out if my girlfriend - oh Eileen, I can't, I can't."

How she wished she had gone to her mother and confessed it all! How she wished she hadn't been a fool to think that he could stand up like a man in circumstances such as these! She felt like bursting into tears and falling to the ground. The remnants of her faith and admiration for him collapsed with her inner falling.

"Eileen, you must understand, oh don't you? I know, I know dearest, I can't help it. I love you, I love you," he cried bitterly, and clutched the cold limpness of her ungloved hand.

She withdrew her hand from his grasp. She turned and watched the leafless branches shaking drily in the autumn wind. The cool wind drew out the heat from her pounding cheeks.

"It's all right. I'll go in alone," she said, finally.

Her stiff gait quickened as she mounted the granite stairway and drew up to the doorway with the well polished bronze sign. Before she pressed the buzzer she heard him call her. She stopped, but didn't turn. He rushed halfway up the stairs; painfully she hobbled over to the railing. Her face flushed as two schoolgirls smirked at this odd Romeo and Juliet scene.

"Eileen - I'm sorry, I'm sorry sweetheart. I'm such a sick coward! I know I am, I know. Darling I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm going in with you. Come," and he gripped her under the arm and started moving toward the door. But she held back and smiled at him weakly. She was distracted by his sudden courage.

"Well - come. Aren't you coming?"

"No," she said, and tenderly looked at him and put her hands up to the lapels of his coat. "Wait for me out here."

"No - I want to go in with you."

"You don't have to. I'll be perfectly all right."

She jerked herself away from him and hastened through the door.

He did not know how he would pass the time waiting for her outside. It could take as long as fifteen minutes and then it could take two hours. He began pacing up and down the sidewalk. He crossed the street and stood in the park, from which he kept his vigil on the doorway. He saw it open once and he started running across the street: a bus almost killed him, but it wasn't Eileen. He crossed, cautiously this time, and waited at the corner.

Meanwhile he reflected, but refused to anticipate a favourable outcome. That would not be in keeping with some other-wordly principle which dictated that he must be punished in some way or other. Basically it was clear to him that he was no good, not worthwhile, not anybody who was something or somebody. He knew that perfectly well. He wasn't worth much. After all was said and done, his father was right, for deep down in his heart he knew he was a despicable character, the worst person he had ever seen!

But while these thoughts frowned and sneered in his brain he uttered wild and frantic prayers to Jehovah to save him, to save him somehow. The door of the doctor's office opened and Eileen paused in the doorway, speaking to the nurse. After what seemed fifteen minutes she said a protracted thank you; finally, she hurried down the steps and drew up to where he was standing.

" Well?"

She put her hand over her mouth. "The doctor wasn't there, but I asked the nurse and she told me that if I'm still not okay in two more weeks I should come back then because that's how long it takes to know for sure."

He was oppressively irritable all the way home, and he left her at her doorway, sulking and without saying good-bye. Her head ached when she got upstairs. She threw herself on the bed. A din rang in her ears; she felt like throwing up. She fancied, because of this, that she was really caught, recalling that her aunt had always felt nauseated and had thrown up regularly before she had given birth. She felt sweaty be-

fore she fell asleep.

"I've decided it's the only sensible thing to do," she told him the next day.

"But the nurse says that it might take another two weeks to tell whether you are or not. So if you're going to tell her, tell her then."

"No, I can't."

"Why not? What's to be gained by telling her now?"

"I want to."

He was silent for a moment. Through the window he could see the blue sky cruel with depth and the wind stretching far over the rooftops.

"Eileen - it's all up with us if she finds out."

She looked at him with surprise. "Why do you say that?"

"Well - it's obvious - isn't it?"

"No," she breathed, "it isn't."

"What do you mean?"

"My mother is very tolerant. She will feel bad about it at first, I know; but then she'll be glad I told her and not gone off and done something rash. Really, it's the only thing to do. We haven't got any money; there's no one we can go to, and even if we could, that wouldn't help any. Like this, if something really is wrong, then at least my mother will help!"

Vaguely he saw the point. But he wasn't satisfied with it. He

felt that no matter how liberal her mother could possibly be if she were told that her daughter was illicitly pregnant she would not be able to help herself but throw him out of the house, disgrace him, debar him from ever seeing Eileen again. How could he keep his mother from finding out too? And his father? And everybody?

"But why tell her now? We've still got two weeks. Oh Eileen, I'm so afraid I'm going to lose you. Honest I am. Eileen? I'm so afraid of losing you - and somehow I feel I will. Eileen? Eileen, do you hear me?"

"Yes?"

"Do you still love me?"

"Yes."

"Then let's not let her know until two weeks more - just two - oh Eileen, if I lose you I don't know what will happen - Eileen, you won't tell her?"

"But I have to!"

"Why, why do you have to?"

"Because - because I'm afraid!"

"Why darling? Why are you afraid?"

She tried to hide her face in his chest. A flood of tears reared up in her, but she restrained them, and for a pent up moment shook quietly. Then:

"I'm afraid - because I feel, oh so alone! Oh I know it's wrong - I know, I'm afraid you'll do something and I'll be left alone! Oh Ronnie, don't go ... "

Together they broke loose and slipped down on the couch and sobbed, but then he collected himself and poured forth all his store of tenderness and love until she sobbed no more. He kissed away the wetness from her eyes and she kissed him too, sweetly, without remorse, and later when she asked him to lend her his comb so that she could comb her hair she said that she felt much better that it had been like this. He too was glad and he held her in his arms before the mirror and he told her she was beautiful, and she smiled as if to say stop kidding me, ai, but he insisted that she was, and he turned her around and said see, and showed her her face in the mirror. She smiled her wide, concerning-shattering smile, lighting up her cheeks to a full red; then once again the mood of those early months when they had learned to kiss returned and they were furiously alive again with love and a deep untremmeled compassion for all the universe.

Afterwards he said, "When will I see you tomorrow?"

"At twelve."

"Are you going to tell your mother to-night?"

She remained uncertain and he took her in his arms again and pulled off and untwisted her underclothes to kiss her body. "You don't have to worry about it. I love you, you know, do you?"

"Yes," she laughed, "because I love you too."

"I'll see you to-morrow."

And as he ran downstairs she watched him go and when he was about to open the door he turned and saw her standing buoyant with charm and bewildering goodness. He threw her a loud smacking kiss and she laughed at him and came running down the stairway, tumbling into his arms all over again.

Next day he waited for her at the gate of the schoolyard at the lunch hour. Eileen bobbed out among the swarming crowds of girls. When she saw him her eyes danced with delight and her cheeks became like cherries. She darted over to him.

"I'm all right," she whispered gleefully.

"You are! How do you know?"

"I know: don't worry."

He grebbed her around the shoulder and they darted off. They fairly ran until they came to the mountain and they skipped across Fletcher's field singing with widely opened mouths and spirits flying like kites.

Now his only unhappiness was that he had only forty cents on him, and she had only a dime and that wasn't enough for a lunch at Dunn's for both of them so they had to say so long for now and go home and eat dinner alone.

The general office in which all the administrative work of the Youth Movement was somehow done was located in a private house in a half spare room crammed with typewriters, a mimeograph machine, and a battered green filing case. There the members of the general executive, the Hanhala, gathered this particular Saturday afternoon for their regular meeting.

"I feel the time is ripe," Tzipporah said, "that we should start thinking of the future of the branch here. Yosef and I have discussed the matter between ourselves, in terms of the role we want the group Hakoach to play during the coming year. We feel - that is, Yosef and I feel, that

it is time the members of Hakoach be given prominent positions in the branch so that they can undertake important responsibilities."

These preliminary remarks were commented on, certified, analysed and footnoted by the six members of the Hanhala, two of whom were Yosef and Tzipporah, the others being Mordecai, the leader who wore bi-focals and had the air of having read Das Kapital from cover to cover, but had, as a matter of fact, digested but a single pamphlet from the Little Lenin Library series (written, Yosef always joked, when Lenin was a small boy); Layah, a thin crusty looking girl who never wore a dress which could be called decent and sported sport shoes which should have been discarded four years ago; Avi, a small spurt of a young man, twenty years old, muscular and sincere, whose departure for Palestine had been delayed by a dying mother; and Rachel, large and bosomy, who seemed to be the only member of the Hanhala who washed her hands and face regularly, whose eyes always shone and were radiant, perhaps as a result of having published a four line poem in Poetry (Chicago). These six were the devoted colonels of the Movement, who, in their discussions, did away with all vestiges of parliamentary procedure because that was a bourgeois form which showed the immaturity of people in "this society"; consequently, a discussion of what should be on the agenda of a two hour meeting might require a sub-committee five hours to arbitrate.

Yosef didn't wholly agree with Tzipporah's exposition, and he felt called upon to venture:

"It's partly true, what Tzipporah said about giving them a sense

of responsibility. I feel that it's more important that we weld them into a solid unit and the only way to accomplish it is by having them take responsibilities in the Movement."

"I don't see in what way we disagree," charged Tzipporah.

"It's only your emphasis," returned Yosef, "you feel they all should be given prominent positions, and I feel ... "

"I don't see where the difference is, fundamentally. I feel some people should be given key positions."

"Yes," Yosef interrupted hotly, "let me clarify what I want to say. I feel they should be given positions, responsibilities, that is ..."

"So far as I'm concerned, I feel it's the same difference."

"All right," Rachel said, "let's not quibble over small points."

"It's not a small point," Yosef insisted. "I feel it's a matter of your whole approach."

To this Tzipporah expostulated: "If you'd have read Slavson's Creative Group Education, you'd see what I mean. It's very important to let the kids believe they are doing everything. I don't know whether I should emphasize this point again, because I feel it is so important."

"I disagree with that approach," Layah cut in. "I don't feel that it's right using this method of making the kids believe. Either the kids do something, or they don't. We don't have to teach them false logic, like in "this society", or make them believe in illusions."

"What are you people talking about?" Avi yelled over the mounting furor. "I feel you're all absolutely wrong. I read Slavson's book from cover to cover and I feel, Tzipporah, you are basically wrong. Now

let me clarify the issue ... "

"All right, quiet everybody. We can't conduct a discussion with this much noise ... "

"It's a matter of instilling the right ideas at the right time," Avi continued. "If we don't instill them, 'this society' will. So I feel it's very important ... "

"And besides," Tzipporah interrupted, "I feel that the kids should be given a chance to develop. Now is the time. We don't want ourselves to be stuck here as leaders forever! We want to develop a new body of leaders who can take over, so we can go to the New Hampshire training farm and then to Aretz."

This raised further hallabaloos of disagreements, interjections, glib exhortations, on matters both pertinent and impertinent. Finally everyone was in an uproar and just at the point where they were going to put up their fists as they do in "this society" Avi cracked a joke and they all tipped over with laughter.

An hour later they retreated into their seriousness and continued the discussion. When the meeting was over, Tzipporah declared, "I'm glad about the decision to have Yehudah and Eileen replace Avi and Layah on the Hanhala. I feel it is a positive step forward."

"Yes, I agree. But now we have the problem of convincing Hakoach that Eileen and Yehudah should be members of the Hanhala without making it seem influenced or handed down."

"Well, I've kept close contact with Eileen and I think it'll be easy to approach her. As far as convincing the group to vote for them -

I feel it will be fairly obvious to everybody that they are the only mature people in Hakoach!"

November was the first cold month that year. The lingering leaves disappeared almost overnight, and the city turned a gaunt and ghostly grey. When the crisis of her fears was over Milen was able to recover her balance quickly. Now she stood apart and judged the situation objectively. A bleak, uncanny feeling swept over her, telling her that something was wrong in her relations with Ronald. When they had the house to themselves she felt terribly uneasy now when he approached her. What would happen if they got into danger again? Was it worth the risk? Perhaps next time they simply wouldn't be lucky! There was only one way out: they must stop having intimate relations.

With a decision almost formed, she confronted him. Her face was without its usual softness, or petulance.

"I don't know," he said.

"But you don't think it's really any good if we have to face such worrying - and everything!"

"I don't know - I ... "

He didn't wish to discuss the matter. Dimly, he realised her uneasiness was well warranted, but because it was dim, and because of the neat way he had of forgetting awkward things, he couldn't bring himself to agree with her. Moreover, he couldn't accept the nullification it would mean; for, once having won her, he was loathe to give her up. He had a strange, mysterious feeling in him that if he were to give her up ---

A severe cramp of fear and agitation seized him.

"But Ronnie - really, I don't think it's right to," she was saying.

He didn't reply. He had won her by degrees. She was his. He wouldn't allow her to go; he would never give her up. He would be lost if he didn't have her.

"It's not fair we should have to worry about the consequences each time. It takes the worthwhileness away from it if we have to worry so much each time."

He went home with these words echoing in his ears. For some time he forgot about the whole issue, forgot that she insisted on a decision, having insisted, moreover, with a strange, peculiar assertiveness; and instead of making up his mind, of facing the problem squarely, as he dimly realised he must, he thought of the past two days, of the past two weeks and remembered how he had behaved. What had he done, he now wanted to know. Why had he let himself go? He had cancelled all his vows, destroyed all her hopes, and shattered all their promises. Now, what could she possibly think of him? Questions, anxieties like these, roared in his brain in vast circling confusion.

He went to bed shaking from the cold, pure realisation of his own weakness. He lay in a fever, in a sweat of peculiar detestation of himself. Why had he not acted like a man? How much more would she have loved him, he suddenly realised, if he had behaved strongly, if he had displayed strength.

He jumped out of bed, flicked on the light, and sat at his writing table. Quickly he began scrawling down new resolutions. He must be a man, if she is to love him: he must be something, he must be somebody ... for, as he probed deeper and farther, as his true wishes came closer to him, he suddenly dropped his pencil and sat staring into empty space.

When he met her the following day the evening before had become a dim, vague recollection. When she returned to the matter they had left off discussion, it came to him as something new.

"We're not going to any more, okay?" He didn't reply. He walked along beside her in silence. "Okay?" she repeated. He hardly heard her. He didn't know why he didn't speak. "Oh why don't you say something. Oh you're so self-...."

"It's all right," he suddenly mumbled, "Okay."

For the moment she breathed a sigh of relief. But contrary to her expectations, their resolution solved few problems. Too often she continued to feel uneasy in his presence. A nameless and shapeless bleakness haunted her whenever she realised that she could no longer look to him as a tower of strength, and fancy him as she used to, think of him as the noble, tall youth whose declarations of eternal love could sweep the earth and oceans away. She felt profoundly disturbed.

Ronald, for his part, felt a need to oppose the awful feeling of not caring which suddenly gripped him. He resolved that he loved her, that he loved her very much, and that he was not going to lose his temper

with her so often. He would treat her better, and let her offer her opinion, not, as he did so often, stifle her, and not allow her to speak what was on her mind; he was going to make her love him all over again because somehow he sensed that perhaps she didn't love him. But that thought struck him as strange, and for a moment he reconsidered, perhaps he should ... he didn't know what to do, but he must see her after the Friday night discussion she had mentioned.

The discussion was scheduled to be over at ten. As it was a two hour discussion and as it didn't start until nine twenty-five, she wasn't free until after eleven.

"What did it take so long for?" he asked, agitated with having been made to wait so long.

"Oh, we had to discuss many important things. And afterwards Tzipporah was telling me about a book. You know, she knows so much about everything. I find she's a very intelligent girl!"

"Yah, she knows how to shoot the bull!"

"Why do you say that?"

He laughed. "Why do you ask me why I say that? Isn't it obvious? At least Yosef has a mind. He studies at McGill and knows something. But she!"

"Most of the leaders think she's a better person than Yosef. They didn't ask her to leave Toronto and come here for nothing, you know."

"That doesn't mean anything. Hitler was a good leader - but heck, that doesn't say much!"

They continued down Hutchison street. She returned to the subject of the book.

"You know, Tzipporah told me to read it, and it's really an excellent book. It's called The Happy Family. It's such a mature book. You should read it."

"What's it about?"

"Oh, it's about everything. It's written by a doctor - how people should live together and get along with each other and share responsibilities. You know, Tzipporah said it would benefit us both if we read it together. Really, it has such a mature approach."

"But what is it about?"

"I'm telling you - it's written by ... "

"Yah yah, I know all that. I'm asking you - what's it about? And you start telling me a whole bunch of trash. I'm asking you a specific question. Can't you give me a specific answer?"

They passed under a bright arc lamp and he saw the taut expression on her lips. He felt intensely irritated with her.

"Well, what's the matter now? I'm asking you something!"

At first she made no reply.

"I don't think it's right being so impatient," she said.

"What am I being impatient about?" he yelled helplessly.

"Don't yell!"

"I'm not yelling! What am I being impatient about?"

She gritted her teeth in a sudden torrent of unrepressed anger. Her body shook: she clenched her fists. "Well, I'm asking you," she

heard him say. How she wished she had remained with Tzipporah, spent the night at her house, as Tzipporah had suggested that she could. She wished that - oh damn!

"Ronnie," she finally gasped, "I think you're being very immature!"

"Oh don't start any of that now all!"

"I'm not starting anything. I'm just saying that you never give people a chance to express themselves. You think that just because you can collect your ideas quickly everyone else can, I think you're being very inconsiderate."

He was subdued. He remained silent. She chose to ignore his annoyance and continued making her point.

"The book I was reading was about mutual respect and responsibility. That's what the author feels is at the crux - no, he has a better word." She paused to cool off and think. "I forget what he calls it, actually ... "

"I don't see where this applies here," Ronald barked.

"I'm not saying it does," gasped Eileen. "You said that you wanted to know about the book in the first place, so I told you!"

"Yah yah, so go ahead!"

She began to detest his attitude, his pugnacious tone of voice. When they went up to her house and sat down for tea she wished he would hurry up and go. She was feeling more sure of herself now. Presently, as he sat down by the table deeply glum, she wasn't drawn into his mood. Instead of wasting time in thoughtless silence she mentioned how much school work she had to do. But she could not rouse him from his moodiness, from

the feeling of self detestation which now chained his tongue with silence. She didn't care in fact, whether he was roused or not. At the door, he towered over her, his face pale with emptiness and inevitable pain. She merely folded her arms and waited for him to say good night. But he could not pull himself away and leave everything in a state of such terrible uncertainty. He drew her into his arms, but he found her limp and unresponsive.

"Eileen," he muttered, "I want to ask you something."

She remained immobile. Her face was expressionless. She betrayed little interest or enthusiasm for what he had in mind.

"Eileen, do you still love me?"

Her eyes darkened. She hesitated. A little wave of fear trembled through her. He drew her into his arms again. At first she wouldn't move, but then he insisted. But she didn't look up into his face.

"Not the way I used to," she whispered.

"Eileen," he cried, catching hold of her chin and turning her face toward him. "Why do you say that?"

"I don't know - that's the way I feel."

They remained utterly motionless. He tried to discover what sensation now clawed at his heart but he searched in vain, for there was none. In a moment that unpleasant feeling vanished. She was a burden, a heavy weight in his arms. He felt immensely vacant. Again he looked for the sensation, but he did not find it, and this time his surprise was less. He didn't care, he discovered. But he wanted to care, and so he became frightened with his not caring.

"Then you don't love me any more - do you?"

The house was still. No trucks rumbled or clattered out upon

the street; nor did the wind swish through the bare trees outside, or any voice or noise disturb the frozen, fearful silence of the house. He could hear a cat meowing far away, and the sound of a train's whistle in the rail-yards, but he couldn't hear her heart breathe a thin, faintly inaudible "no".

On Monday afternoon Eileen turned on the radio and sat in rapt attention when the announcer said that the United Nations had handed down a decision to partition Palestine. She wanted to dance and sing and jump with glee. Just then Tzipporah called and said there was going to a Mass Rally at the Forum to celebrate the event.

She dialed Ronald's phone number quickly, but the line was busy. When she finally reached him, his voice was grouchy.

"Yah, I heard it over the radio," he said.

"Isn't it wonderful? I think it's wonderful - oh I don't know what to say - I was speaking to Tzipporah just before and she was saying that we are so lucky - just to be alive - after two thousand years! Are you coming to the rally tonight?"

"I can't - I have an exam tomorrow!"

"Wha-at? You can't stay home tonight! You must come, you simply must, - it's a historical event!"

She was terribly upset with him but she made up her mind that she would go herself anyway. She put on a fresh white blouse and a newly pressed skirt, and took the streetcar to the Bayit. Some fifty people were already there and they were all excited; as she walked in they were starting a hora and she joined in and leapt around the room, zestful and enthusiastic. On the streetcar they couldn't stand still and they sang

themselves hoarse, stopping only to save what was left of their breath for what they knew would be a monster rally of tumult and shouting. Tzipporah knew where the door was which led to the basement of the Forum, under the amphitheatre seats, and they all took off their coats and hung them in dark brown locker rooms and rolled their sleeves for the sake of uniformity. Some of the leaders were hurrying about handing out banners fastened to the ends of stout poles. Eileen stood on her tip toes to look around and see all the faces; there were hundreds, perhaps more than a thousand getting ready to march out into the Forum, a complete turnout of all the members of the Zionist Youth Organisations in the city. She was thinking of Ronald; how badly she felt that he wasn't here to witness an historical event of this importance when a buxom group worker came over and thrust a substantially heavy pole into her hands stop which fluttered a paper banner. Tzipporah came over and helped her to hold it because it was so heavy, but Eileen said, "It's okay. It's not too heavy," and she didn't mind when after five minutes her shoulders started aching. Then several whistles blew simultaneously and a person she had seen at smaller Zionist rallies stood up in a white shirt opened at the collar and held his left arm high above his head; after the tumult and the roar subsided he gave instructions: several bugles and drums started playing and they started marking time and felt their blood pounding to the rhythm of the big bass drum; gradually the long, twisting, turning, tangled line began moving, and an overwhelming exultation and sense of power and significance welled up in them as they marched through the door to be greeted by the tumult of applause from

a Forum dense and roaring with Montreal Jewry celebrating a two thousand year longed-for event. They felt rich and strong and proud when mention was made of Prime Minister of the newly born State of Israel, David Ben Gurion, and they arose to a greater and louder tumult of applause when a special poem of tribute was read in honour of Zion's first visionary, Theodore Herzl.

There were more speakers and choirs and a specially imported dancer who did Yeminite dances in exotic costumes of red, purple, yellow and blue silk cascading from her shoulders to her mobile hips. Then, when the last speaker had spoken and had asked for contributions so that illegal arms and ammunition could be bought and smuggled across from New York, guns from France, aeroplanes from Czechoslovakia, first aid from Switzerland, they rose to the momentous occasion and sang the new words to Hatikva.

The doors were congested for a whole hour after the rally came to a close. All the street traffic was blocked when Zionist youth of the city rushed out onto the pavements in front of the Forum and arm to shoulder, shoulder to arm, raised their shout: Emek emek avodah, emek emek horah! and swung around, five hundred dancers, in arcs and circles of stamping, shouting, cheering joy until whole orchestras of motor horns started tooting. Half of Montreal's traffic police were on hand to clear the merry makers away

Eileen asked Tzipporah, Sarah, Barry and Yehudah to come up to her house after the rally was over, but only Tzipporah accepted and

came. First she tasted the cookies Eileen had baked from the recipe book yesterday; with a bellyful of food and comfort, Tzipporah was in no mood to leave, just then.

"Perhaps this is the time to tell you," Tzipporah began attempting to be dramatic by speaking slowly and with emphasis on certain words, "that the Hanhala has been discussing a certain matter."

"The Hanhala" Eileen interrupted, "meets every month, doesn't it?"

"No, it meets every week. Sometimes twice a week, or even three times when we have pressing problems."

"Where do you get all the time to meet that often?"

"Oh - well, you make it. You see the Hanhala is the executive body of the branch. Without the Hanhala, nothing would function. In short, we're the executive directors." When Eileen gave signs that she had digested these facts, Tzipporah continued. "We've been watching you carefully, as I was saying, and we all feel that you are excellent material for leadership in the Montreal branch of the Movement. We feel you are intelligent, that you have the capacity for leadership, that you are dynamic. I was watching you at camp, and personally I feel you have some very remarkable abilities - which perhaps now are dormant, but which can be developed. I think that you should make a very good General Secretary of the branch here in Montreal."

"General Secretary! Me? You mean me?"

"Yes, of course. You seem so surprised because at present, I feel, you don't know what to expect of yourself, in terms of the future.

That's why, I feel, you think being the General Secretary of one of the Movement's branches is beyond you. I, for one, feel that in terms of your abilities, you would do an excellent job!"

"Well - really, I never thought of myself as - really - I'm overawed ... "

"I mean of course - you would first have to be a regular member of the Hanhala, and then gradually take on more responsibility - you see, I don't expect you to plunge in, in one leap - see what I mean?"

"Yes - of course. Really, I'm so thrilled!"

"Actually, it would be a matter of being a regular member of the Hanhala for awhile - and then, as the present leaders begin leaving for Aretz you and your group would take over, and I see a very good chance of you being at the head!"

Eileen's face was red and happy as she sat, her arms folded and resting in her lap. Tzipporah asked her if she could have another cup of tea. Eileen said, "Sure," but there wasn't any more water, so she lit the gas and started heating up some more.

Later, as Tzipporah sat over a third steaming cup of tea, Eileen wanted to know more about the Hanhala. Tzipporah told her. She even began telling her things on the confidential side.

"Don't repeat this to anyone, not even to Ronnie," she told her.

"No, I won't," Eileen assured her.

It was one thirty when Tzipporah left. Eileen felt as though she had already been on the Hanhala for a whole year!

Ronald phoned her the next day after school and she told him about the rally. Apart from this she had some wonderful news for him.

"I can't tell you over the phone, silly. Come over right away."

"I'm soon going to eat supper though."

"Tut tut, never mind, you'll eat supper here."

When he marched upstairs to her house ten minutes later Eileen was waiting for him, her hands over her lips, and the moment he entered she leaped to her tip toes and flung her arms about him.

"What are you so happy about?" he wanted to know.

"Happy? Happy isn't the word for it. It's supreme joy!"

"Well - let's hear."

She started telling what Tzipporah had implied to her, and then she began telling him what Tzipporah had told her - no, it was against her principles, but she had to just this once - and in all confidence he must please, please not tell anyone because it was confidential; she was so glad about it because now she would be able to work on the Hanhala; she always had wanted to work on the Hanhala, because this would give her a chance to express herself and this, this was very important to her; and the leaders thought she had real potentialities, yes, that was the word Tzipporah used: she was so surprised Tzipporah thought that highly of her, really.

"Well, what do you think about it?" she asked when she was through. "Isn't it terrific?"

He didn't reply to her question. He looked at her gloomily.

"Well, don't you think it's really terrific?"

"I think it's a bunch of rubbish," he said. "I don't want you to bother with them. I say it's a bunch of rubbish and I know what I'm talking about! I've been in the Organisation longer than you have and I know damn well what I'm talking about!"

Her expression became pained and she put her fingers to her mouth. Her lips worked with irritation and regret.

"Well - I disagree with you - I feel it's very important. If you had been at the Rally last night you would have seen how really important it is!"

"Oh don't shoot the bull! I'm telling you and I know what I'm talking about! I've read just as many books as Yosef has, and I can say this much, he doesn't know terribly much about what he's talking about most of the time. It's rubbish I say."

"Well - I disagree with you!"

"You disagree! Well why do you disagree? What is there to disagree about? What makes you disagree? You hardly know anything about the philosophy of the Youth Movement, so how can you agree or disagree? Simply because Tzipporah tells you so? Does that mean you have to give up your time and everything because some jerk who hasn't even finished high school comes and tells you to!"

"I'm not giving up anything, as you say. I don't see why you have become so antagonistic against the whole idea. And besides - I don't see why you remain a member if you're so against it all!"

"Well, I'm quitting eventually!"

"Why don't you leave right away?"

Pugnacious and indifferent, her erstwhile soft and round face focused a glare of cross questioning self righteousness at him - the soft and sweet smile which had always comforted and soothed him crystallised into a hard grimace of distain. He drew near her; she shook him off.

He was utterly at a loss as to how to deal with her. This was not his old Eileen, whose mind and body was an entity specially reserved for him, clay to all his usages. For a moment he was frightened and drew over and held her in order to prevent her from moving away. She looked up at him with affected indifference, trying to show him that she was firm in her convictions and meant every word she had said.

"Eileen," he said, looking into what were now her cold brown eyes, "don't you see, at the end of this year we'll have to get out of the Movement anyways? Eileen, I want to go to college. Eileen, you're not listening to me - no, you're not! I - I want to be somebody here, do you understand? I want to do things right here, where I was born, Eileen, I don't want to run away to a farm to milk cattle and be a peasant!"

"Run away?" she said quietly, with uncomprehending eyes.

"Yes," he suddenly yelled. "And I don't care one bit about what Yosef thinks about it - maybe he wants to run away ... "

"Run away?" she repeated.

"Yes, run away I call it. He's afraid of living in Canada. He's afraid of being an engineer. 'There's too much anti-semitism!' What an excuse! If you want to find an excuse you can find an excuse, the trouble is he doesn't even take the time to find a half decent excuse."

"Well isn't there anti-semitism?"

"Sure there is! What of it? In some parts of this country they don't like the Catholics. Do we like the French pea soups? Do the French pea soups like the Limies? And the Chinaman, who likes the Chinaman? So what do you want, everyone to love us because we're Jews?" He paused. Her face was white. Her eyes did not move. "Eileen? Eileen, are you listening to me?"

"Yes."

"Eileen, we're going to leave the Movement pretty soon anyways - and maybe in two or three years, after I will have gone to college for some time - maybe we'll be able to get married. So what's the difference if you're on the Hanhala or not?"

"Ronnie," she replied coldly, "I disagree with your whole attitude. To me the Movement has become a way of life. I'm not going to give up a way of life for such petty reasons as - as college. Besides, I probably won't make the marks!"

Suddenly her mood changed and he heard her sigh a heavy note of regret about her marks and again he felt the lord of the situation, she the mere vassal of circumstances and exams she hardly ever passed; the subtle feeling of insignificance she had always known and felt when school was the topic of discussion crept over her and Ronald saw her drop her eyes and he knew she felt badly and he regained the firmness he was sometimes able to muster on such occasions and said:

"Eileen, I don't want you to join the Hanhala, do you hear? Eileen, doesn't what I want mean anything to you? I just don't want you to!"

Her lips were frozen with silence. She did not stir.

"Eileen, don't you love me still? Just a little bit? Don't you care what I think?"

"I do care, I care very much - but when you get so unreasonable!"

"Eileen, let's not be silly, let's not be silly, for heaven's sakes, let's not," he cried and pulled her down onto the couch. He started kissing her so that she couldn't speak. After a moment she slipped her arms about him. They lay there for twenty minutes or so, speechless and breathless under the anesthesia of their loving. Then she propped herself up on an elbow.

"Ronnie, I want it decided!"

"What do you want?" he muttered, his head heavy with passion.

"That I'm going to be a member of the Hanhala."

In a perilous moment of confusion she gazed at him, not knowing whether he was her friend who had her interests at heart, or whether he was cruel and crafty, and her blood enemy. Before she could reply he pulled her down to himself and kissed her hotly and madly.

"Be on it, be," he grunted, "do whatever you wish, but don't go away, don't leave me!"

The second week in December Tzipporah introduced the matter of electing two representatives from the group Hakoach to the Hanhala and the group conducted a series of discussions which lasted until the first week in January. Finally, by a majority vote, both Yehudah and Eileen were elected to the Hanhala.

Ronald had not taken a much more accepting attitude over the matter of the Hanhala. He resented her position very deeply, and the evening of the voting he left the Bayit and walked home alone.

After the first meeting Eileen attended, she ran to him hopeful that she would be able to tell him about what they had discussed, but she found him uninterested and apathetic. He knew more about it than she did, and that's all there was to it.

Meanwhile, she discovered that as a member of the Hanhala she was obliged to assume other responsibilities connected with the problems of administering the branch. Her one or two extra meetings each week rapidly increased in number, and shortly after her official induction she was telling her mother that she had a different meeting every night.

"But Eileen, you've got your exams, how are you going to pass if you're going to run around to meetings every night?" her mother asked.

"But the meetings are so important, and so interesting too! And you know, you really get to know people when you meet and discuss with them!"

"But what about next year? Last month you told me that Ronnie convinced you that you should go to college ... "

"College is meaningless in this society ... I feel I'm really accomplishing something now. That's the important thing!"

"I'm really sorry but I have to go," Eileen said before one of the very numerous meetings she attended was quite over.

"But we haven't gotten through this problem of how to get twelve

year olds to join the Movement!" said Tzipporah.

"I know - but I have to go - really. Ronnie is waiting."

"Well, he can wait."

"I said I would meet him at eight. It's eight thirty already."

"Well, I'm sure if you tell him the meeting took longer ... "

But she noted the uneasy expression on Eileen's face. For a while she doodled on her notebook; then she ventured a further remark.

"You and Ronnie are moving in completely opposite poles lately. It's a very unhealthy situation - you know ... "

Eileen fixed her eyes to the floor.

"Yes, I know."

"Have you tried to do anything about it?"

"There's nothing I seem to be able to do."

Tzipporah faltered for a beginning; then, with assurance, "I feel that when two people who have had a relationship feel they are no longer suited to each other then they should decide, on common grounds, to end their relationship - I mean, it's only reasonable, to the Movement, and to all concerned ... "

She considered Tzipporah's remarks for more than a week before any concrete opinion formulated itself; the brooding indefiniteness which the last few months had scrawled upon her soul gradually became visible and meaningful. Then the overwhelming idea struck her. She would end her relationship with Ronald. She would break it, bring it to an end. The very words for it sounded strange.

But she pursued the matter, considered it at great length. It struck her as the only reasonable path for her to follow; she felt certain from several hints that Ronald had dropped that he was thinking of the same thing too. Now that she had found herself in the Movement and had become a successful leader she did not want to be hindered in her work. She wanted to be free from all ties which bound her to the feebleness of her former self. She wanted to be free from everyone. Most of all, she didn't want to be tied down to an obsolete love affair.

After having deliberated considerably she asked Ronald what he thought. She asked him offhandedly, in a slip-of-the-tongue way. He was very irritated with her. He took it as much as if she had said that she couldn't see him that evening because she had another one of her lousy meetings.

"Look, don't bother me with your crazy ideas," he told her.

She saw less and less how she could secure her freedom, - yes, that's what it was - if she continued to depend on him and his wishes. He would continue to shy away from the crucial points. She had learned that he was capable of resolving his composure and blandly forget the essential facts. Yes and No could hold the same emotional cast for him; they had little significance if he simply didn't want them to.

She could not, therefore, depend on his accepting her viewpoint easily; she realised this to her vast discomposure because she wished more than anything else that she could tell him, and he would think it over and agree and then they would stop seeing each other so often; of course after

that there wouldn't be any of the obligations which The Happy Family had said ought to be part and parcel of a mature relationship. She wished so much that he would react that way. Then she would be able to have him for a friend, and maybe she could influence him into having a more positive attitude toward the Movement. She breathed a sigh and wished that the relationship didn't have to be broken up in the first place. But no - she had decided. If she allowed herself to be weak, they would go on like that. It wouldn't be healthy to go on like that.

She sat at her window and gazed down at the traffic below. Everything proved uninteresting, the trees, the cars, the movement of people, the flicker of neon lights; she felt a vague revulsion toward the city she had known ever since childhood. She felt remote from it all, a little saddened but glad that she would not have to live all her life in this treacherous place. The telephone rang, and she started up. It was Ronald. He said that he was coming over.

Later, her mother, leaving the house, turned to her and said, "If Daddy calls, tell him I'm at Aunt Myra's."

Ten minutes later the door opened downstairs and she heard Ronald coming up the stairs. She remained in the kitchen while he put his coat away. He stood rubbing his hands in the hallway, then he came into the kitchen. She said, "Hello." Then the telephone rang, and she talked for half an hour.

He went into the parlour and sat uneasily on the couch. He could hear Eileen's chattering on the telephone and he called to her to

bang down. She waved her hand at him. Exasperated, he got up and walked over to the piano. His fingers began pounding out a disjointed melody. He didn't turn until she had eased onto the couch.

For some minutes he looked at her and said nothing. He gazed through the window and saw the grey smoke of the day rise and wilt in the greyness of the windy sky. He went over to where she sat and slipped down onto the couch. He asked her the usual questions as to what she had done during the morning; she replied in a thin voice and didn't look at him. She played with the white cuffs of her grey, long sleeved dress.

She wondered if she should start telling him now. No, not ask him, tell him. She knew that was the only way. She must be firm, not afraid. She knew how he might react. She knew him well enough, all right, so she must be firm, insistent. She watched his expressionless face. He put what felt like a clammy hand upon her cheek and she felt a peculiar coldness and pain dart through her. She didn't want him to kiss her, but she didn't want to move away. Her lips were dry and passionless. He kissed her several times. Soon he tired and he didn't want to kiss her anymore. He drew away.

"Are you planning on doing any studying?" he asked.

She didn't look at him, but kept her eyes on the solid coloured carpet. Should she tell him now? She must have courage. Courage was held to be the prime virtue of the chalutz. And that's what she wanted to be. A heavy truck rumbled by outside, splashing the wet snow.

He repeated his question, this time with more vigour. He began telling her all about the studying he had to do. This was his last year

at Baron Byng; the matriculation examinations were soon to follow; and both of them had to do well in these examinations because both of them wanted to go to college. Wouldn't it be wonderful, both of them going to college? Together! He had wanted to go for such a long time!

"Well, aren't you going to do any studying?"

His voice fell with a din on her ears. She was elsewhere, alone, in some dark and brooding place. Her face pained her. Her eyes ached. She must tell him now. Now she must tell him. She must be firm, strong, courageous, otherwise she could never do the things she wanted to do. And he wouldn't let her be the thing she wanted to be.

"Well - I'm asking you a question - it's three and a half months to the matrices - you've got March, April, May - half of the month of June - look, don't be silly now. Then you'll be worried about passing your exams. You'd better study while the studying is good!"

She turned her head and looked away from him. Now she was resolved ... now.

"Ronnie, I think we should discuss something beforehand ... "

"What is it now?"

She hesitated before she spoke again.

"I have decided," she said, "I've been thinking, that is," she fumbled.

He threw an agitated glance at her. "What have you decided?"

"I've - I think we should break our relationship!"

"What do you mean? When have you decided?"

The hysterics grew within him. His lower lip quivered, and an uncontrollable sensation of pain and abandonment swept through his heart.

"I've decided it's no good for us. I think we should end our relationship because ... "

"What because? Why because? Do you know what you're talking about? You're crazy! What are you talking about?"

Her face remained firmly set. He grabbed her by the arm and set her on his lap and seated her as he always had seated her when he wanted to speak to her and order her thoughts and feelings. A little gust of fear lifted in her heart. He held her firmly.

"What are you talking about?" he said with sudden resolution. "I don't think you know what you're talking about! Honestly I don't! I know things haven't been going too well between us the last few months. Okay, so it's clear why. We were worried whether you were pregnant at first - and there were other things - but all that has cleared up. Hasn't it? Lately I've felt that we were having a good relationship, like during camp - do you know what I mean?"

She stared at him silently. "Do you know what I mean?" he repeated.

"No," she whispered.

"Well, what is there to understand, for chrissakes - it's quite simply this - but you always"

She turned her head away.

"I've decided!"

"What have you decided? What in the devil are you talking like that for?"

"Because I don't think it's good anymore."

"What's no good? What do you mean, it's no good. It's wonderful! Do you think somebody else like you, with your qaulities, can be found so easily? What the devil - Eileen, don't talk like that - I love you, do you understand, I love you!"

She paused a moment, and then with a firm, set expression, repeated, "I've decided."

He grasped her more firmly. A wild spasm of anger travelled through him. "What have you decided?" he screamed. "Who gives you the right to decide anything like that? You can't decide such a thing. Do you hear?"

"Our relationship is no good any more. It used to be good, but now it isn't any longer. I've been trying to tell you that, but you never wanted to listen to me."

"What is it you want to say, what? Why do you speak like that, for heaven's sakes, why?"

"Oh Ronnie - you don't have to get upset like that. We can discuss it calmly!"

"All right - we can discuss it. But not when you tell me you have decided. What right have you to decide?"

"Because - there's no other way."

"Why no other way? Why? Who told you so?"

"Ronnie, - you simply won't listen to reason, you simply won't!"

"What reason is there to listen to, for chrissakes? I love you, what more reason is there? What are you looking at me that way for? You

don't believe me, ai? You don't! I'll prove it to you yet. Oh stop it - cut it out! Eileen listen to me - I love you, I really do! Stop saying such things to me. I can't stand it when you say such things. Please don't say it!"

"But we can't keep this up - we're ruining each other, spoiling each others' chances of developing - really we are!"

"What chances do you want to develop! Develop if you want, but don't leave me, don't go away! Oh I love you - I do, I do, I really do!"

"But what's the good?" she said. Then she repeated, "But I've decided."

For a moment he was silent, and then he put his hand to his forehead and bent his face so that she couldn't see him and he felt his chest heaving and shaking and his eyes blinding with violent gusts of tears gushing up from the bottom of his heart: he could turn his face away no further, and she could hear him crying now, low and whimpering, like a dog. She put her hand to her mouth and parted her lips in horror for she had not expected anything like this, anything like this ever, and she came near to him and touched his shoulder. "Please - Ronnie," but he was deaf to her pleading and got up and threw himself upon her. She didn't have the courage to resist his prodding her with kisses and she didn't have the strength to reply to the questions bursting from him - why was she doing this to him, why?

"Ronnie, I've decided because I think it is the best for both of us. You feel badly now because you perhaps - well, you have no - per-

spective - I mean, but you will see - Ronnie "

She could not restrain herself and her heart grew liquid too and she didn't know what was happening to her when her eyes became confused with tears. When he saw her weeping he put his head on her lap and begged her not to leave him. He mumbled that he would never, never let her go; and when she heard his insistent tone of voice she muttered again that she had decided, and she started wiping away her tears

"What do you mean you have decided?" he cried without restraint now. "How come you've decided - who told you to?"

"Nobody has told me."

"So why do you want to leave me? Why? You never told me this before!"

"I did - oh I did, but you never wanted to listen."

"But what have I done to you? What? Have I done anything wrong? Have I hurt you in any way? What do you want of me?"

"Please Ronnie - please - you haven't done anything wrong - it's just - it's just that I feel we aren't in love anymore - really, so ..."

"So we'll fall back into love! We can - well is that it - we can, we will - what's the matter, for heaven's sakes, what's the matter with me?"

"There's nothing the matter - it's just that - oh Ronnie stop crying, please stop - stop! This is so foolish. Really it is! We can discuss it, but not this way!"

She persuaded him to get off the floor. He withdrew a handkerchief from his pocket and limply brushed it across his eyes. They sat on the couch together. "Kiss me?" he begged, pulling her over to him.

She remained motionless so he pulled toward her and kissed her vehemently. She tried to wrench herself free, but he held firmly.

"You'll never leave me, you'll never," he cried.

"Ronnie, I've decided."

"But why, for heaven's sake, why?"

"Because I feel it's no longer good."

"So we'll make it good - oh for heaven's sakes, Eileen!"

"But I don't want to have a relationship any more - I just don't want to - I want to be free. That's all - just free!"

He didn't know what she meant; he sobbed and the clock in the living room ding donged twice while he sat and stood and sat down again, not knowing what wild fury of misfortune had fallen upon him, why he had come to this: how he wished he could turn the clock back a month, or two, or three, that he might put off this terrible pain and emptiness and abandonment which howled and whistled and tore him within. He protested, and kept protesting; he made every plea he knew and invented many more; then he lay exhausted and miserable. He didn't want to leave yet and go home.

At the door, he beseeched her still.

"But I want you to love me! If you want me to, I'll change! Eileen - what is it - what?"

"Nothing - it's just that it isn't any good any more."

"But why?"

"Because - because I want to be free."

"If I change, will you love me?"

She paused and then replied with extreme agitation, "But you

don't love a person who is going to change. You love a person for what he is already."

"But if you want me to change, I'll change. Just promise you'll love me!"

But she remained stubborn and silent. He stopped kissing her, and she looked up at him fearfully and muttered, "I can't!"

He stood back aghast. Limply his hand sought the doorhandle; he couldn't pull himself away. He looked at her, turned aside, and said, "I know what it is: it's they - they've told you to do this to me! I know, it's all right, I'll fix them!"

"Ronnie, how can you say such a horrible thing?"

"Because I know - it's your rotten Hanhala and the others; oh God, why did I even start with them!"

Her hands clenched and loosened. She stared at him with eyes wide open. "It's not true - it's not at all true!"

But he had no further strength for argument, for more pleading, for more accusation. There was hardly the strength to open the door left in his hands. He waited for a moment, before he left, thinking that somehow the sullen white mask of anger and resentment would vanish from her face and the joyous fever of her love for him would rush back. But it wasn't a joke, it wasn't a dream, not the nightmare he thought perhaps it was, nor the impossible illusion that he would wake out of it any moment now; it was real, utterly and implacably real.

Before he started going she called him. "Wait a second," she said.

A wild hope and yearning swooped down and he thought it was all over, the illusion gone, the joke up - he was awakening from it all!

She went to the kitchen and he heard the tap running and then she returned with a washcloth in her hand.

"You'll catch cold," she said, and stood on her tip toes to wipe away the redness in his eyes.

Then, blindly, he stumbled down the stairs and out of the house.

He called her twice a day and insisted on speaking to her so long as she would not bluntly tell him good bye. He crept into her sympathies like a beggar, and lay in the antechambers of her affections and concerns. In a short while she stood back and gazed in horror at the sickness she had caused. At times she wished she hadn't been the one to break up the relationship. During these moments when her will power relaxed he was able to thrust himself upon her and she did not have the perseverance to throw him off. She was reasonable to his entreaties. She said she was willing to discuss it and each time he saw her they discussed it, but it always ended with exhortations and pleas or threats and tears, or all four. He succeeded in making himself utterly miserable. But her determination always returned and she would throw him off as violently as before.

Then he would continue to hunt her down. He telephoned her continually and found out, when she started hiding facts from him, where she

spent each part of her day. He laid in waiting for her as she walked to school and he sneaked out of his class five minutes early so he could be at the girls' gate in time. He invented all sorts of importunities in order to see her , simply to be with her. He failed an algebra exam and did poorly in his French oral, but that didn't matter a damn. He invited her to plays and to movies. He tapped his small bank account and bought her gifts he knew she would delight in. He tried to ensnare her in every conceivable way, by protestations, logic, poetry, promises. He said he would work for her, be her slave. He promised her everything he knew of, employed every term he had read in the romances; he memorised whole portions of Romeo and Juliet, so that when he finished quoting she gave him a kiss, but wouldn't promise him her eternal love.

Soon he decided the firmness and conviction by which she held firmly her decision could not be of her own making. Once he realised that this was so, he felt he had known it all along. He could not imagine the simple, plastic, unformed Eileen speaking to him as she now spoke, resolving as she now resolved.

He decided he would put an end to the influence acting behind her. One evening at the Bayit he drew aside Tzipporah and asked her to go outside with him.

"Yes, it's important," he told her.

He must control his temper, he must not be nervous, he told himself as he walked along St. Lawrence Street with her at his side. At the corner they stopped.

"Well kiddo, what's on your mind?" Tzipporah asked, her heavy

matronly form stooping slightly forward, voluminous and attentive.

"I want to ask you something," he stammered, but didn't go on.

"Well, what about it?"

"Did you tell Eileen," he said, his underlip quivering at the first word, and then, feeling the unravelling of a sob, he did not continue.

"Did I tell her what? What did you want to say?"

"Did you tell her to ... to ... leave me?"

"To leave you - what, I mean - has that happened?"

"You told her to - I knew it all along - I can see it by your face - you told her to ..."

"Ronnie, what's wrong?" she said, overcome by an unusual gust of emotion. "I didn't tell her that she should break her relationship with you - I simply remarked to her that she should consider matters - because after all you're both in the Movement and the Movement is the most important thing in your life, and I told her ... but," and she drew near him and clasped his hand. Violently he shook her off. "After all, you haven't got a perspective on it, so you think it's terrible, but really it isn't terrible at all. Now I think both of you will be able to develop fully in the Movement, both of you."

"The Movement," he cried, "that's all you think of, that's all you know! God damn you - why are you so stupid - why? You think I give a damn about the Movement? I never did and I never will. You're all a bunch of monsters - you're ,...." He broke off, and abandoned his anger. He wiped his face with his coat sleeve. She looked at him, her lips tightly pursed. She wanted to say something to him, but she hardly knew what. For

a moment more he controlled himself, but when that moment passed, "Why did you do it, for God's sakes, why? You've never been in love, so you don't know what it's like- why did you?"

Back at the Bayit Yosef listened to Tzipporah give him an unexpurgated version of what had just taken place.

"I knew something had happened between them," he said. "It was bound to."

"And it's about time something did," Tzipporah returned. "I told you back in camp that their relationship couldn't last. But now that it's broken we have to be sure that both are re-directed into the Movement,"

"Eileen's doing fine. Did you notice how she has become active in the Movement, ever since the past few weeks, it seems. She's really capable. But now it's Ronald we have to worry about."

"Yes, we have to fit him in. But I think that once he has thrown off the shackles of a bourgeois relationship, he'll be able to give of himself - I think he'd be very capable if he would only get down to it ... I think you should try to speak to him. It would do him good."

"Yes, I think I will."

The very next time Yosef saw him, he began to employ diplomatic come-hithers calculated to fasten the ties of friendship which might have already existed between himself and Ronald. He carefully noted Ronald's reactions in the presence of Eileen, watched those cat and mouse movements, noted Eileen's short-temperedness, and saw the slowly unfolding agony blooming on Ronald's face. He tried making a "character analysis" of him, and

he went home and opened his drawer and found all those black, paper covered fifteen cent notebooks and looked up all the musings he had scribbled down. Certainly, he had known all along that the relationship was bound to collapse; he had recognised, uncanny observer of humanity that he was, that the relationship was founded on the two leaning on each others' shoulders; just as soon as one grew strong enough to stand on his own two feet, the other would tumble like a paralysed victim of polio. In terms of the Movement he could have foretold long ago that Ronald would never be active while leaning on Eileen's shoulders because the Movement demands dynamic, self sufficient, ideologically clarified individuals who are willing to orient their desires into objective channels and fulfill Historical needs in order that Mankind might benefit. Yosef finally concluded that the break was, after all, nothing less than a blessing in disguise - so far as the interests of the Movement went.

Ronald was slowly taken in by Yosef's frequent smiles and expressive back pattings. He began admiring Yosef and again liking him in a way he hadn't ever before. After ten days, and many times that number of rebukes and rejections from Eileen, he decided to approach his leader with his personal problem.

"All I want to know is how I can get her back," he told Yosef, who had sworn that he would keep all he learned completely confidential. "That's all I want - I must get her to love me again!"

"Why do you feel you must re-form your relationship with her, though?" Yosef asked, Question One on a pre-arranged inquiry list he had prepared in the event that Ronald might respond to his friendliest overtures.

"Because, don't you see - I've had her for so long, and now

simply because of a misunderstanding she wants the relationship to be over - finished - but you see, I can't accept that - I must get her back - I simply must!"

"What about her point of view? Do you see any reason why she might want to break the relationship?"

Ronald paused and thought. He wondered just how much he should tell him. Yosef continued to prod. Finally he gave up.

"I don't really know, though, I suppose I wasn't very tactful with her those last few weeks before she finally made up her mind. I was always pestering and nagging her." He broke off there and laughed a little. "You know I even slapped her once because she got me sore over a trifle - I don't know really, I suppose it was all up between us - I got on her nerves and - but that's really off the point. I know I made certain mistakes. I know that, because after all when the whole thing started I was - well, I was fifteen, and you know, I had cockeyed ideas about how you should behave and then - after all - you don't understand too much about another person's feelings - but then I told her, I told her a million times, I'm willing to change, if I can only get her back. I must get her back, I simply must - do you understand what she means to me - have you ever? oh, but look, I'm willing to change - I'm willing to do almost anything for her, be anything ... "

He paused for a moment. Yosef was silent, rubbing the palms of his hands together.

"You don't place much value in yourself, do you?"

"What do you mean?"

"She's worth everything to you. You're not worth a damn to yourself. So you substitute her for your own lack of worth." Yosef thought aloud.

"I don't follow what you mean."

"Skip it," he said, curtly. "Tell me something, have you ever thought of joining forces with her and working in the Youth Movement along with her?" Did you ever consider that your diversified interests made you grow apart?"

"Oh nuts - not that! I don't want to work in the Movement! All I want ... "

"Why don't you want to work in the Movement?" he asked sharply.

"Because - oh because I'm finishing high school this year and I have to study so I'll get a scholarship ... "

"Nevertheless you have time to conduct a relationship with Eileen. If there's time for that, why not for the other?"

"That's so different," he squirmed. "Where's the comparison? I don't see any."

"There's a word of comparison! If you're interested in a thing you work for it, isn't that so? If you're interested in the Movement's welfare, you contribute to it, wouldn't you?"

"Look - all I'm interested in is getting Eileen to love me and that's all!"

"To the exclusion of any interest or devotion to the Youth Movement?"

"Not to - oh, what's the difference?" he balked.

"But don't you see," Yosef insisted, "there's the world of difference. Eileen is interested in the Movement. She has given a great deal of her time and energy to it. As a matter of fact, during the last two weeks, since your relationship has been broken, she has doubled her activities. She spends more time at the Bayit, being creative, being involved in Youth Movement work. What do you think this means? It means part of the reason she broke her relationship with you was because you weren't interested in the same things as she. You must see that point. Or else, I feel there isn't any real value in my discussing it with you."

"But how can I start working in the Movement when I have so much studying to do and I want to go to college next year and I want to win a scholarship - I can't afford to waste my time with ... "

"I explained the situation to you," Yosef interrupted. Now it's up to you to make the choice. But it has to be a mature choice. If you'll decide to work in the Movement, it'll definitely be a mature choice. It'll mean that you have grown by your experience, profited by it. It'll mean that you'll be able to receive back Eileen's recognition. You'll win back prestige in her eyes. Do you see what I mean?"

"I see but ... "

"Never mind buts - the important thing is that you should start applying yourself! Next week there's going to be a discussion about what members of Hakoach can do to go out and bring in new members to the Movement, perhaps to organise groups and be leaders. That's your chance. Take it, man! For instance you can round up some kids at Baron Byng and form them into a youth-group. I'm sure you'd be a successful youth leader. Then

you'd be doing valuable work in the Movement, and you'd regain your prestige in Eileen's eyes."

It took him a little while to make up his mind, but when he did he was overjoyed with his decision; he felt that it would win him favour in Eileen's eyes immediately. He phoned her three times until he heard her voice, slightly annoyed, though the harsher part of her annoyance veiled, say Yes, he could come over, after the Hanhala meeting was over at ten o'clock.

He wondered whether he should buy some pastry and bring it up to her house. He debated and finally decided to get her some gooey stuff which he knew she liked; when he put the box on the table and didn't demand a kiss as payment she opened her eyes wide with pleasant surprise. As she lit the gas range he exploded his plans to her and she parted her lips with a I'M-really-glad-you've-finally-seen-the-light expression. She turned away from the kettle and walked over to the other side of the kitchen in order to be as far away from him as possible - or so it seemed to Ronald. He continued babbling on about all the wonderful ideas he had to help bring chalutzith to the backwards, run-of-the-mill, reactionary, unmilitant Jewish community in Montreal. She smiled amiably as she listened to him tell her of his ideas. He offered a few of what sounded like original suggestions and, stiff legged, she hobbled into the bedroom and re-appeared with a pencil stub and a sheet of paper to note them down in order not to forget to put them before the next Hanhala meeting.

The kettle boiled and she poured two cups of steaming tea and arranged the multi-coloured cakes on a plate. He asked her to take one with the whipped cream and delicately sliced peaches with maraschino cherries bedded at the frosty rims. When she stretched out her hand he bent forward and smiled: "You see, I know what you like!"

She became tense, for she immediately realised that in spite of his decisions to be a chalutz and an active worker in the Movement, the bridges which lay devastated behind them were still not completely demolished and she again started watching the things she said, being curt at all times, dwelling only on impersonal matters.

"I wonder where my parents are?" she said, leaning back after the cake was finished. "It's late already."

They sat quietly for some minutes. Uneasy with the prolonged silence, she got up, slipped into the hall and arranged her hair before the mirror. Perspiring a little, he slouched back into his chair. Soon he got up and went into the hall. As he approached she moved away. He followed her into the living room. She seated herself on the couch. She held a little red handkerchief in her hand which she wrung with tension and unease. She pulled her skirt down tight over her firmly clasped knees.

He seated himself not far from her; moments passed; his stomach began churning the old, inescapable longing for her as he looked at the soft pursing of her lips. He knew that face so well. Were those lips once mine, he thought, his heart heavy with nameless longing: that face, those eyes, and hair and nose which were neither beautiful nor pretty, yet possessed a loveliness he was sure no other could have. He looked away from her. A strange

new pain seized him now, and he wished, oh he wished he didn't want her - but when he looked at her again his longing grew infinitely more intense: had he been Antony he felt he would have traded forty thousand worlds for a single kiss sincerely and fully blown, for a single night of dreaming on the softness of her cheek.

He drew closer to her. He parted his lips, but at first no words came. He had to struggle in order to say: "Eileen, I want to speak to you."

He watched her brace herself, watched the cruel determination rise like a tidal wave.

"You know it isn't right like this," he said. "Eileen, you know, I was thinking today if you forsake me - do you know I was on the verge of going batty last night? You don't believe me, ai? Eileen, what has come between us? What, in the name of heaven, what? You must be changed, you're not the same, you're somebody else - you're fooling me, that's it, - you're in disguise - you're somebody else! What are you, my Eileen, where have you gone to? I would have never believed had somebody told me that you would have become - as you've become. You're inhuman, Eileen, I'm telling you - that's what you are! You've turned as cold as stone, dead as rock. Where are you, you who were so fine and sweet and good - I remember, I remember how all the time I couldn't believe myself I actually had you! It always seemed too good to be true. Me, with all my faults - selfish, foolish, stupid, proud, me! That I should have such a wonderful girl! And you know - I knew it wouldn't last! I knew it from the beginning. From the very first time I sensed that you liked me even a tiny bit. I knew it wouldn't last.

It was too good to be true, that I wasn't worth such - such wonders ...

Oh Eileen - can't you ... see?"

He began sobbing, in spasmodic jerks.

"What's wrong with me? Tell me! Do you want me to work in the Movement with you? I'll do that! I've told Yosef I'll do that. I'll do anything if you only love me! Do you understand? What it is, what's wrong?"

She sat up straight. She worked hard to control herself.

"Ronnie - it's no good ... "

Before she could offer further explanations he flung himself at her and lay beside her on the couch. She struggled violently to get out of his grip. He kissed her wildly and passionately and pulled at her skirt.

"Don't, don't - you mustn't," she cried, and then with a vicious pull she tore herself away.

He fell against the couch in amazement and exhaustion. She stood over him, indignation seething at her lips.

"Ronnie, I want you to understand our relationship is at an end!"

He looked dumbly at her; her anger and disgust grew when she saw his tears. He choked with his sobbing: then, in a sudden paroxysm of yearning and pain, he leaped at her to encircle her but she quickly moved out of the way; he fell to the floor with a dull nauseating thud. He gave a low cry of pain and then started whimpering again. She put her hand to her mouth and shook in agitation and fear. A quick transfusion of compassion for him went through her and she bent down over him.

"Ronnie, please, Ronnie, please!" she cried.

Some five minutes he lay there. Finally she persuaded him to get up and lie on the couch.

"Did you hurt yourself?" she asked in a failing voice.

He didn't reply. He covered his eyes with both his palms.

She moved near him, and she let him embrace her, kiss her. She knew it was wrong, it was contradicting her firmly enunciated principles. But she hadn't the heart to offer any opposition now, and she tried not to listen to his moan: "Oh I must have you back, I must, I simply must!"

P A R T F I V E

Barry said he would meet him and see if they could get any kids to join the youth groups they were trying to organise. When they met, Ronald was ready and rarin' to go. He knew how much Eileen would smile if he was successful; perhaps she would go so far as to tell him "I love you" and everything would be right again. Barry pulled out a notebook from his back pocket and poised a pencil against the first sheet, looking, in becoming manner, profoundly leader-like; he approached a group of eighth year boys and began the crude temptation. "Say, how would you like to join a club?" "What club?" they asked. It got that far four or five times; but every time the kids learned it was a Zionist club, they said, "Nah," they belonged to a "Y" club already. Soon Ronald started going after them too. After twenty minutes or so they procured five names between them. "I'll see you at our Bayit on St. Lawrence Friday night, remember then!" they instructed their novices.

Ronald made sure they'd come to the Bayit Friday night by being personally interested in them: he phoned them, talked to them about their interests, their problems, their likes and dislikes, and later at the Bayit his eyes sparkled with the kind of interest needed to make the kids believe that he was profoundly interested in them.

"I've got all the activities planned," he told Yosef before his proteges arrived. "First I'm going to tell them what the Movement's all about - that you have plenty of fun here and that we have a camp -

and then I'm going to play a couple of games like buzz-corn-beans and snatch-the-hat and broken-telephone, and stuff like that. After all, well, I suppose we'll have a discussion."

"Ata-boy," said Yosef. "That's the stuff. I always felt you'd be a terrific leader once you got down to it."

The kids came and they watched the circle dancing and stood near the walls, their mouths open. Ronald tried being big-brotherly with his own kid brother Herbie, and he found it difficult to pretend. However, Yosef smiled an encouraging smile, and appended it with a "Keep it up, you're doing fine." Then the lights were dimmed, the candles lit and the Oneg Shabbath began. Observing him, Eileen held her hands to her mouth; she felt tremendously pleased with him. She felt that things were finally turning out nicely; he was learning to stand on his own feet, learning to accept the situation. Who knows, perhaps they could be friends again. If he changed, she felt she could accept him as a friend; perhaps, even, they could re-form their relationship. But no - well, perhaps

That weekend Tzipporah telephoned Eileen and told her she had something important to convey to her.

Eileen was at her wit's end until she heard the doorbell ring. Quickly she ran to the door and almost threw her arms about her leader.

"Before we start, do you have a cup of tea?"

"Sure, come into the kitchen."

They went into the kitchen and Eileen started heating the kettle.

"Now before I breathe a single word, - a single word - do you hear? I want you to know what I've got to tell you is strictly between you and me. Not a single member of Hakoach or a single member of the whole branch besides you and me must know - do you hear?"

Eileen opened her eyes wide, and said, "Of course," she wouldn't tell anybody.

"Good, in that case I can tell you. It's like this. As you know the Hanhala is not the only executive body that's in charge of the branch of the Movement in Montreal. There's a central branch in New York, and a sub-central branch for the Canadian region - you know, - Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, Quebec, and Montreal, - and the executive of this sub-branch met and decided we're going to use the funds given to us this year by the Canadian Jewish Congress to send one person from the Canadian Movement to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. We decided this this weekend at our meeting in Ottawa, and tentatively you've been the one elected to go, for a whole year, to see the country and study."

"Me?" Eileen interrupted excitedly. "You mean me! But I haven't even got good marks - and I'm sure I won't even matriculate."

Tzipporah laughed. "You don't need any marks at all. It's the Movement that's sending you. We all feel that you have excellent potentiality which isn't developed yet, and when you go to Israel, you'll have the opportunity to develop it. In Israel you'll have a chance to see the country, learn the language, stay with our members there who have settled on kibbutzim, acquire new educational techniques, as well as live on a kibbutz."

"When - when is this going to be?"

"That's not settled. The chances are it'll be early in the fall, in September."

"But really, I'm overawed. Wee! I never expected that I would be going to Aretz so soon. I'll really be there, and see it. Oh really - it'll be so!"

Tzipporah laughed and sipped her tea. "To tell you the truth, I envy you. By next January I'll be going there for good. Boy, will I be glad! But Eileen, I must, must beg you - on your word of honour - nobody must know! Please don't tell Ronnie, or anybody. I know I can depend on you."

"Oh of course, of course."

Now that she was elected as the Movement's delegate because of her potentiality and was going to Israel reputed as an excellent person in the Movement, her enthusiasm for the Movement tripled. She soon found out that as a prospective chalutza, especially since she would be in Israel by September, she should do something about learning Hebrew. Ronald heard her say that the whole group should spend some time learning Hebrew, and that she was starting to study herself, because who knows, any day they might be called upon to go to the Land, to build it and defend it ...

Ronald grasped the opportunity. "You know," he said to her enthusiastically, "I've been studying Hebrew too. If you want I'll teach you what I know."

She paused for a while but he continued coaxing her in a way

that made her think he was genuinely interested only in instructing her in the language of their people, and so she agreed that it was a good idea. They decided to meet at the Bayit, for she insisted she had no other time to meet him elsewhere. He went home, encouraged by her interest, and planned to study up some words so it would seem to her he knew a great deal about it.

He studied the dictionary assiduously, he hunted down odd facts; he committed to memory a score of odd phrases, and learned by heart a half dozen proverbs. He thumbed through dictionaries to find strange words with strange meanings; he found a book which explained the special genius of the language. On Tuesday night he met Eileen at the Bayit and raved over the treasure he had unearthed.

"Yes, In Jewish school they used to say it was a very beautiful language," she said, "and it's very important that you learn it before you go to Israel, so that you don't have to use Yiddish or English or any other language. Otherwise it will be impossible to create the new type of Jew who lives the language and speaks it."

"That's true, that's true," he said excitedly, "but listen, I was studying a dictionary, and look at the words I found. Gee, they're terrific. You know how they say 'anger' in the Bible? Listen, isn't this terrific? Instead of saying anger, they say 'charon-aph' and that means, literally, 'his nose burned.' Isn't that terrific? And listen, I found another one. You know what 'rachamim' means? You know - we sing the word 'rachamin' in that song - so you know what it means - this is really terrific! 'Rachamim' means mercy, you know, when God shows his

mercy - compassion - and you know what the root of the word is? Rachem - and that means womb. Isn't that tremendous - ai? And I'm telling you, I found a whole bunch of others too."

Eileen reflected a moment. As a member of the Hanhala and as the Movement's delegate to the Hebrew University, she felt called upon to say something.

"Yes, it's very important to speak Hebrew, because that's the only thing which identifies you as a Jew."

"What are you giving me that baloney for? You've got to understand the real poetry of it. Imagine - when you speak Hebrew, you speak real poetry, just like Shakespeare's characters!"

She mentally scratched her head while he continued expounding the other few mysteries of the language he had learned about in the past few days. Finally she arose and said:

"I'm really sorry I didn't start studying it long ago. Really, it's so interesting."

He stared at her blankly. He felt profoundly hurt for her disregard of the point he was trying to make. He felt contemptuous of her, and he didn't stir when she moved over to where she had left her coat. He wished he could break away from her. She was so stupid! She didn't understand anything. What a hopeless moron! He remembered how Barry had described her mentality, three years ago.

But as she stood buttoning her coat he moved over to her. He asked her if he could walk her home.

"I have to meet Tzipporah. We have to discuss some preparations

for camp."

She said nothing. She started hurrying, wanting to go as soon as possible.

"When are you going to do some studying?"

"I haven't time - really."

"You're going to fail if you don't buckle down - though." She didn't reply. "Do you want me to help you with your maths?" Her face twisted into a grimace; she indicated that she was thinking.

"I can't see when I have time to, though."

"Well, make some time," he said.

Her face suddenly hardened and she mumbled something about the Movement being more important than petty exams. She turned and said she was late. After a curt Shalom which fell strangely and somehow sickeningly upon his ears, she skipped out of the Bayit. His sickness at heart grew, and he wished he could go away somewhere, far, distant, and be forgotten. He wished he could get rid of her. He wished he could rid his heart of her. He wished he could forget her, forget her entirely. But when he thought of her his heart grew faint with longing, and he wanted her, he wanted her back more than anything else in the world.

The following afternoon Ronald came home from school to find his mother with a disturbed and perplexed expression on her face.

"Pa has to go to the hospital," she said.

At first he didn't seem to understand what she was talking about. But rapidly the full force of what she had said struck him.

"What's the matter with him?"

She explained that they had paid a visit to the doctor's, and that the doctor had revealed his diagnosis; there was something wrong.

"Please don't mention it to him, do you hear?"

Ronald grew alarmed.

"What is it?"

His mother bit her lip. She grew pale as a sheet.

"What's the matter, Ma, what's the matter?"

In a moment she was sobbing quietly to herself, then she let forth a gust of strange, strained crying such as Ronald had never heard before. "They're going to have to operate," she said, between her sobs. "The doctor doesn't know what it is, for sure."

"Ma, please," he begged, beside himself with stupefying emotion.

"Please stop, please!"

She wiped her eyes and got control of herself.

"I don't know what we're going to do, I just don't know."

A hundred thoughts coursed in his brain that night. All the events of the past few weeks now conspired against him in one dreadful chorus of fateful whisperings. What would the outcome of this be? Would he ever realise his dream and go to college? And his father - what would happen to him? He had always been sickly. He had never been robust, or particularly healthy. One thing or another had always depressed his spirits, an attack of sinus, a sore toe, a swollen pair of glands, his teeth, minor ailments. What would happen to him now?

He struggled and tossed all night with these thoughts, his mind

ranging from extreme fear through indifference, and then back again. What was the meaning of this event, he asked at last. Surely there was some meaning to every event. Surely there was destiny in every circumstance, the twist of fate in the very fabric of character. The Movement's philosophy taught differently, but Ronald didn't take the Movement's philosophy seriously - even since Eileen and he ... What was the destiny in this event? And Eileen? There was a secret meaning in her leaving him. He knew it. He knew it with all his heart. And yet - and yet what was that secret meaning?

The question posed, his thoughts swiftly turned back to her, and he wanted her, he wanted her with all his heart. He remembered what Yosef had said about being responsible to the Movement, and how Eileen, now that her personality, her desires, her values were so firmly entrenched in the Movement would look upon him differently if he succeeded. So he forgot about his ailing father, and wondered how he would spend the Friday evening with the group of three or four eighth year kids who would come down to the Bayit and look to him as their leader.

After that evening Yosef approached him and said, "Do you think you'll be able to get your group to come out to camp?"

Ronald knew this would come up. The subject had not failed to occur to him when he learned that his father would be hospitalised.

"Well - I don't know if I'll be able to go to camp myself this summer."

"But how are you going to be an effective group leader? Camp is the only place where you have intense chalutz living. Surely if you

intend to make the kids into chalutzim then the place for them is camp."

"I know. But I have to work this summer because my father is sick. Where ~~am~~ I going to get the money for college?"

"Oh," Yosef said confidently, "you'll be able to get a scholarship."

"Even if I do, it won't be enough. I'll have to help support my household."

"Well, you can work after lectures. After all you've only got fifteen hours a week when you're in Arts. The major point is I don't see how you're going to achieve your end of ... "

"Oh but I can't go! It's impossible!" Why doesn't he see and understand? How could he leave his mother and father just like that ...

"Well- you'll have to make a mature choice. Besides, if you have any hopes for winning back Eileen ... "

He would think the matter over.

But how could he think the matter over when it was so obvious to him that he couldn't leave now, he simply couldn't get up and go to camp when his father was soon to go to the hospital. What would Yosef, the big shot, do if he were in such a predicament, Ronald thought angrily.

And yet - and yet - what about Eileen? Oh what about Eileen, his heart thought, melting in confusion, falling like a frail rampart against a huge tidal wave of longing and desire. It was true. If he didn't go to camp now he would lose her, he would lose her forever. It was too unbearable to think of; too unbearable to imagine, his losing Eileen, the Eileen he was so sure he loved. That she would become strange

to him, that she would be just another person he once knew; he couldn't accept it. He would do his utmost. He must prevent becoming estranged from her. He must never belong to anyone else. She was his and his forever. He must not allow it to be different.

When June came he decided by hook or by crook he would go to Camp, and be near Eileen, and try, try his utmost to make her see that he wanted her back, make her feel sure that he was really a chalutz deep down inside of him, not a - and he didn't know what he was, he suddenly began thinking idly, he just didn't know what he was - oh, but he wanted Eileen, he wanted her madly, and he would make her see that.

He wrote the matriculation examinations and in spite of having Eileen on his mind night and day, he felt that he had done rather well.

After the exams he told his mother he was going to camp. She was utterly horrified, but he raged and nagged and swore he had to go to camp, he had to go for a special reason.

"Please Ma, I'm begging you, Ma, I have to go, you don't understand - but let me go. I know Pa is sick, I know, but I have to go - if I don't go, oh I don't know what'll happen, I just don't know ... "

His mother looked at him with growing alarm. Her fretting subsided, and she was suddenly sympathetic with what had hitherto appeared to be sheer madness.

"It's that girl friend of yours, isn't it?"

He didn't say what it was, he had to go, please wouldn't she understand, just this time, just this once He appealed to her uniquely, in a way he hadn't appealed in years, or perhaps, ever.

But his father watched him bitterly as he packed, and he grumbled that it was awful that a boy who wanted to go to college should go off to camp, just like a kid

"A boy who wants to go to college should think about earning some money. If you want to go to camp and be a counsellor, go to a camp where they will pay you, not where you pay them."

But by then he had already packed and carried his baggage to the Bayit and helped load the truck with all the other baggage the seventy five prospective campers had left there. Eileen was at hand and she was helping to load the truck too, but when he saw her he came close to her and fawned over her and spoke to her and didn't allow anyone else to have a word with her until she was sick to her stomach. Desperately she awaited the hour when the truck would leave, and since the Hanhala had slated her to accompany the baggage to camp and stay there for two days in advance of the others, she would be rid of him.

He felt hurt and humiliated to the core when he learnt this. She scrambled aboard when the driver gave the word and she didn't even wave good-bye to him. Then the motor roared and the truck began inching forward, looking as though it would topple, and she, along with the few others accompanying her waved to everyone and no one, and then the truck was moving down the street

She lay perched on top of the great load with three others, laughing as they clung to the rusted iron rods to which the truck's canopy was tied, and groaning with sheer delight as the antique vehicle

wheezed to a stop with engine trouble every twenty minutes. Soon they passed the city limits. The country air was fresh and sharp and the sunshine burst upon rolling hills planted with oats, barley and hay, while the North river flowed in the dustless air of late June, for once implacably blue. A wild shout leapt from their mouths as the smoke of the camp kitchen came into view, and as the truck came to a halt they jumped down from atop the baggage while the four devoted members of the Movement who had spent the past four weeks making preparations, ran to greet them.

They spent the night in tents, freezing as the air grew cold, but feeling warm because they were together just as they would be when they would go to their Homeland and live and work together. The next day, therefore, everyone worked at last minute preparations. After lunch they all dropped their tools and ran towards the mass of campers who came marching into the camp in triple file, swinging their arms and singing the marching song of the Palmach. Mordecai, at the head, delivered instructions, told them when they were to meet around the flag pole. The campers disbanded and went to their assigned tents.

Eileen assembled her three happy twelve year olds, who, when they perceived their leader, ran towards her with arms outstretched. She embraced them each separately, since it was important for the members of a chalutzic youth-group to be profoundly attached to their leader. It was too bad she had only two sides, because the third member of the group had to run alongside the other two, both of whom now walked, arms about their leader, as she took them to her tent and showed them around.

She was happy and excited, and she spoke quickly and without hesitation, telling them what they had to do in order to set up camp. She took them to the dining hall under whose floor the cots were strewn and she helped them select the very best ones that could be had; then she led them to a great pile of dusty and battered baggage and helped them carry their valises and boxes to the tent, teaching them the words of the Palmach as they unpacked. She told them they ought to be able to do the best job of digging the garbage pit, and so win the prize for having the best garbage pit in camp. When one of her girls tired, she explained why it was important that each and every one not be tired, help and pitch in - really, it was very important, in fact it was the crux.

When the bugle blew for supper her group of freshly washed, neatly combed girls stood in a circle about the flag pole, their hands behind their backs, awaiting further instructions. She felt proud when all the leaders and all her companions in Hakoach stared at her enviously. Later, when she thought about it more, she felt she was doing all of this for the Movement because she believed in it, because, as Tzipporah said, the Future of the Jew and the Future of Mankind was involved.

The first night at camp there was a bonfire. Later she sat on woollen blankets neatly folded on her bed, as an example to her group, and she told her three attentive listeners how much fun camp was, if they could co-operate and do only the things the whole group wanted to do, and think things only the whole group wanted to think, and plan things only the whole group wanted to plan; for in this way they would be like real chalutzim, who, the first day when they planned a settlement, rose five o'clock in the cold morning and loaded house frames and plows and seeds

into trucks and took weapons just in case the Arabs might be incited by their feudal overlords; and by the end of the very first day a stockade was erected and a tower and a high powered searchlight on top; and the settlers, she told them, were prepared to cultivate gardens in the deserts, where once the voices of the prophets had thundered, and rear blossoms where once the feet of Jehovah's armies had marched, and plant trees in a land which was the cradle of all civilisation, which was eternally theirs because a God they felt was the opiate of the people had promised it to a patriarch they felt sure was a primitivistic folk myth.

After taps she read them a story from the Movement's official publication. When they slept she considered sneaking out of the tent to meet all the others in the dining room and sip tea and eat jam and bread. But she preferred staying with her group. She lay on the pillow, her hands behind her head, gazing up through the tiny rip in the tent's canvas, watching a single star twinkle in the dark night sky.

"Wee - it's so much fun being a leader," she told Tzipporah. "It's impossible to imagine such a thing until you have really been a leader and given of yourself - really!"

Tzipporah smiled. "I'm glad," she said. Then she asked her if she had any educational problems she wanted to discuss.

"Well, there is a lot I want to discuss. But I feel the time isn't ripe yet."

Tzipporah told Yosef how well Eileen was doing, and Yosef passed

it on to Layah, who mentioned it to a group of others, who at the time were cleaning out the toilets. So it became general and casual knowledge that Eileen was a top-notch leader.

She might have stood at the top of the world now, were it not for her continually uncomfortable experiences with Ronald. He still insisted on making a fool of himself, at the table, at the bonfires, during the arts and crafts sessions, when she felt his eyes continually peering at her, into her. He made her grit her teeth when he started plaguing her with his hurt eyes and his looks, and somehow she wished it were September already, and she would be aboard the plane that would take her away from him, and he would learn to stand on his own feet and become a valuable member of the Movement. Yet what made her most unhappy was watching him work with his group, and hearing one of the other leaders report how he left his group one afternoon and how they wandered to the swimming place alone and how one of them almost drowned. She felt terribly upset because he didn't seem to care about being a leader, and that instead of educating them toward chalutzic living, he was instilling in them negative attitudes.

She didn't know what to do about it. The matter came up for discussion at the Hanhala where everyone had something to say about it. This wasn't a personal matter: this was a matter of the Youth Movement, which to her had become well nigh sacred. Ronald was being insincere in his work, she told the Hanhala, and there was no vice they considered more damnable.

"I agree with you," Mordecai said, summarising the indictment.

"And I feel that we should see to it that he shouldn't lead a group next September."

"Next September," Avi objected. "Are you mad? We should get rid of him and replace him right now."

"That's impossible," Mordecai pointed out. "We haven't got another leader to replace him."

Everybody agreed, so there could be little discussion. They were about to adjourn when Mordecai called their attention to a very important fact.

"I believe Eileen knows about this ... so there's no harm telling the rest of the Hanhala that her name has been sent into the head office in New York to go to the Hebrew University."

There were few comments; only Yehudah sat bewildered, and was going to object because the choice wasn't democratic. But then Mordecai pointed out that Eileen was the best of the younger leaders and surely she would benefit them all from going to Israel because she would bring back a good deal to the branch.

"Tonight," said Mordecai, "we'll be announcing this decision to all the others."

For seven days she evaded him and he couldn't manage to have a single word with her. After that he decided that he must impress her with the fact that once and for always he had consigned himself to working in the Movement. "Here, take a look," he would say to her, "I've even become a leader of a youth group. It's because I believe in the Movement

like you." He had made up his mind that when he had finished college he would go to the kibbutz too; further, he had made a decision to stand on his own two feet - oh, he wished he was free of her, never knew her, never would see her again. What did he want her for anyway? He decided he must tell her point blank - oh, he wished he was free of her, why should he have to beg her to love him, beg her to consider him, she who was so little and stupid and insignificant, as Barry had called her that time, mediocre - he must tell her point blank, once and for all, that he had changed and that he was prepared to endure a chalutzic love relationship with her.

He decided that the way to accomplish this would be to tell her finally and firmly. He must not break down. He must seem firm. He realised that she distrusted the weakness in him. His inadequacies revolted her. To be weak meant to her that he wouldn't be a successful chalutz; and that meant he wouldn't be in the mainstream of History and participate in the renovation of the Jewish people; if he were weak, he would remain a nonentity, doomed to play no role in the making of History.

With this in mind he braced himself and asked her to accompany him on night watch.

"I can't go," she said, "because one of the kids of my group always wakes up, and I have to be there ... "

"But it's only for two hours. Let's go on at two o'clock."

She paused and said nothing; she kicked at a pebble which lay near her foot. "I have something to tell you, something very important," he said. "Eileen?" he mustn't allow the pleading to come into his voice. He wouldn't allow it. "Just this night, please"

Soon she would be gone. He would forget about everything. Then he would be a valuable asset to the Movement.

"All right," she said, finally.

A leaders' meeting had been called before lunch, and Ronald sat on a bench opposite Eileen. When he heard that the reason the meeting had been called was that they had to consider a very urgent question his spirits sank and he became fearful lest the question should be how poorly he had conducted himself in his capacity as a leader. He knew he had done poorly, but that was because - oh, because of a million things they would never understand - Mordecai said that the reason for the meeting was that they had to consider the question of whom of their number they would delegate to send to Israel, for a whole year, to study at the Hebrew University, to live on a kibbutz and to work on the land. When he heard this a burden of yearning and fear began pounding at his heart. "Oh God, please make it Eileen," he prayed, and the next moment, "Oh please don't let it be Eileen!"

Mordecai asked for suggestions as to who the group felt should go. There was a discussion as to what type of individual should be sent. Back and forth they argued the point, while Eileen sat, her hands clenched between her knees as she anxiously listened to the repetitious statements that a dynamic, intelligent, vital, chalutzic individual should be sent, one who would return to the branch in Montreal and give of himself and his experience, and learning, and be, in general, a valuable asset to the Movement. Finally they put down three names, among them, Eileen's. Various

individuals spoke up about the merits of each candidate, and Mordecai, assisted by Tzipporah, pointed out that the first individual was inclined to unchalutzic in some of her tastes, especially since she had not relinquished certain bourgeois habits, as yet; furthermore, they claimed, she harboured unchalutzic plans of going to Israel and of not being a worker on the soil, planning instead to be a dilettante. Group disapproval of this individual increased, as red-cheeked and filled with animosity at the individuals who had so roundly denounced her, she said something about the sanctity of the individual in her own self defence.

Then they discussed the second candidate, who they felt hadn't shown that he was wholly devoted to the Movement, hadn't demonstrated that he had a full understanding of the Philosophy of the Movement; consorting, instead, with people from Outside Society too freely; and they felt, moreover, that were he to go to Israel he might spend on a trip to Europe some of the time and money the Movement would provide; consequently, when these opinions were tossed into the arena, group opinion on his merits was also divided. In his self-defence, he said that it was undemocratic and unfair for a person like Eileen even to be considered.

Many voices started speaking at once, and Eileen's cheeks turned a warm red. She was defended, however, by the top leaders, all of whom repeated that she was dynamic, intelligent, that she understood and was rooted in the Philosophy of the Movement.

When the voting took place she was elected by a slim majority.

Ronald's feelings were shattered. He simply didn't know where to go, or to whom to turn, or what to say to her when eventually, after

she finished talking to everyone else - oh, he hated her, he hated her! - she came over to him and said something. But just as that was happening someone came from the neighbouring farmer's house and said there was a long distance call for him.

"Who is it?" he asked, but he wasn't given the answer, and he ran down the cow path which led to the farmer's, and when he finally picked up the receiver his heart was out of his mouth with pleading with some God, some fate, some destiny, that it wouldn't be, it wouldn't be, that everything was all right.

"Hello," he shouted into the phone.

"Ronnie, it's Ma."

"Ma! What's the matter?"

Her voice was still and quiet.

"Ronnie, take everything and come home immediately."

"Ma? What's the matter? Did anything happen?"

There was a silence. His heart plunged down a canyon of fear and horror.

"Pa is sick. He is in the hospital. Nothing is the matter. Just come home. Ronnie, I need you near me!"

"Ma, are you sure everything is ... ?"

"Ronnie, take the next bus and come ..."

What would happen to him now? And what about tonight? Eileen!

"I'll come right away," he said, and then he asked her again if there was anything terribly wrong, and she said "No," still in that terribly quiet and still voice, and again she repeated, "Come home right away."

He went back to the camp with a terrible fear still shaking in him. He went to his tent and started to pack his bags. He packed quickly and put the few things he had into a knapsack. When Eileen saw him crossing the field toward the road, she asked him where he was going.

"My father is sick. I - I won't be here tonight."

Soon he was on the bus. There were few passengers but it was very stifling and hot. What would happen now, he thought. He tried cushioning his fear and worry regarding his father with thoughts of Eileen. If only he could have stayed in camp tonight. If only

The motors of the bus raised their roar. In two hours he was nearing his house.

His breath was almost out of him when after the long agony of bus and trams, he ran down Waverley street; but then he saw his brother Herbie playing in the street and somehow things couldn't be too bad. When he finally came into his house his mother ran toward him and told him that his father had been taken to the hospital early yesterday.

"It's no use. They'll have to operate," she said.

He sat down, exhausted. She gave him a long, detailed account of what the doctors had said. She told him that right after he had had something to eat he must go up to the hospital immediately and see his father.

"I can't go now," he said evasively.

"Ronnie - I beg of you - go now, right now!"

"I can't," echoed hollowly in his throat.

"Why not? Ronnie, he's your father, remember that. You have only one mother and one father. Ronnie, do you hear me? Go and see him. They're going to operate the first thing in the morning. Do you hear me - go while the going is good."

He took a streetcar, transferred to a bus, and got off at the stop where the Jewish General Hospital was plainly visible on the corner. He walked briskly to the central entrance and asked the nurse in attendance on what floor he could find Mr. Isidore Green. He pressed a button and stepped into an elevator together with a nurse and an orderly.

He quickly found the ward his father occupied. It was a small room, with one other unoccupied bed in it. The room was dim and looked rather desolate. Uneasily Ronald crossed the threshold and said hello to his father.

Immediately he felt uncomfortable. On the streetcar he had thought of what they would talk about. Now as he faced him a strange feeling subdued him, a strange feeling of unutterable detachment.

Outside the world was darkening. The pleasing scents of summer were cancelled by the sharp odour of the hospital smell. In the corridors white clad nurses hastened by. His father confronted him in a wine coloured dressing gown.

He had never seen his father in quite this way, standing beside the window, leaning against the cold radiator. The dimming light of the sunset fell on his forehead. He was smoking a cigarette. Most of the time the smoke rose from his nicotine fingers. For the first time in many years, father and son confronted each other, apprehensive and alone. Neither knew how to begin the conversation. Ronald fished for thoughts. He looked at his father's face. A small stubble was growing on the sides of his cheek. In the lone-

liness, in the narrowing dusk, a strange feeling overtook him. He battled to fight it down. He began by asking commonplace questions: his father offered him commonplace replies. After fifteen minutes of hedging and shifting, a nurse came smartly into the room and warned her patient that visitors are kindly asked not to stay later than nine. Ronald glanced at his watch. There were twenty minutes left. He fidgeted about for a few minutes more. The light in the sky continued to dim.

Finally he said, "I have to go." He said this without conviction, however, and he watched something sadden in his father's face: the now unshaven face whose bristles he recalled had touched his cheek with a loving kiss but once, long ago, in some forgotten place, when the son plainly knew that it had been forced by his mother - had saddened, and a faint and far loneliness came into his father's face. Now the father himself was a boy, a frightened, weak boy, and for a split second their eyes met and then turned away: but then, as if by the will in the mind of an omnipotent power their eyes met again and caught in a web of shyness and tenderness for each other: for in that moment father and son came to know each other more than in all the years which were lost to silence and loneliness and lack of love: in that moment, for once in his life, Ronald knew and understood the affection his mother had for this man, knew why she cherished him and adored him.

"Sit, what's your rush," the father said, almost shyly.

He hesitated, not because he did not wish to stay, but because his forehead flushed with shyness, and he did not know how to speak to him.

"Okay," he said, finally.

Silence followed. But it was somewhat better.

"So, you're thinking of going to college?"

"Yes, I ... "

There was another pause.

"Nu - and what are you going to take up?"

"I don't know yet. I think I want to go into Science. But I'm not sure. At least - not any more."

"Why not?" his father asked. His voice sounded kindly. His face seemed profoundly interested.

"Because - we, I used to be interested in Science - but now I'm interested in other things ... "

"What can you take if you don't take Science?"

"I don't know - I can take Arts."

"What do you mean - you want to be an artist?"

"No - Arts means - other subjects."

That topic was soon exhausted. Ronald felt somewhat easier. He thought of something else to discuss.

"By the way, I'm not going back to camp. I'm getting a job."

"Yah? That's good."

The idea had just occurred to him.

"Maybe I'll work in a drug store. I'll be able to earn some money that way."

The father was beginning to be pleased with him when the nurse came and Ronald said not to worry, that he would be all right.

But his father did not answer; his face was averted. Ronald sensed there were tears in his father's eyes.

"Two more minutes," the nurse said.

"Ah, there's nothing to worry about," he tried cheering his father, "before you'll know it, it'll all be over."

His father moved his head slightly. Ronald felt the monstrous fear creep into his heart.

"Pa, don't worry about it - try not to. Okay?"

But when his father lifted his face, his eyes were filled with tears, strange immobile tears, and Ronald approached him closer and put his hand on his shoulder. He was swept up by his father's emotion and sensitivity.

"Pa, please - you'll be all right. I know you'll be all right. I know it, Pa, please. God will take care of you ... "

For the first time in years he kissed his father and went home that night and prayed for him.

Even if it were possible, Ronald now knew that he did not want to go back to Camp. He felt miserable, but not thoroughly depressed about his father's illness.

"There isn't a penny in the house," his mother told him, after they learned that the operation was successful, and he began hunting about for a job.

The next day he got a copy of the Star and scanned the Want Ads and found that a message boy was wanted in a dress factory downtown. He

told the boss that he wasn't going back to school so that he could get the job. At night he felt proud and successful. He wrote Yosef a letter saying that since his father was ill he had to work and he wouldn't be able to come back to Camp.

But as he lay in bed that night his heart was divided. Shouldn't he have forgotten his family responsibility, as the Movement preached the dynamic, intelligent chalutzic individual must do, and return to Camp immediately? What about his responsibility as a leader? What about the group of kids, what about his role, his function in the Camp? And when he thought about Eileen a pang of longing seized him - what about Eileen? Had she really meant it? He must go back to camp. He must

P A R T

S I X

... But he did not go back to Camp. Soon Camp was over, and when she came home Eileen was too busy to call him up and remonstrate with him for not returning and looking after his group, instead of being irresponsibly immature and staying in the city and working. She was very busy with last minute preparations for her trip and every night she sat up late with her mother confiding that she really was very worried about going to a strange place, in a way that is, but in another way she wasn't really worried, getting up, leaving her parents and friends because if you want to accomplish the task of chalutzith, you have to learn to adjust yourself.

Her mother asked her whether it would be nice to have a farewell party the day before she was leaving.

"Sure, we could invite the whole group. It would be very nice, really!"

Some thirty members of the Youth Movement, Ronald among them, crowded into her house for the farewell party. They crawled all over the place, and flooded into the parlour where afterwards games were organised and singing started. Then the singing stopped and the eating, which had started the moment they entered the house, began in earnest, and after that a gift was presented to Eileen. Eileen got up and made a speech about the Homeland and they all felt better when she finished and sat down. They listened to the symphonies of Shostakovitch until twelve thirty, and then,

a few at a time, they started leaving.

In the meantime Ronald's mind warred with a multitude of impulses. He watched Eileen move through the rooms, heard her laughter which was as familiar to him as the sound of his own voice, watched her stoop to serve ice cream to those seated on the floor, heard her confer with the leaders, whisper to others, deliberate in suppressed tones with still another few; he watched her in the familiar movements and poses in which he had known her for almost three years. And now? Now what?

Where were the promises, where were the awkwardly phrased hopes of tenderness, of love, of eternal love? Were they too, wasted, gone, to dwindle like fading roses in the vase of memory? They were in her movements, thought Ronald, as he watched her move through the room, warm and superficial, generous and foolish, stupid and proud and brave were her movements. And he? Where was he to go? He recalled the look on his father's face the night before the operation, the pleading which had for the first time made it into a human face, the pleading which had somehow banished cynicism, distrust, and a whole constellation of misgivings. And now with conviction rising in him like an elemental wind, he thought: I've been a fool, a blind fool. I've made too many mistakes, I've failed too many people. I've not really known her, or them, my father, my mother, my friends - myself. Shall I ever grow out of folly? Shall I ever find myself?

But he too would move on. The breathless pause of the party would soon be over. The nights when they had stood, as if all the world

existed for them, all the stars shone for them, were over. For when he watched the others. leaving one by one, demonstrating their loyalty and affection to the cause and her dedication, it was incredibly soon.

He arose. The music still came from the phonograph; no one had bothered to turn it off, and the automatic machine played the records over and over again. It was a warm night; the windows were all open. "I hope you'll all come to the station," she was saying.

Soon he would leave. He didn't know what he was waiting for.

He heard her bantering excitedly. Her face was red. To-morrow she would leave and not come back for a year. To him that meant that she would never come back. Ever or soon. Remotely, in some corner of his mind, he was profoundly glad of it.

He opened the door and walked into the passageway. Perhaps he should wait and say good bye. Perhaps, since it wasn't too late, and since she was leaving tomorrow, she would consent to coming out and talking with him ...? He felt himself moving down the stairs. Tomorrow she would take the train and go to New York and there she would board the plane. Perhaps then - just when she would be boarding the plane - she would change her mind. Yes, it had happened before. It had happened to the very best of chalutzim, to the most staunch, to the most ideologically convinced. Why not to her?

But soon would be never, and he didn't want it to happen, he didn't want her to turn back, because somewhere in the corner of his mind, he was waiting for something else to happen, he would make that something else happen. Somehow he knew it was there, waiting, waiting

for him to touch it into life with the magic wand of his own will; for no longer was he as a child who never believes what is real, believing only in something intangible toward which he must go. He didn't want her to turn back from the plane.

He reached the bottom landing, and slowly opened the front door. Suddenly, at the head of the stairs, Eileen appeared. He froze. He did not move. Nor did she move. She could not. She did not know what to say, but he saw she wanted to say something. Perhaps she sensed that the Movement, to which she now owed her body and her soul, meant nothing more to him. She could not say anything which might mean anything to him. Her face worked up a thought, but then she did not know how to say it, so she left it unsaid.

Ronald heard the pounding in his heart. Yes, soon, soon he would be free. Free of what? and of whom?

"Will you write - sometimes?" she asked.

Freed of himself, of his burdens. Soon.

"I'll try," he said.

She smiled. He did not know what her smile said. A day before he might have queried himself, might have wanted to know. But something pounded in his heart and it wasn't a desire to know what she meant, or to know whether it might affect him.

"Well - good bye, then."

"Good bye."

And the pounding in his heart quieted. Without looking at her again or saying anything more he opened the door and quickly walked out into the cool night air.

