



WHY DON'T THEY

Think!

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Why Don't They **THINK!**

It may be easier to act on impulse or a hunch, but does it pay off?

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Trouble With A Capital T

The corridors at McClintock High looked no different from those of any other high school at eight o'clock in the morning. Locker doors clanged sharply, forcing voices to become shrill and loud. Hurrying figures dodged around those that were more leisurely. Suddenly, an explosion of laughter caused a general rush toward a spot

where the fun seemed to be centered.

Two girls were climbing the north stairs slowly. They wore blue jeans and plaid cotton shirts — turned inside out. Their hair had been braided over wire so that the braids stuck out at grotesque angles. Green and purple grease paint had transformed their faces into horrifying masks. As the

strange apparitions walked down the corridor, the shrieks of laughter gathered volume.

The fun ended abruptly as the voice of Mr. Cline, the Principal, cut across the mirth. "Go home, girls. Get dressed properly and then come back."

The culprits prepared to obey. A boy screwed up enough courage to say, "Aw, Mr. Cline, they're being initiated — they have to act queer."

"School laws aren't made lightly, Brent," said Mr. Cline. "All of you know that secret fraternities and sororities have been forbidden here in school. That also means initiations in any form, whether the societies meet outside school premises or not."

"But *why*, Mr. Cline?" Tom Brent found still more courage to ask, but his ears were red. "We know the rule, sure, but nobody ever told us why the rule was necessary. Couldn't it be discussed some day in an open meeting?"

"Yes, Brent, I see no reason why it shouldn't be. Do the rest of you feel the same way?"

"Yes, sir," came a chorus of voices.

"Then by all means we should get together and talk it over." Mr. Cline looked at his watch. "If six of you care to come down to my office, we might make some plans for a forum on this secret-society business."

A few minutes later Tom found himself in the Principal's office with five other classmates. He folded his long legs under his chair and tried to appear at ease, but he plainly was not. He winked at Lois, but the red in his

ears persisted. His short hair in its crew cut seemed more erect than ever.

"What a sap you were to open your big mouth and get yourself into this situation!" he said to himself.

"Now then," said Mr. Cline, after they were seated, "feel free to say what is on your minds. Before we plan a meeting, we need to be sure that it is necessary."

"I think we need that meeting anyway, Mr. Cline," said Ellen, "whether we're discussing the ruling about fraternities or not. It's blind rules in general that I object to. After all, we're not little kids any more."

"She's right," broke in Lois. "We're tired of being pushed around and *told* what to do and what not to do."

"What I can't understand," said Tom Brent, "is why adults want to take away all our fun. We're only young once — why don't they let us enjoy it?"

Cliff Horton fidgeted impatiently. "I want to know what's wrong with secret fraternities anyhow," he said. "And if some kids come to school dressed so whackily that we all get a good laugh, what's the harm? It doesn't hurt anybody."

"You guys make me sick," came the cold voice of Joe Pratt. "All you think about is fun! A couple of girls come to school dressed like fools and they get sent home. That's as it should be. What do you people think school is — a playground? Or don't you ever stop to think?" Joe stared down the black looks around him and went on. "I'm

interested in having that meeting from another angle. Why do the school authorities disapprove of secret societies anyway? To me they represent a selection of superior people singled out of the masses. All progress in life is brought about by the superior, intelligent few. Why shouldn't they be given a chance to meet and work with their own kind? Why should they be forced to associate with the common masses?"

"You're not referring to us, are you, Joe?" asked Cliff, and a ripple of laughter eased the tension.

Without looking at any one student in particular, Mr. Cline said, "Suppose we look at it this way. Every year, anyone who wants to may try out for either the girls' or the boys' basketball teams. Those who seem to have the best physical qualifications are chosen. Now suppose we change that way of selection. Instead, a committee looks over the class, picks the ones that look promising, and elects them to basketball membership. The committee acts in a similar fashion for the football team, the glee club, the senior class officers, and so forth. The students simply wait to be chosen. There are no tryouts, no campaigns, no candidates. The committee makes the selections and all the decisions. Would you approve of that?"

"Of course not," came from several voices.

"Why wouldn't you approve?"

"It isn't the way we do things in this country," Tom replied. "That sys-

tem leaves out free initiative. A person ought to be able to go out for the things he likes — and can do best."

"What would happen if I sat and waited and the committee didn't choose me for anything?" asked Lois.

"Well, nothing would happen exactly," replied Mr. Cline. "You'd simply be left out."

"But if I were left out of things — and nobody wanted me," Lois persisted, "I'd become unhappy. I might even grow queer!"

"You might indeed," said Mr. Cline.

"Oh, what a system!" groaned Donna. "You're not thinking of putting it into operation here, are you, Mr. Cline?"

"No, not even if I approved of it, Donna," Mr. Cline replied. "You see, this is a *public* school — anyone is free to take any course or join any organization for which he is qualified. Moreover, I happen to be a firm believer in democracy, which aims to provide *equal* opportunities for *all* people.

"I see that some of you get my point. I hope you do, Joe."

"Now our time is running short. Do you still want to have the meeting?"

"Personally, I don't feel the need for it any longer, Mr. Cline," said Tom slowly. "What you've just said has started me thinking. I believe I know now why you oppose secret societies. But the other kids weren't in on this discussion. We ought to go ahead with the meeting for them."

"Very well, we'll have an open meeting a week from today." Mr. Cline

looked thoughtfully into the faces around him. "Believe me, I don't want to thrust rules down your throats. I prefer to have my students think straight for themselves, not swallow wholesale the statements and decisions made by other people. But the ability to think straight is an art; you can't develop it without practice."

On his way home that day, Tom Brent pondered over the meeting. In particular, he thought of those words of Joe's, ". . . don't you ever stop to think?" Why should those words stay in his mind now? Tom had heard them before. They were his father's pet refrain. He used them so often that Tom and his younger brother Woody fairly gagged when they were repeated. The boys dismissed the remark to that part of their subconscious minds where they stored all such foolish admonitions made by adults. Tom had already packed away there Mr. Cline's well-meant advice about learning to think straight.

"Time enough for that stuff when I'm on my own," Tom had told himself long before. "By the time I'm through school and start to row my own boat, I'll think as straight as anyone. But kids need time to grow and have fun. All this business about learning how to think — it's the bunk! If it's so necessary to know the 'art of thinking,' how did I ever reach sixteen without getting into trouble? Trouble with a capital *T*. Tch — pure baloney. Straight thinking is for business deals — for knowing how to make money or

how to elect guys to office. I'll know it all when I'm old enough!"

Still Joe's remark bothered him. It was true that Joe was a "crackpot" — all the kids said so. But in spite of his queer ways, Joe was Tom's age, and here he was voicing one of the old adult clichés. Was it just a passing remark with him, as one would say, "Why don't you grow up?" Or did he really mean it? Did he stop to think himself? Could it be that he had already branched out too far in this business of thinking? Was that what made Joe so different from the other boys?

Further rumination was cut short as Tom reached his own front porch and picked up the evening paper. Usually Tom paid scant attention to the first page. He was interested in one thing, sports, so ordinarily he turned to the sports section and finished off with the comics. That done, he had "read" the paper. But tonight the screaming headlines on the front page caught his attention:

VANDALS WRECK HEPPELWAITE HOUSE

Below were pictures of the damaged rooms in the Heppelwaites' colonial house. Mahogany heirlooms had been hacked and partly burned; mirrors, china, and glassware had been smashed — hardly anything of value had escaped destruction at the hands of the vandals. Yet nothing had been stolen — everything had simply been destroyed. The police thought it was the work of an organized gang.

"What a mess — and for what?" said Tom, looking at the pictures of utter ruin on the pages before him. "Those guys need to be examined!"

Dinner hour in the Brent home that evening was not a peaceful one. Mr. Brent had seen the evening paper, and this latest outrage against decency had stirred him to fever pitch. "Of all the stupid, imbecilic, and senseless acts that young people can produce today, this is the worst yet," he roared, slapping his hand on the folded paper beside his plate. "Why don't they ever stop to think!"

Quick anger surged through Tom like a hot tide. For the second time that day he found himself daring to challenge an elder whom he had been taught to treat with respect.

"Dad," he said sharply, "why don't you lay off kids? The paper doesn't say that the vandals were young people. They could have been — well, just anybody. I'm sick and tired of being told that young people don't stop to think. How do you know they don't?"

Mr. Brent's face had been red with rage. Now it turned purple with suppressed fury. He started up and then, as though remembering that Tom was almost seventeen, sat down again, saying with measured heat, "Leave the room!"

Tom pushed back his chair, glanced at his mother's distressed face and at Woody's placid one, and left. He had expected some support from Woody — the kid was always ready to snort, too, at that crack about thinking. But

tonight Woody ate calmly on, stuffing roast turkey into his fourteen-year-old face, unannoyed by the disturbance.

Sitting on the window seat in his room directly above the front porch, Tom reviewed the whole unhappy day. "All that bunk about thinking," he said aloud. "If more grownups practiced what they preach, they'd know how to get along better with kids." He kicked his math book off the seat and sat glowering.

He saw Mr. Tropello coming up the front walk, but paid little attention. After all, there was nothing unusual in a neighbor's dropping in for a call after dinner. The murmur of quiet voices told him that the men were in the living room directly below. Then one voice rang out sharply, "Woody, come here!"

"Poor Woody," thought Tom. Probably his young brother had trampled on Mr. Tropello's vegetable garden again — or busted another window. Woody was a good kid, but he was just plain thoughtless at times.

But surely it would take more than a bruised garden bed or a broken window to produce the anger which sounded now in Mr. Brent's voice. Woody must be in deep. Tom forgot his own injured pride in a growing sense of curiosity about the younger boy. He walked softly toward the stairs, went halfway down, then stopped abruptly, frozen by what he heard.

"Woody, tell me the truth. Were

you involved in that Heppelwaite house outrage?" thundered his father.

"No, sir."

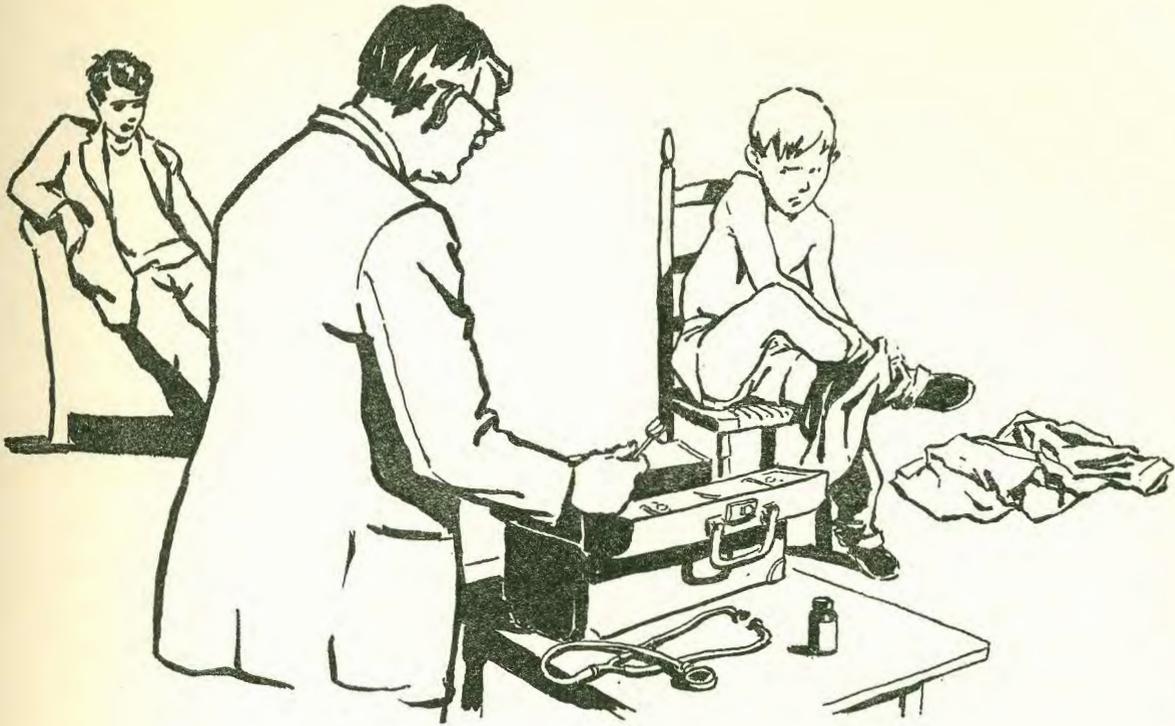
"Well, now, Woody" — in contrast to Mr. Brent's bellow, Mr. Tropello's voice was like quiet drops of melting ice — "Jimmy Clement says you were. You and he and Jack Ryan. The three of you together made a shambles of that beautiful house. Unfortunately for all of you, Jimmy left one of his father's hammers behind him in the Heppelwaites' house. Mr. Clement's initials were on the handle. You know Jimmy isn't lying."

For the first time Tom remembered that Joe Tropello was not only a neighbor but also one of the smartest detectives on the force. He was too skillful for Woody. The poor kid would never have a chance to defend himself. Then, to his horror, he heard Woody mutter as though his teeth were clenched. "The dirty rat! So he squealed!"

Bitter sobbing followed the implied admission — but not from the boy. Apparently his mother was there, too. Her cry, "Oh, Woody, how could you?" echoed the cry in Tom's own heart. What was it he used to say about trouble with a capital *T* never touching him? Well, it had caught up at last.

Tom felt no sense of anger toward his young brother. It was more like amazement. Why had he done it? Why hadn't he stopped to thin —

"Hold on," he said silently to himself, "don't say that. — But maybe there is something in it, after all." Would thinking about such a matter as the wrecking of a house have prevented this family tragedy? Wasn't some thought required for planning the vandalism? Yes, crooked thinking — not the straight kind. Why wasn't Woody a straight thinker? Dimly he heard again Mr. Cline's words: ". . . to think straight is an art; you can't develop it without practice."



As Different As You Please

Woody did little to explain why the vandalism had been committed. He endured the licking administered by his father in stony silence. Mr. Troppello and the police got nothing from him except a terse statement, "I'm not talking." If he felt any regret at all, it was when he saw the anguish on his mother's face. He would not talk to her either, but he was plainly uncomfortable in her presence.

Tom was with his brother when Dr.

Burton arrived. The boys had known the doctor all their lives. He was an old family friend, as well as physician. Woody was particularly fond of him, and conversation with the doctor was a cherished treat, even when Woody was sick.

But today the boy was not anxious to talk. When he saw Dr. Burton coming up the steps, he said quickly, "Stay here, Tom; don't leave me."

So Tom remained in the room, but

he kept his mouth shut and his ears open. Perhaps he could pick up another piece of this puzzle that baffled him so.

The doctor greeted the boys briefly, then said abruptly, "Take off your clothes, Woody."

"Ta-a-ke off — my *clothes*?"

"You heard me."

"What for?"

"Physical examination. Come on, get busy."

"But I'm not sick!"

"Let me be the judge of that. Strip, Woody."

So Woody stripped, while the doctor took several implements from his bag. Tom remained silent in his corner. He was more mystified than ever by the proceedings. This was a long way from the enlightenment he sought.

The examination began. It went on in silence. The doctor was deliberately thorough. Woody grew more and more uneasy.

Then the doctor went over Woody's head. Inch by inch he examined the scalp, tapped it gently, made notes on his mysterious findings.

Finally, Woody could stand it no longer. "For Pete's sake, Doc," he cried, "what's the matter with me?"

"That's what I'm trying to find out," Dr. Burton replied slowly. "Woody, your dad is worried about something that happened six years ago. Remember when you fell off the sea wall and landed on your head? In spite of the fact that you seemed to suffer no ill

effects then, your dad is afraid that you may have injured your head. He thinks that fall is responsible for your strange actions now."

"Nuts!"

"Yes, that's what he's afraid of."

"I didn't mean *I* was nuts — I meant the whole idea is crazy. There's nothing the matter with me."

"H-m-m," said the doctor, leaning back in his chair and putting his fingertips together. "Put on your clothes, Woody."

Tom, over at his side of the room, was startled by the fright of this new idea. Perhaps that crack on the head *had* injured his brother. There might be a very good reason for this twisted thinking of his. Tom tried to recall any facts that he had once heard about the forms of insanity. This might be a progressive illness. Woody might grow steadily worse — and end up in an asylum! "Oh, no," Tom almost prayed aloud, "don't let that happen to my brother."

Woody was visibly upset, too, in spite of his bravado. He scrambled into his clothes, glancing now and then at the doctor. The latter paid him no further attention. He pored over his notes or ruminated with half-closed eyes.

"What's next, Doc?" Woody wet his lips.

"The police will probably order another examination at the hospital, Woody."

"What hospital — the 'nut house'?"

"Possibly."

"Listen, Doc, you *know* there's nothing wrong with me!"

"How should I know anything about you lately? You act strange, commit crimes, won't talk. That isn't the conduct of a normal person."

"So what? I've never refused to talk to *you*, have I?"

"That's true — you haven't. Woody, there was a time when you were a pretty decent kid. I liked to talk to you. You were always so enthusiastic about your activities. I enjoyed hearing you tell about your troop in the Boy Scouts. Yesterday I heard that you had dropped your scout membership. Why, Woody? What was the matter with the troop?"

"My troop? Oh — nothin', I guess — I just don't like it, that's all."

"Why don't you like it?"

"Aw, it's too tame. I want action."

"Don't you get enough action and thrills from the movies — or the radio?"

"Sure, but those thrillers make everything else seem tame. We'd listen, and then we wanted to go out and *do* something. What was there to do? You can't play football all the time."

"Hm-m-m," said the doctor.

"Anyhow, *anybody* can belong to the Scouts," added Woody.

"So you wanted a secret society for the select few?"

"Yeah."

"And you got your own thrills by smashing things that other people valued."

"Yeah."

The doctor leaned forward. "Now, Woody, tell me honestly, do you believe that well-balanced people go around smashing the property of other people?"

"Why shouldn't they if they feel like it?"

The doctor sighed. "I'm afraid I agree with your father, Woody. That head injury has made it impossible for you to think straight."

"Now don't get me wrong, Doc. I'm not cracked. I can think all right if I want to."

"Then why don't you want to?"

"No reason. — Except I don't want to be just another guy. I don't want to be *told* what to do all the time. I'm gonna make my own rules. *I'm gonna be different!*"

Woody got up and went over to the doctor's chair. Then, as he had often done in the past, he sat down on a low stool beside his friend.

"Doc, is there anything wrong with being different?" he asked earnestly.

Tom felt as though he had been swimming against a cross current which had suddenly cast him up on a rocky shore. He sat there, relief pouring into every vein, and felt his tense muscles relax. The kid wasn't cracked at all! And the doctor knew it, too. This whole affair had simply been the doctor's way of bringing Woody out of his sullen, strange silence and making it possible to talk to him again. Why had Woody suddenly gone off on this tangent of crooked thinking?

The doctor wanted to find out, and he was doing it in his own way.

More than ever, Tom admired Dr. Burton. He was so solid, so capable. And he could think straight. He had planned this approach to Woody, had carefully thought it all over beforehand — knew just where he wanted to come out. A tingle of excitement traveled down Tom's spine. This business of thinking, now — there *was* an art to do it. It was almost like a game of skill. You could put your mind to work doing all sorts of things for you. But if you got off on the wrong track, as Woody had done, thinking might land you in trouble. Or you could even become a queer duck like Joe Pratt! Tom shook his head impatiently. This was bigger than he had thought. But he wanted to know more. And who would make a better adviser than this doctor here, who was such a clear thinker himself?

Since Woody's last question, Dr. Burton had been silent. He was busy lighting his pipe. He performed the little ritual with care, glancing now and then at the boy as though to tell him that he had not been forgotten. Finally, he drew on the pipe with complete satisfaction and leaned back in his chair.

"You want to know what is wrong with being different, Woody," he said. "There's nothing wrong with it. I wouldn't give two cents for you if you *weren't* different from other boys. The point is, *how* different do you want to be?"

"I don't get you, Doc."

"Well, put it like this. You have your second house all picked out to be vandalized when the opportunity comes, haven't you?"

"No." Woody twisted uneasily.

"You surprise me. I thought wrecking houses was part of your plan to be different."

"We wanted something different — something more exciting — but we didn't have any plan."

"The Heppelwaites' house would have made a good bonfire." The doctor was serious.

"Jack thought of that, but I said it was too risky."

"Risky how?"

"Well, an awful lot of people live right near that old house. If their houses had caught on fire, some one might have been hurt."

"But wouldn't that have provided a lot more excitement?"

"Yeah, but you don't go around burning guys up for no reason at all!"

"You think you wouldn't now. But believe me, Woody, when you start out in search of thrills, your first experiment, like ripping and smashing things up, becomes tame very quickly.

"You look around for a more dangerous excitement. Very soon the next thing you try grows stale, too. But by then you have become reckless. The desire for thrills is like a fever in your blood. You dare to do things you would never have thought of in the beginning. You live for the excitement

of the act, the danger, the pursuit. Whether people get hurt in the process doesn't bother you any more."

"Doc, you're all wrong. I *know* I wouldn't go that far. By the time I'm grown up, I'll settle down like you and Dad. I won't make any mistakes."

"Well, you won't make any *more* right away, that's certain. You got caught making your first one," said the doctor.

"We wouldn't have been if that dope of a Jimmy had picked up his old hammer — or had kept his fool mouth shut."

"You don't seem so keen about Jimmy now — or Jack, either, for that matter," the doctor said gravely. "How did you get mixed up with those two anyway, Woody?"

"Aw, it's a long story. — You're right about Jimmy and Jack. I never liked them much. — I like the guys in the Stumble Bums better."

"The what!"

"The Stumble Bums. That's a secret club that some of the kids have. They're good eggs — all except one. That Tony Heppelwaite — I just hate him. He's the one who told the other kids about me — said I couldn't afford to join up and that I was too dumb anyway — so they blackballed me!"

"I see. Hm-m-m. They kept you out of their secret society, so you collected Jack and Jimmy and formed one of your own. Was that it?"

"That's it, Doc." Woody looked earnestly at the older man as though imploring him to understand. "A guy

feels *awful* when he gets left out of things."

"I know, Woody." The doctor tapped his pipe. "I was 'left out' of a fraternity that I very much wanted to join — when I was in college. I can remember now how I felt."

Woody looked grateful. "So Jimmy and Jack and I decided that our club wouldn't be any ordinary one. We'd make people sit up and take notice. And then — the Heppelwaites went off for a week-end trip to New York. We wrecked their house. I took care of Tony's room myself. By the time that guy got back, he couldn't tell his stamp collection from his socks! It'll teach him to blackball people."

Dr. Burton broke the short silence that followed this last admission. "Woody, do you trust me enough to know that I wouldn't ask you to believe something I didn't believe in myself?"

"Yes, Doc."

"A while back when you declared that you wanted to be different, I asked you a question. I said, '*How* do you want to be different?' You didn't know what I meant. So I pointed out the course that you had cut out for yourself. You remember — thrills, more thrills, risks, and danger — hard-boiled cruelty? You didn't like that course; you claimed it didn't fit your case. You were going to stop before it was too late. You were *different*."

"Believe me, Woody, you aren't the first boy who started out on that course. Most of them thought as you

do — that they could stop whenever they wanted to. Time proved that they couldn't. Even when the law caught up with them — or they decided to go straight by themselves — they were already marked for life. They were different, yes; but people disapprove that kind of difference. You know how you felt when you weren't admitted to that club. Would you enjoy being shut off permanently from all normal contacts with people — being treated as an outcast — being despised as a 'jailbird'?"

"We-ll — maybe not."

"There's another way, Woody. As long as you stay within the boundaries of human conduct — as long as you observe the laws of society made for the protection and welfare of *all*, you can be just as *different* as you please. You can dye your hair green and wear pink suits if you want. People would think you were odd if you went around like that — and your dad would probably have apoplexy — but you would still be an accepted part of society. You might be a joke — but you wouldn't be a menace."

The doctor grinned and rumbled the hair of the boy who sat in front of him. "Come to think of it, Woody, you'd be a hot-looking specimen with green hair. I can think of more interesting ways for you to set yourself apart from other men."

"Such as, Doc?"

"Well, unless that bump on your head *did* crack you a bit, I'd like to see you using that mind of yours for

something that would *contribute* to society. Life is full of all sorts of challenges, Woody. Some people risk their lives searching for a cure for a dread disease. There's Dr. Schweitzer, the famous Alsatian organist, who voluntarily gave up his career as one of the outstanding musicians of his day to become a missionary doctor in equatorial Africa.

"Or take Rear Admiral Richard Byrd, who has led others to explore parts of the globe formerly unknown to man. They have found in Antarctica new resources of the earth, discoveries for making lives happier and richer.

"You could go on and on finding men who have become outstanding in their differences. Some of them achieve fame. Others are hated — they are honored only after their death when people have learned to appreciate the greatness of their work."

"Doc, have you been happy as a doctor? If you were me, starting out to *be* something, would you choose doctoring all over again?"

"If I were you, I'd choose the thing I was best fitted for and wanted to do. As for me — yes, I'd go through the long grind of learning to be a doctor 'all over again,' as you put it. I may not have accomplished as much as I would like, but my life has been a darn sight more interesting and satisfactory than that of 'Benny the Pinch,' who's been spending most of his life in jail!"

Slowly the doctor pulled himself up from his chair.

“Well, Woody, this last part of our conversation has been like old times. I’ve enjoyed it. Unfortunately, we have an unpleasant job ahead of us. Mr. Tropello and your dad are waiting to take you to Leominster to the district court. — And Woody, how about leaving that mask you’ve been wearing around here lately at home —

or throwing it in the ash can?” He smiled at the boy, and Woody tried to grin back.

The doctor looked over at Tom, still in his corner. “Want to go along with me in my car, Tom? It’s a long ride, and I’d like company. You were so quiet over there I’d almost forgotten you were in the room. What a grand husband you’ll make for a talkative woman some day!”



"Go Slow"

Tom watched Woody getting into the back seat beside his mother. Mr. Tropello stepped briskly in after him, and the car pulled away from the curb.

With misgivings, Tom settled himself in the doctor's car. If he had been on the way to court himself, he

couldn't have felt any worse.

"Doc, what do you think they'll do with Woody?"

"Hard to say, Tom. The boys have caused a lot of property loss. Furthermore, there has been a marked increase in juvenile delinquency lately. The public is demanding that some

action be taken to check it. I'm afraid the boys won't be dealt with lightly."

Tom swallowed uncomfortably.

"On the other hand, none of them has a previous court record. They come from good homes. The judge will take that into consideration."

"That makes me sort of sick inside, Doc."

"What does?"

"That remark about 'good homes.' Sure, Woody and I get enough to eat — and Dad is generous enough about money, I suppose. We're not poor people — you yourself called our home a 'good' one. But look at the way Woody has turned out. There's something screwy about a good home that lets a kid do what he's done!"

Tom cleared his throat with embarrassment.

"Doc, it's hard to say this — but, well — *you* were able to get Woody to talk. He told you the whole story — no one else could get a word out of him. What's the matter with my father, Doc? He never talks to Woody and me the way you do. He sort of — pushes us off. You haven't any kids of your own, but you know how to get a lot closer to us than my father does. Why?"

"Your father is a busy man, Tom."

"So are you — you're a doctor. You're busier than he is — at night, especially."

"I used to be, Tom. As I grow older, I find it a lot easier to let the younger fellows run around at night to care for the sick people. As you

say, I haven't any family — I don't need to push myself to make a lot of money.

"But your father has responsibilities that I haven't. He has a family to support and two boys to educate. Then, too, he's a businessman. Every day of his life he competes with other businessmen, all just as keen to make money as he is. That makes him over-tense. Little things annoy him. He's like a clock that's been wound too tightly.

"Don't criticize your father too harshly, even in your thoughts, Tom. He's a successful man in his own right, even if he has fallen down on the job so far as one of his sons is concerned. The trouble is that he's never learned to relax properly. He's like thousands of other American businessmen today. They won't take time to know their own families."

"Dad and I used to have a stamp collection once, but he turned it over to me."

"That's what I mean — he thought he was too busy, I suppose, to bother with a hobby. Maybe you could revive his interest, Tom — ask him to work on it with you. And don't give up trying to talk to him. He needs *you* just as much as you need him."

"He needs *me*?"

"Yes, you and your doings are part of the interests that he needs outside his work. Did you ever get your dad aside to tell him about that experiment you're developing in the chem lab?"

"No — thought he wouldn't care."

"That's where you're wrong. Let him know what's happening in your life; ask him to do things with you occasionally. He'll be able to think a lot straighter."

A sound between a gasp and a snort came from Tom. "That's a good one — suggesting my dad do some thinking! Why, he's always preaching at Woody and me to stop and think. I was sick to death of the word — before all this trouble started."

"Your father *does* think — extremely well as far as his own business in abrasives is concerned. Like many another successful American today, he prides himself upon his ability to solve a business problem. But then he applies that same line of reasoning to everything else. His thinking follows the same old pattern — which won't always fit the case."

"You mean there isn't any *one* method for thinking straight on a subject?"

"In a way, yes. All thinking is the solving of one problem after another. For example, you have to decide what to buy for your lunch — or how to prepare for an exam and still have time for a swim. A single day multiplies a thousand times the problems that must be solved by thinking. How could the average person have all the knowledge necessary for the solution of every problem? Each one is different. Each one may demand that we adjust a little this way or that to understand it better. Some people won't make that adjustment."

The car swerved to pass a truck, and the doctor waved a greeting to the truck driver, who tooted his horn in return.

"My theory is that the *way* in which you tackle the solving of a problem



shows whether or not your thinking is straight. You can get yourself so worked up emotionally that you can't even see a few plain facts before you. Emotions are tricky things." The doctor grew sober. "Emotions led Woody astray. His thinking got snarled up by his feelings when he wasn't wanted in that club."

"But good emotions won't get you into trouble, will they?" Tom asked. "You know what I mean — liking people, not hating them."

"Tom, there's no such thing as a good or bad emotion. It's indulgence in extremes that's harmful — getting too sentimental or too angry. The mother who loves her child so much that she won't let him live his own life isn't much different from the mother who beats her child unmercifully in a fit of anger.

"No, Tom, it just isn't possible to think straight when one is emotionally upset. Yet far too many of the world's problems are being faced that way today."

Tom sat for a while in silence. Then

he took up the thought that kept repeating itself in his mind.

"You know, Doc, there was a time when I thought all this business about thinking straight was pure baloney. Then I got socked with this trouble of Woody's. Now I don't know whether I'm more puzzled — or less so . . . Maybe I need time to get away and think over what you've been saying. There are these different ways in which people *think* they're thinking straight — and there are people like Woody — and Dad — who are getting off on the wrong track. There's even a guy at school, a Joe Pratt. All the kids call him a 'crackpot,' and he sure acts like one. He thinks there are a few people who are superior — he's one of them — and they should make all the rules and see that everyone else obeys them."

"They used to call them Nazis in Europe," the doctor murmured in a low tone.

"Well, there they are, Doc, the people who've been making quite an impression on me lately. Joe and Dad and Woody. And now *you*. Each one thinks in a different way. In what direction am I going? I like your way of thinking — of solving problems — best. But you tell me there is no *one* method, so I can't imitate you."

"No, Tom, you can't imitate me, even if I knew all the right answers — which I don't. No one can prepare you to be a straight thinker — and you won't always be successful with every problem that comes your way,

either. Everyone has to develop his own ability to think straight. But he should take time to learn the process."

"How did you learn?"

The doctor laughed. "Mostly by watching the mistakes that other people made, I guess — and some of my own."

As they approached an intersection, the light flashed from green to red. The doctor stopped the car. Beside them a traffic sign bore the familiar words "GO SLOW." The doctor nodded his head in the direction of the sign.

"If you're looking for a safe guide in this business of learning to think straight, Tom, there's one to remember. Don't rush at the problem. Take time to look at all the angles. Go slow — that's good protective insurance against the pressure-group crowd."

"The 'pressure-group crowd.' Who are they, anyway?"

"Well, Tom, they are the ones who want to sell you ideas — free, of course. All you have to do is accept the ideas. You won't need to think — the pressure groups do it for you."

"Now, wait a minute, Doc." Tom sat up a little straighter. "I'm just getting interested in this straight-thinking stuff. I don't want to have my right to think taken away from me before I get a chance to use it myself! How am I going to recognize these pressure guys when I bump into them?"

"It can't be learned in one easy lesson, Tom. There's an article you

might like to read. It's just as useful now as when it was first published back in 1937. It's called "How to Detect Propaganda." I have a copy in my library if you want to get hold of it. It will tell you about the 'tricks of the trade,' which is what the authors of the article call the devices of the propagandist.

"As for recognizing the pressure-group leaders or propagandists, themselves, well, some of them look like 'Slippery City Sam' — you know, the



smooth and oily type. Others are sweet old ladies, the kind that can't bear to kill a mosquito. But one of them once organized a group of mothers into a 'Mom' society that was a serious threat to our war effort at the time. And you can't spot a Commie by a wild-looking face or get-up, Tom. Some of them appear quiet, refined, and intelligent until their emotions

get the better of them and they begin to yell.

"On the whole, though, you won't be fooled too easily by that sort of propagandist. They give themselves away as soon as they begin to get excited — read that article and you'll see how. The pressure-group people that you really need to be careful about are folks like me."

"Like *you!* You're no Commie!"

"Did I say all propagandists were? No, Tom — and don't get the idea that all pressure groups are harmful, either. Some of them are in there fighting to bring about improvements to society — to correct wrongs that should have been corrected years ago. Many of our common beliefs today are the results of pressures brought to bear on public opinion in the past. Compulsory education for *all* youth, not just the wealthy ones; the right of women to vote; the abolition of child labor; social security — they're all the work of pressure groups at some time or other. In a country as large as ours, pressure groups sometimes serve to represent the wishes of the people. The town meeting, where everyone has a chance to express himself, is impractical in a 48-state union."

"Then why do we need to be afraid of pressure groups?" Tom asked.

"Not afraid of them — on guard in listening to what they say. Being critical doesn't mean discrediting everything the pressure grouper says. He may be dead right and his proposal

may be a sound one, but the straight thinker wants to be able to do a little investigating of his own — to analyze for himself the purpose of the proposal and the statements made by the propagandist. He doesn't want to be railroaded into believing anything.

"Take one of the issues that is facing us today, the matter of a national compulsory health program. Why, members of my own profession are lined up in two hostile camps on the subject of socialized medicine. Some of them go to England and come back with glowing accounts of the system there. Others go across and bring back the worst possible accounts. There are two definite pressure groups, one working for and the other against national health insurance today. Look at the full-page ads appearing almost weekly in the paper — and notice who pays for the advertising! The average man is being squeezed between the two, and believe me, Tom, it isn't easy to be a straight thinker under those conditions."

They turned into the street where the district court was located. Tom spoke hurriedly.

"Doc, just one thing more. You've spoken of pressure-group leaders and propagandists as if they were the same. Yet you said, too, that some of the things that pressure groups work for are all right. But — well, I always thought that propaganda was bad — something that decent people didn't believe in. Am I wrong?"

"To a certain extent, yes. Think of it like this, Tom. Education enables you to study and hear *both* sides of a situation. Fair debate and open discussion do that, too. The kind of propaganda to watch out for is the kind that limits you to *one* side — the side the propagandist wants you to get; and it often tries to make you blind to the other side, or to make you see red when it's even mentioned. When it does that, propaganda is 'bad' — it tries to shut off your own thinking.

"Yet the cause the propagandist is promoting *may* be all right. And the way he states his case may be fair and aboveboard, too. Some people say the cure for 'bad' propaganda is 'good' propaganda."

The doctor guided the car into a parking space behind the courthouse.

"Whenever you're told to believe *one* side only and are refused the opportunity to look at the *other* side for yourself and draw your own conclusions, watch out! You expect people to argue for what they believe in, but in a democracy you have a right to ask for argument that really meets the issue fair and square — balances facts and reasons on both sides, without deceit or name-calling or tricky talk to get you all mixed up.

"And now comes something we both hate, Tom, but we have to go in and see Woody through." The doctor sighed and pulled the key out of the ignition switch. "Lock the door on your side of the car, will you, please?"



Only One Way To Fish?

Two weeks later, John Talbot and Tom left the school together after their last class. They breathed deeply, appreciatively, of the late September air. It was an Indian summer day, warm and clear and still.

"Not too cold for a swim?" John turned inquiring eyes upon his friend.

"Sounds good — we'll have to walk to the beach, though. Dad has the car. Boy, I'd sure like — hey, Johnny, is some one calling me? Nobody's

around, though." Tom looked back at the school.

"It's the man in the car over there," John said, indicating the car across the street. "Oh, it's Dr. Burton!"

"Hi, Doc." The boys ran over to him.

"Anybody want to go fishing with me? May be the last chance of the season."

Tom looked at the doctor, who was dressed in old corduroys and a shape-

less hat. The boys laughed. "Doc, you're whacky," Tom said. "You can't catch fish so late in September. Not from the rocks, you can't. And you haven't any boat!"

"Who cares?" The doctor's eyes twinkled. "The point is, I need an excuse to take an afternoon off — and what could be a more perfect day for it than this? There won't be many more such days. What do you say, boys? Want to come?"

"Count me in." John threw his books into the back of the car. "Will



you wait a sec, though, Doc? I'll grab some sneaks and track pants from my locker and telephone to my mother."

"I stopped at your house on the way over here, Tom," said the doctor. "Your mother wasn't at home."

"I know — she was going downtown with Woody after school. But I'll need some old stuff to wear, too." The words trailed over Tom's shoulder as he raced after John.

Within five minutes the boys were

back, and the doctor headed the car toward Thurston's Point.

"How's Woody getting along, Tom?" the doctor asked when he was clear of the heavy traffic.

"All right — in a way. He knows he got a square deal from the judge, and he's darned glad that he's on probation instead of being in a reform school. But — well, he's having a tough time." Tom's face reflected the sympathy he felt for his young brother. "He's getting the freeze. You know, all the neighbors are keeping their kids away from him. At school it's even worse."

"Being different isn't quite what he planned, eh?" commented the doctor.

"I've given him a share in the stamp collection," Tom said after a short pause. "But he's moody — and he doesn't want to stay home with me all the time!"

"The stamps are fine, but don't try to do too much for him, Tom," the doctor said slowly. "Give him a chance to think by himself. Just be there — ready to talk or do things with him when he needs you."

"You're lucky that he does want to be by himself," John said. "My brother is the kind of kid that's into your business all the time. He won't leave my stuff alone and he's always under foot. What a pest!" He climbed out of the car at the point of land nearest the breakwater and began to help Tom unload the doctor's fishing gear.

"What did you bring for bait, Doc?" asked Tom.

"Flies."

"Flies! For the love of Pete!" John stopped what he was doing and looked at the doctor in astonishment. "The only fish we ever get from these rocks are cunners — and you'll never catch them with flies."

"I use flies," said the doctor complacently.

"But do you catch any *fish*?"

"Of course I catch fish," the doctor snapped back good-naturedly. "Trouble with you is, you think there's only one way to fish — and that's *your* way. You both have closed minds."

The doctor put his jacket down on the broad, flat space on top of the breakwater, and climbed down to the rocks below. "Now hand me my basket, will you, John, and I'll show you how *I* fish."

He selected a brightly colored fly and fastened it to his line. Then he snapped the rod with a quick flip of his wrist, and the line curved out over the water. Swiftly the little feathered hook dropped neatly down. The boys watched silently. Nothing happened. There were no nibbles, no sudden twitchings of the line, to indicate the presence of fish.

"Hah — told you so!" chortled Tom.

"Don't gloat, m'boy. Anyway, weren't you the lad who said there were no fish here? If you really *want* to try, though, boys, and my flies don't appeal to you, you'll find some bacon rind in the basket there. Use that."

"*Bacon rind!*" John snorted.

"Where'd you ever hear about that for bait?"

"Where did you ever hear about worms?" countered the doctor.

"Why — why, *everyone* knows about worms. Nobody *told* me — I always knew it." John's expression was one of pained surprise.

"You mean you were born knowing just how to fish? Mm-m, smart baby," said the doctor gravely, and the boys burst out laughing.

"All right," John admitted. "Some one must have told me that worms made good bait — but I *proved* they were for myself."

"Do you always prove everything you're told before you believe it?"

"Whenever I can." John fell neatly into the doctor's trap.

"All right, then, why don't you try my flies — or my bacon rind?"

"Don't ever attempt to outwit Dr. Burton," chuckled Tom, and the boys picked up the waiting rods.

"Were you trying to tell me, Doc,



that I shouldn't have an opinion that I can't prove?" asked John a little later, as the three sat companionably watching their motionless lines.

"By proof, do you mean personal experience?"

"We-ll — yes."

"We wouldn't have many opinions if we waited to make a personal test of each one," said the doctor. "Sometimes we have to trust the good judgment of people who do the work for us."

"You mean, simply accept their thinking without doing any for ourselves?" asked Tom, recalling their previous discussion and hoping to trap the doctor into a contradiction.

"Before you learned to read, who do you think helped to form most of your ideas — gave you background for your opinions?" the doctor queried.

"Well — our parents, for one thing —"

"Other kids," broke in John.

"Sunday school teachers," added Tom.

"And did you discard all their knowledge and go on independently from there as soon as you could read and be more critical in your reasoning?"

"N-no — guess we went on believing what they had always told us," admitted John.

"More or less you formed a habit of accepting without question the opinions of people whom you trusted, didn't you?"

Tom agreed that it was so.

"Suppose one of those young cunners down there had been told by his wise old mother not to swallow everything that looked good to eat. If he nibbled only, and tasted gingerly, following her advice, he might live

to be a grand old cunner himself. — This one didn't value his mother's opinion," said the doctor, and he pulled up a wildly struggling fish.

"Well, I wouldn't have believed you could catch fish here without live bait if I hadn't seen this with my own eyes," said John.

"That's what I mean by accepting the tests made by other people," replied the doctor, as he removed the fish from the hook and tapped its head with the handle of his knife. The flapping fish lay still.

Tom sat watching the process and thinking. Finally he spoke.

"Doc, I'm not a cunner, and I can't swallow everything you've just said as easily as that poor fish. I trust you and respect your judgment. I also think you're a swell guy. But suppose your ideas were cracked. It might not be safe to trust you — yet because I liked you, I'd believe you. Wouldn't that complicate things?"

"Yes, Tom, it certainly would. That matter of loyalty and affection has gummed up the works for more than one would-be straight thinker," the doctor said earnestly.

John looked at his hook. The bacon rind had been well nibbled.

"Well, I'll be doggoned!" he exclaimed. "And I never felt a thing!"

"What I was going to say —" said Tom, "I read in the paper that a father had been arrested for teaching his little boy to steal. According to that, it isn't safe for kids to believe some parents, even."

"No, Tom, it isn't, in a few cases, but some children can't help themselves. By the time they're old enough to know right from wrong, the damage has been done. — And some of them never get their thinking straightened out after that."

"Well, Doc, you said we have to trust people who know more than we do sometimes. O.K. You also said it's easy to get into the habit of trusting the opinions of others — even as little kids do. Double O.K. — But then you said that some people ought *not* to be trusted! Now, how can anyone know whom to believe?"

"I guess I'd put it this way, Tom," said the doctor. "Most of the people that influence the young can be trusted most of the time; yet the young must learn to think for themselves in the end. Learning to trust some people, but not others, is part of growing up. I wouldn't want you to be as gullible as one of those fish that is so attracted by the bait that he can't sense the hook. Nor would I want you so suspicious that you think *all* people are trying to hook you."

"All of us need to use a little more of the reason that God gave us. That ability to reason is the thing which makes men different from animals. But I've seen some people who didn't use as much common sense as that starfish down there. He seems to know where he's going."

The three on the rocks above watched the starfish hitching itself along in the clear, green water of a

shallow pool below.

"Where do you suppose he *is* going?" John asked.

"Probably to get a feed of mussel meat. See those blue-shelled mussels beyond him? He'll climb on top of one, put his arms around it, and give it the squeeze play."

"Bet he's unpopular down there in fish-land," chuckled John.

"Yeah," said Tom, "about as likable as Joe Pratt."

"Aw, that crackpot! Why bring him up and spoil a perfectly good day?"

"But I've been thinking about him lately, Johnny," Tom went on, paying no attention to John's sour look. "Joe is one guy I don't find it hard *not* to believe. His ideas are so screwy! What makes him that way, Doc? His parents seem all right."

"What *seems* to be all right on the surface may be all wrong underneath," the doctor said, putting a different fly on his line. "I don't know Joe's folks — they have lived here only six or seven months. But from what you've told me of Joe and his strong likes and dislikes, I'd say that his parents — or somebody equally close — probably had a lot to do with forming his opinions."

John gave a snort of disgust. "Did you hear about his latest, Doc? He can't understand why 'the intelligent people here in McClintock once elected a Jewish Mayor.'"

"And he doesn't like Mr. Cline because he's a Catholic," added Tom.

"Has he any professed faith of his

own?" asked the doctor.

"No. He says his people are agnostics, and what's good enough for them is all right for him."

"Looks to me as if you had a first-class bigot as a classmate," the doctor said.

"Bigot?" The boys echoed each other.

"Yes, bigot, the kind of fellow who is so deeply prejudiced in favor of his own little group that he refuses to see any good at all in anyone outside. It might be interesting to study Joe — find out *why* he is a bigot. He has taken over his folks' opinions — that's plain. But what started them hating all the rest of God's creatures?"

"Seems to me there's a lot of bigots hating people in our country today," broke in Tom. "I've heard of Jews that hate Gentiles, and the other way round; and I know there are some Catholics and Protestants that go in for hating each other; and you hear a lot about grief between Whites and Negroes." Tom's face was troubled as he looked at the doctor. "How come, Doc? What makes these bigots?"

"Usually there's a reason hidden away somewhere which causes a prejudice to grow and develop. Joe's pappy may have had his feelings hurt, so he in turn tries to hurt somebody else. Or he may have been scared out of his wits sometime when he was a small boy and is still going around believing that every Jew he meets is exactly like the one who frightened him long ago."

"Maybe Joe's dad grew up just like Joe — hating certain people because his father or grandfather did before him," said Tom.

"Yeah, maybe they just passed the idea along — sort of inherited it," John added.

"You can't inherit prejudice," said the doctor. "It's a contagious disease that we *acquire* from our surroundings. But grandfathers belong to those surroundings — so you may be partly right, John.

"Some day when I have more time, I'd like to trace this business of prejudice back to its original source," continued the doctor. "Track it down, so to speak, and see why people dislike so heartily folks they've never even met — and why they let feelings dictate their behavior.

"There are a lot of half-baked beliefs and traditions that we hang onto today concerning the differences between people. Differences in religion — differences in race. Just as if it were wrong to have differences! I'll tell you one thing, boys, I'd soon lose my taste for fish if all kinds in the sea were rolled into one and tasted like pollack. I can't abide pollack!"

The boys were amused, but they respected the doctor's earnestness and did not laugh.

The doctor continued in the same grave tone: "Boys, be mighty careful that you don't grow prejudiced yourselves as far as Joe Pratt is concerned. It would be very easy for you to build

up a case against all agnostics just because you've met one like Joe. And stop calling him 'crackpot.' When you brand people with such names, you're acting just like all the rest of the bigots."

"What do you want us to do — love the guy?"

"No — you don't even have to like him. Just treat him as a human being, with all the rights and privileges that you claim for yourselves.

"As for you, Tom, a while ago you were puzzled about whom and what to believe. Then you remarked that Joe's queer ideas didn't fool you. You dislike Joe, so you find it easy *not* to believe him. Be careful there. Let's not assume that things are untrue just

because we dislike the persons who tell us about them. That's too fickle a guide — and it works the other way. Remember what we said about finding it easy to believe and do the bidding of those we *like*.

"No, Tom, a better prescription for you is some of that reason I mentioned before, mixed with large doses of common sense. Then if you read widely and listen intelligently, you shouldn't have too much trouble. — Not half as much trouble as I'm having right now. There's something on the end of my line — and I don't believe it's a fish."

But it was a fish. The doctor pulled it in at last, and the boys yelled with delighted laughter. It was a pollack!



Where There Is Smoke ==

Tom slid into his seat at the breakfast table and began a direct attack upon the toast and strawberry jam. He ate in silence, as did all the family. Mr. Brent wanted no disturbance while he was reading his morning paper.

The customary three slices of toast and jam and two glasses of milk con-

sumed, Tom started on a large bowl of cornflakes. His mother raised her eyebrows inquiringly, indicating the glass of orange juice standing untasted before Tom's plate.

"Later, Mom," he mouthed back. "Tastes better that way."

He grinned, and his mother smiled helplessly. She would have liked to

make some comment about his strange habit of eating breakfast backward, but at the same time she did not wish to break the silence and risk her husband's displeasure.

"Well, another day — so off to work!" Mr. Brent rose abruptly, leaving the paper neatly folded, as always, beside his plate. Tom often wondered if his father never realized how monotonous that same old bit of witticism could be when you heard it day after day.

"Take care of yourself, my dear." Mr. Brent delivered his usual hasty kiss on his wife's cheek, thrust a "Good-by, boys" at his sons, and departed.

Hardly had he had time to reach the front door when Woody sprang to the radio, and the strains of a hill-billy song screamed through the house. Woody liked his music loud and furious. But his pleasure was short-lived. It was the end of that particular program, and the news of the day which followed held little interest for Woody. He started a hurried dash for the living room, but Tom stopped him.

"Woody, wait — I want to hear what he's saying."

"Oh, just news about some guy being a Communist. Who wants that stuff?" Woody barged on.

"But did you hear who the man was?" Tom asked, looking at his mother. "President Lorgin — of Middleworth College!"

As far back as Tom could remember, Jonathan Lorgin had been one of his particular idols. He was everything that a boy might wish to be upon maturity. He had distinguished himself in college as one of the greatest fullbacks ever known. His record as a major in the United States Army was a brilliant one of honor and courage. And now for the past two years he had been president of Middleworth, the college where Tom hoped to go himself. It was incredible to think that he could be a Communist!

"Oh, no, Tom, it couldn't be!" Mrs. Brent said aghast. "President Lorgin is too fine a man for that."

"Why can't Mr. Lorgin be a Communist if he wants to?" Woody had returned to the table and his half-finished breakfast. "Dad's a Republican. What's the diff?"

"There's a lot of difference, Woody," Tom answered. "Dad isn't conspiring to overthrow our form of government, for one thing. When we were talking about it the other day in history, Mr. Corey said that our democracy isn't perfect by a long shot — it needs a lot of improvement. But Communists aren't trying to improve it — they want to destroy it."

"Maybe it isn't true about Dr. Lorgin, dear," said Mrs. Brent. "See if there's anything in the paper about it."

Tom opened the folded sheets. Yes, there it was. He read aloud:

Pres. Lorgin And Seven Others Named As Reds

A confidential report released yesterday charged that eight prominent professional men have been active members of the Communist party for several years. The eight named include . . .

Names and facts followed, and then came the usual "Continued on page 12." Tom felt sick. He turned to page twelve and scanned the column for particular mention of the man he so admired. A paragraph in heavier print sprang into focus. He read:



Reporters reached Dr. Lorgin last night at St. Louis, where he is attending a conference of college administrators. The president of Middleworth College was inclined to treat the matter as a joke. "No one has ever questioned my loyalty to the United States before," he said, "but I've been called plenty of names—not complimentary. Just last week I heard myself called a 'conservative capitalist.'"

Asked if he intended to press the matter, Dr. Lorgin said, "Of course not. It's just a stupid lie. People who know me will realize that I'm not—nor ever have been—a Communist."

Tom put the paper down. "I knew he wasn't mixed up in that phony business," he said, relief showing in the tones of his voice. "He's too swell a guy!"

But his restored confidence was given another jolt a little later when he encountered Cliff Horton ambling along to school in his customary leisurely manner.

"Hi there, Cliff, what's new?" Tom fell into step beside him.

"What's new yourself, dope? Hey—see the paper this morning? That guy you're always raving about—Dr. Lorgin—turns out he's a Communist!"

"He is not." Tom was quick to defend his idol. "I read the paper, too, and saw where he denied the charges."

"Don't tell me you guys really believe what you read in a newspaper!" John Talbot jeered as he joined them. "What you read today is denied tomorrow. It's always that way."

"Aw, it is not," Cliff replied; and Tom added, "Maybe some papers print sensational stuff all the time, John, but most of them don't."

"I'll bet this story about Lorgin is true enough, though," said Cliff. "My dad says that a lot of these college professors are Pinkos or Commies."

"Well, I don't know anything about *him* much—except that Tom is always gassing about the guy," John said breezily. "But Gramp always is quoting an old saying: 'Where there's smoke there's fire.'"

A little gnawing pain, like a half-

forgotten toothache, made the day uncomfortable for Tom. He attended classes in a listless fashion, without conscious awareness of the root of the trouble. He could arouse no enthusiasm even for football practice later in the afternoon.

It was only when the long grind of practice was over and he was standing in the shower, feeling the cold, hard sting of the water needles against his skin, that he was free to think his own thoughts.

The doubt sprang, fully developed, into his mind. Perhaps John was right: one shouldn't believe everything one reads in a newspaper. And that included Dr. Lorgin's denial that he was a Communist. How did he, Tom, know anything *really* about the private life of the head of Middleworth? He had been an outstanding figure in the public eye, true, but just because Tom liked him was no reason for going on blindly trusting him. Hadn't he and John and the doctor talked about that very thing on the day they went fishing?

The doctor had prescribed reason and common sense for a situation like this. Very well, Tom would try to reason it out. He would tackle this "problem in thinking," as Doc called it. Maybe he could think straighter than he realized!

First of all, what was the problem? "Is Dr. Lorgin a Communist — or isn't he?" he muttered softly, and felt strangely relieved, as though direct action had already been taken.

Next? "Collect all the information about him you can get," he whispered to himself.

But wait. Dr. Lorgin wasn't the only man who had been accused of Communist leanings lately. Some of them, no doubt, were dyed-in-the-wool Reds. Others were probably quite innocent. Would it be wise to find out more in general about this "Red-baiting," as Mr. Corey had called it one day in class?

Where could he get the information? "Newspaper reports — back files in the library," he said softly. But instantly the doubt returned. How dependable were the papers? Weren't books more reliable? But which ones? The doctor had recommended an article. What was it now? "How to Detect Propaganda." Yes, that was the title. He had forgotten the author, if he had ever known. No matter; maybe the librarian would know.

The librarian did know, and Tom settled himself in his room that evening with the article, two apples, and a dish of sweet pickles. One might as well learn how to think straight in comfort.

The article had proved stimulating — there was no doubt of that. Tom even felt eager to read other things of the same type. But more than he wanted to read, he wanted to discuss the matter with some one: to talk about the article, to ask about the reliability of news in the paper, to know whether the story about Dr. Lorgin was merely a rumor — or a fact.

He cornered his father after dinner the next evening, waiting until Mr. Brent had lighted his cigar and settled himself comfortably in his favorite chair in the living room.

"Dad," Tom began a little hesitantly (he was not accustomed to conversations of this sort with his father and hardly knew how to begin), "I've been bothered about that news of Dr. Lorgin —"

"What news?"

"Why, about his being a Communist. It's been in all the papers — and on the radio —"

"Yes, yes, I remember. Well what about it?"

Tom was a little crestfallen. Surely his father knew of his admiration for Dr. Lorgin. Couldn't his dad understand *anything* about his sons?

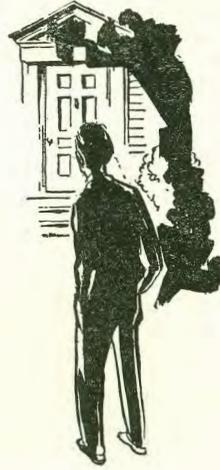
"I — don't know — whether the report is true — or not. How can I find —"

"Tom, it's about time you learned to develop judgment about the things you hear over the radio or read in the papers. Take it in — and believe about a third of it. That's my way, and I find it works. — Was there anything else you wanted to say?" Mr. Brent's voice had the cold finality of a business interview.

"No, sir." Tom turned away. How could he tell his father about the article he had been reading, or that he was bursting to talk with some one who would understand how he felt?

He hated to make a pest of himself, but maybe Dr. Burton wouldn't mind

being bothered with him for half an hour. Perhaps he could suggest other reading, too.



Ten minutes later, Tom stood on the doctor's front steps. There was no light in the waiting room, a small ell jutting out at the side of the house. That meant the doctor was having no office hours this evening. Good. But his study windows were lighted, so the doctor was at home.

Tom rang the bell. As the housekeeper opened the door, he heard the sound of men's laughter. So the doctor wasn't alone. Tom would have withdrawn, but the housekeeper was already calling, "It's Tom Brent, Doctor."

The doctor appeared at the head of the stairs. "Come on up, Tom," he said cordially. "There's a friend of yours here — Mr. Cline."

Mr. Cline — the high school Principal Tom gulped. He liked Mr. Cline, he was an all-right guy — but talk to the doctor confidentially with *him*

there! What would the kids at school ever think?

Reluctantly, he climbed the stairs. He should have gone back home, he thought. But that would have looked like rudeness on his part. The doctor must have thought it would be all right, or he wouldn't have invited Tom to join them.

He felt better when he was actually seated in a deep, red, leather-covered chair in the doctor's study. Mr. Cline looked just as human as anybody else when he was away from school surroundings. He grinned at Tom and pushed the dish of salted nuts on the table between their chairs closer to him.

"Glad you dropped in, Tom," said the doctor, smiling at Tom in his customary whimsical way. "You can solve the problem. We were just discussing how much it costs the average young fellow of today to take a girl out for the evening. Time was when my weekly expenditure was fifty cents. That took each of us to the movies on Friday night and bought us two ice-cream sodas later. What could you do for that amount of money today?"

"Stay home," said Tom promptly. "That is, you *could* listen to records or dance. And eat candy bought with the fifty cents — at the girl's house, of course."

The men's laughter filled the room. "Just what I used to do thirty years ago," chuckled the doctor, "only then it was a dime's worth of candy that got me in for the evening."

"I'm not a very good one to ask,

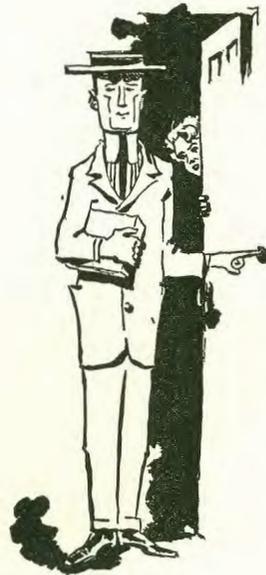
though, Doc," Tom went on. "I don't date girls very often. I'm not much interested in them. They're — sort of silly."

"What *are* you interested in, Tom?" Mr. Cline asked.

"Oh, politics and football and photography and fishing — with *worms*." Tom cast a sly look at the doctor, and they both laughed.

"Tom's interested in something else right now, Bob," said the doctor, "something he hasn't mentioned; but I'd be willing to bet that's what brought him here tonight. I've been rather expecting to have you drop in, Tom, to get that article I suggested. Am I right?"

"Not exactly, Doc," Tom replied with a laugh. "I got the article at the



library and read it last night. But I did want to — well — to talk it over — that and some other things."

"What was the article?" asked Mr. Cline.

"'How to Detect Propaganda,'" the doctor told him. "How did you like it, Tom? Was it worth reading?"

"It was good, Doc. I memorized the whole list of propaganda plays – the seven 'tricks of the trade' as the article called them."

"Would you be able to recognize them if you saw or heard them used again, though?" queried the doctor.

"I think I'd catch on to a few. 'Name Calling' wouldn't be hard; neither would the 'Band Wagon' device, the 'everybody's doing it' stunt. I don't believe the 'Plain Folks' trick would fool me, either. The 'Card Stacking' one might be difficult, though."

"You're right, Tom. Wiser people than you can be fooled with that one, just because the propagandist uses a half truth in the beginning and disguises it as truth."

"I'd like to take a recent speech," Tom said, "one that's been printed in the paper, and see if I could find the kinds of propaganda it uses, all by myself."

"Good idea," said the doctor. "Why don't you try it?"

"That's what the authors want you to do," Mr. Cline put in quietly. "They wrote that article to help people analyze what they heard or read for themselves."

Mr. Cline paused, then went on: "It wasn't intended to help only students in school, though. Plenty of older people are honestly trying to analyze

the issues of the day, and they need help. I was interested in what you said a few minutes ago, that you thought you could recognize most of the seven propaganda devices. You didn't mention the common one of 'Glittering Generalities' – associating something with a virtue word to make us accept a thing without examination. Some of the generalities we hear today, like 'brotherhood,' 'progress,' 'human liberties,' even 'the American way,' are confusing, because they're being used by both sides – those who believe in them from a democratic point of view and those who don't.

"Even some of the slogans we hear – or cartoons we look at – may be laughable. We may think they're too silly for any person of sense to believe; but repeat the slogans often enough and reprint the cartoons, and the first thing you know, the idea has stuck.

"The idea of helping people to analyze propaganda is beneficial. No doubt of that. Everybody needs that kind of help in times of excitement,



when it's easy to go off the deep end. Even if we know our side is right, say in a cold war or a hot war, the hotheads on our own side may try to make us do foolish things."

"War propaganda is usually pretty frantic," said the doctor, gesturing with his glasses.

"Right," admitted Mr. Cline. "But during wartime, people need to have their patriotism stirred to the highest pitch — to make them willing to fight or to make sacrifices."

"And to hate the enemy," added Dr. Burton.

Tom looked puzzled. "But I should think that would be the time when people need even more help in knowing what is propaganda and what isn't," he said.

"Take care, Tom," Mr. Cline warned. "Propaganda means the promotion of a theory or belief. You are thinking of all propaganda as being bad. But it depends upon which side you are on — what *you* believe. We feel, for example, that propaganda *against* democracy is wrong, but propaganda *for* it is just. During a war, when democracy is threatened, we feel it is right to stir people up to defend it."

"Then during a war, people aren't supposed to think for themselves, according to that," Tom said.

"No," the principal replied, "people are expected to think for themselves in the face of *any* kind of propaganda. Far too many don't want to, however. They find it easier to accept the ready-made opinions of others — provided they don't conflict with their own beliefs or prejudices. Just shout for their side, and they'll believe anything."

"But suppose a man *was* intelligent and wanted to do his own thinking," persisted Tom. "Wouldn't he find it hard during a war to tell what was true and what wasn't? Aren't more lies spread around at such a time?"

"Yes, hundreds of them. At the time of the last war, a Rumor Clinic was conducted by one of the big newspapers in our state. Every day the lies or rumors would be printed, and the falsity of the claims, the truth in the matter, would appear just below. The system provided very real service to the general public."

"But how could people believe the answers given by the newspaper?" Tom asked hurriedly. "That's another thing that's been bothering me."

He told the two men how disturbed he had been by the newspaper report on Dr. Lorgin; how further doubt about the reliability of news had been raised through his conversation with Cliff and John, and what his father had said.

"You're not doubting the newspapers entirely, Tom; you're doubting the integrity of Dr. Lorgin himself," said Mr. Cline, when Tom finished speaking. "Look at the newspaper situation like this: you go into a grocery store. Do you stop to test the quality and purity of each article before you buy it? No, you rely upon previous experience or upon what you have learned about the article from advertising or upon the recommendation of somebody else. You have to do that to save time."

"Before you buy a paper, you have to know something about its standard brand of goods, too. We have some of the finest newspapers in the world in our country — and some of the poorest. But as people, we are free to buy any quality we want. Some of the editorials are slanted to give us mental indigestion occasionally, but there *are* papers, Tom, that give you the news fairly free of bias."

"But should a reliable paper print news like that Lorgin story?" Tom asked. "Calling him a Communist is propaganda! Why do papers print such stuff?"

"Would you have your country *suppress* all propaganda?" inquired the doctor. "If all the different opinions and beliefs of people could no longer be expressed, we would have democracy no longer. When channels of communication are closed, watch out!"

"Look, Tom," said Mr. Cline, "your obvious admiration for Dr. Lorgin has blinded you to some plain facts in this case. The man has been smeared by a label, true. But so have other good and sincere people before him. Long ago, the worst word which could be applied to a man was 'heretic,' one who denied his faith or the teachings of his faith. Some of the greatest scientists of that day were so labeled. Whenever name calling or any other device of the propagandist is used, it's an indication of some kind of conflict — people are disturbed.

"Just now, the battle cry is Communism. Now, there are many Americans who hold what are usually referred to as 'liberal' views. A man of this sort may be keenly interested in such matters as better health services for all the people, an equal chance for all people of ability to get jobs, the abolition of child labor, and so on. It may be that Communists are also interested in some of these problems. Should this man be branded as a Communist or a 'Red' just because he holds such views? Clearly not. And yet we must admit that it's a good thing to have people alive to the menace of Communism today. Better to have them that way than to have them totally unaware of the danger that confronts us."

"Folks can control the situation wisely or foolishly," added the doctor. "They can criticize and analyze what they hear and act accordingly — or they can allow themselves to be swept along by a wave of subversive propaganda. To divert attention from themselves, the real Communists draw a red herring across their trail — and off the foolish souls go after the false clues. Today, we're going through the witch-hunting stage, as you suggested, Bob. Some liberals are being branded as Communists. It can be dangerous if people let their emotions take the place of reason.

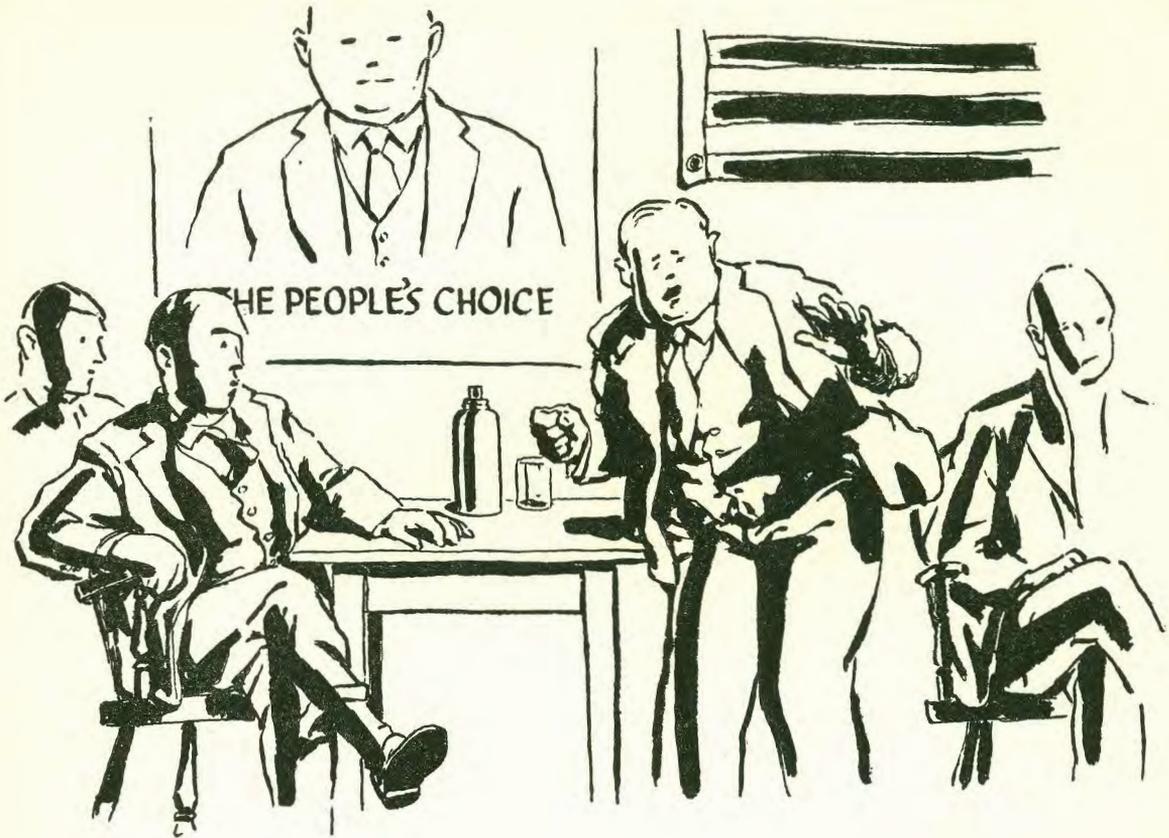
"But we wouldn't have a democracy if there was only one voice to tell us what to think and do, only one brand of propaganda allowed, so to speak.

The fact that people *do* get stirred up over issues shows that some of them, at least, are thinking. Their thoughts may be muddy at first, but in the end they may bring about better ways of living and working together. Democracy takes time, Tom."

As if to emphasize the doctor's last point, the clock on the city hall chimed the hour. Tom rose hastily. "Is that right?" he asked. "It *can't* be ten o'clock!"

Ten o'clock it was, and with something of a shock, Tom suddenly remembered that tomorrow was another school day and his physics assignment had not been touched. He stole a guilty look at Mr. Cline, to find the latter observing him gravely.

"Tom," said the Principal, "there's a new book in the school library you might like. It's called 'Do Your Own Thinking,' Scherf is the author. And when you want more grist for your brain mill, let me know."



All The Angles

The bite in the October air caused Tom to hustle on his way to school. He was about to cross Main Street to the high school when a voice raised in anger caught his attention. He walked over to the group of students and saw that Joe Pratt was in the center. Joe's words hammered at the boys around him.

" . . . And I tell you there ought to be a law against such things. No such person should be allowed to run for public office."

"Who, Joe?" Tom asked. "Thieves and chiselers?"

"Not exactly," Joe snapped. "But most of 'em are that, and lazy, too."

"Who are?" Tom wanted to know. But Pratt was firing his machine-gun words again.

Cliff Horton drew Tom outside the group. "Boy, are you behind the times! Joe's shooting off his face because Terry Jordan's father is running for City Councilor."

"So?" Tom was puzzled.

"So?" mimicked Cliff. "The Jordans are colored — and Joe's giving out with the super-race spiel, but it's nastier this time than I've ever heard it."

"When did Mr. Jordan announce his candidacy, Cliff?"

"In the paper this morning."

Pratt's strident voice knifed into Tom's thoughts.



"Even if this member of an inferior race is elected, he'll never be seated or cast a vote in the City Council."

"Why not?" Tom's voice was clear and level. "Are you going to stop him?"

"Not just me. The right people."

Tom was relentless. "But suppose the people elect him — the right people?"

Joe looked at Tom pityingly. "There's plenty of ways to keep him out of office, even if he is elected. Just never get around to swearing him in."

Tom wasn't aware that the group was watching him.

"That's illegal. What's more, Mr.

Jordan will make a lot better councilor than some we've had in office."

"You're a great credit to the white people of this town," Joe sneered.

Tom laughed. "I know Negroes I like a lot more than I do you. And Terry Jordan happens to be one of them. What's more, you'd better mind your tongue, or you'll get a good poke on the nose."

A soft voice cut into the conversation.

"You needn't fear any of my people, Pratt; we are particular about the things we handle."

The tall Negro boy smiled bitterly. Then he spoke to the whole group. "We'd better get moving. It's just two minutes till the last bell."

The embarrassed group dispersed hurriedly. Tom fell in beside the Negro.

"What a rotten little beggar he is, Terry! Thank the Lord there aren't many like him."

"You'd be surprised, Tom. Most people who feel that way don't talk so much in public, that's all."

As they walked quickly down the hall, Tom said, "I'd like to see you after school in the auditorium."

The Negro lad looked quickly at Tom. "You don't have to stick up for me, Tom."

"Sure, sure." Tom paused at the door of their room. "I'd like to learn about your dad and what he aims to do if he's elected."

Terry smiled at that. "See you at 2:15."

All day Tom thought about people like Joe Pratt and people like Terry Jordan. He spent his study hour talking with Mr. Jenks, the government teacher.

When Terry and Tom met at 2:15 in the deserted auditorium, Tom knew



what he was going to do. He came straight to the point.

"Terry, I want to help your dad win this election."

"Wait a minute." Terry Jordan's face was serious as he sat down next to Tom. "You don't know what you're getting into, Tom."

"I may not know all the angles, Terry, but I've thought this through pretty carefully. I know there isn't much I can do to help. There are no blocks of votes I can swing; but I'd like to do what I can."

Terry looked at him for a long moment before he said, "Maybe you'd better come along and talk with Dad."

"Fine." Tom stood up. "Let's go now if your dad is free to see us."

"He'll see us. He's in business for himself as a lawyer."

Mr. Jordan's law office was small and tastefully furnished. But it was the lawyer himself who caught Tom's full attention. A big, powerful man, with a fine forehead and eyes that seemed to look straight through Tom, he had a warm smile and a musical voice.

Terry introduced them, and Tom shook hands with Mr. Jordan as Terry said, "Tom wants to help you in your campaign for City Councilor, Dad. I told him he'd better talk to you about it before he gets into the middle of things."

Mr. Jordan said, "Tom, we are grateful for all the help that is offered us. But —" The lawyer paused. "There are some things you should consider before we join forces. Just how well have you figured this thing out?"

"I didn't do much in school today except think about it, Mr. Jordan, and I know what I want to do."

The lawyer smiled soberly.

"Tom, how did you become interested in helping us?"

Before Tom could answer, Terry told his father about the street-corner argument with Joe Pratt.

"I see." Mr. Jordan was very serious. "Suppose you did help us in this campaign, Tom, what would your parents say?"

A little surprised at this question, Tom replied, "Dad's so busy in business, I don't think he'd know anything about it. Mother wouldn't mind, I'm

sure. Why should they object?"

"For the same reason that many others will object — are objecting. You would be helping a Negro get into public office."

"So what?" countered Tom. "A Negro fell in the Boston Massacre. Negroes have fought in all our wars. They have bled and died in Korea. They pay taxes. They have to obey laws. What makes them so different when it comes to holding office?"

"A Negro in office must enforce the law and use his public responsibility where white people are concerned. Many, many white people resent a Negro's having such authority over them."

"What difference does it make?" Tom asked. "The people who hold office are — are —" He sought for words.

Mr. Jordan came to his rescue. "— only symbols of authority."

Tom accepted the idea. "That's it," he said.

"Yes, that's true enough," Mr. Jordan added. "But many people don't see it that way. They can think only in personal terms."

"I suppose so." Tom looked straight at the big lawyer. "But how can I help you?"

Mr. Jordan smiled at the boy's eagerness. "Hold on a moment, Tom. There's another thing you should think about. How will your friends in and out of school treat you when they learn that you are helping a Negro candidate?"

"My real friends won't care, and the others don't count. Don't think I'm offering my help like a little Sir Galahad because of Joe Pratt's babbling. I'm not. Pratt started me thinking, and I've checked on you and your two opponents, Joe Teller and 'Shorty' Green. You're the best candidate, so far as I can see. It sure would gripe me to see you beaten just because you happen to be a Negro."

Something of admiration for this straight-speaking boy crept into Mr. Jordan's voice.

"You're sure I'm the best man for the job, Tom?"

"Positive! I checked with our government teacher, and he said you'd be a cinch to get it if you were a white person."

"All right, Tom. There is plenty you can do for us. But I'd better warn you, we don't have much money for the campaign. Most of our campaigning will be door-to-door work — talking with people; distributing pamphlets, stickers, buttons; and getting out the vote on election day."

Tom stuck out his hand. "When do we start?"

"Tonight. I'd appreciate it very much if you'd attend Green's rally, take in what he has to say, and distribute leaflets outside the building when the crowd breaks up."

"Glad to, Mr. Jordan. Where's the rally?"

Terry spoke up. "At Slater's Hall, seven-thirty. Why not take the fliers home with you and go straight from

your house?"

"Good idea. I'll see you in school tomorrow and give you the dope on Green's speech."

Mr. Jordan nodded. "I'll keep in touch with you through Terry. Good luck and thanks."

"Thank you, sir. When I can help, tell Terry."

Walking to Slater's Hall with Cliff Horton, Tom asked, "What did your dad say when I phoned you to come with me tonight?"

Cliff grinned. "Oh, Dad knows the score. He said, 'Keep out of trouble and see what you can learn.' What did yours say?"

"Nothing. He was out on some business deal."

Tom handed a flier to Cliff and read one himself. There was a picture of Mr. Jordan and a brief listing of his military service in the First World War, his educational background, his business experience, and the public movements he had supported.

"A pretty good record, isn't it, Cliff?"

"Fine, I'd say. Here's the hall. What a crowd!"

Slater's Hall was jammed. Green stickers and banners were everywhere, and everyone was talking at the same time.

Cliff said, "I don't see any of the high school crowd here, do you?"

Tom shook his head. They watched small groups of men form, talk their cigars to ribbons, and dissolve into other groups when the cigars were

gone. Cider, beer, crullers, and pretzels were stacked on big tables in the rear of the hall. Here there was less talking and considerable eating. The boys strolled over and helped themselves to cider and crullers. While they were going through seconds on cider, a big red-faced man strode across the stage and beat on a table until the water glasses jumped.

"Now, folks, we come to the main event of the evening. I know you all want to hear the next City Councilor from Ward Six — your friend and the people's choice, 'Shorty' Green — the man who will take care of our fine city and Ward Six when he takes his seat on the City Council. Let's give 'Shorty' a big hand for this grand rally and the free feed."

Tom looked at the candidate carefully. "He's short, Cliff, but he isn't small."

"He sure isn't. He's built like a big-shot college quarterback. Good-looking, too."

"Shorty" waved his hand, and the hall quieted slowly, with dying shouts of "You're my boy, Shorty," "Where's the free feed?" and "Shut up and let the guy talk."

Tom and Cliff sat back and listened. "Shorty" was a good speaker. He told a little about himself and then proceeded to tell the crowd why Joe Teller shouldn't be elected.

"You all know that I like Joe Teller; he's been a friend of mine for years. But he just isn't the man to represent Ward Six on the City Coun-

cil. Ward Six is a workingman's ward. Joe Teller is anti-union and has been for years. How do you think a labor-baiter like Joe — and he is that — would look after the workingman's interests?"

Tom dug Cliff in the ribs. "Now the mud's starting to fly — labor-baiter, anti-union. What's coming next?"

Cliff grinned. "Thief, robber, bum, Commie — who knows?"

"What's more," Green was going on, "Joe Teller is opposed to playgrounds for the kids. Why? Because he played in the streets when he was a kid, and what was good enough for him is good enough for them, he thinks. That's just plain reactionary, and you might as well know that Joe is a reactionary. Joe is maybe a bit shortsighted, too. He forgets that the streets he played in as a kid were filled with wagons and carriages. The streets today are quite different. Now, no matter how nice a man is personally, you don't want some one with those ideas representing you on the City Council."

Green ended his discussion of Teller's chances by saying, "Now, don't get me wrong. Joe's my friend; I like him. But I don't think he should be a councilor."

Cliff nudged Tom. "Here comes the blast on Jordan."

But "Shorty" went straight into a discussion of his own qualifications for the job. Then the meeting broke up with a thunderous ovation for "Shorty."

As the boys emerged from the hall,

Tom looked questioningly at Cliff.

"Not a word about Jordan. Funny, isn't it? Here, pass out a bunch of these fliers, will you?"



"Sure, give me a handful." Cliff frowned in thought. "Green is probably saving Jordan for his next rally. Or maybe for a radio spiel."

Their conversation was interrupted by a man who had just received one of the Jordan fliers. He spoke to Tom.

"Say, young man, aren't you white?"

"Sure. What about it?"

"Why are you passing out these things for a colored man?"

"I think he's the best candidate, so I'm trying to get him elected."

The man looked at Tom closely. "Do you, now? Why's he so good?"

Tom launched into a description of Jordan's record. He compared it briefly with what he knew about Teller and Green.

His questioner commented, "Lad,

you sure know about these fellows. Mebbe I better think about Jordan. Getting an honest, able man in office is quite a trick these days."

He started to walk away, but turned back for an instant and said, "Good luck, kid. You're going to need it."

Cliff looked at Tom with a new respect. "Where'd you learn that stuff about the candidates?"

"From Mr. Jenks. He said there was plenty more to learn. I'll have to get after it. Fliers are gone, and the crowd's gone. Let's go home."

"Yeah," Cliff agreed. "I got about an hour to put on the books."

The following day Tom met Terry Jordan at school and told him about the rally. Tom concluded, "I don't think I did you much good."

"Dad had a reason for asking you to go. How about going to hear Joe Teller tomorrow night?"

"Sure thing, Terry. Get me some more fliers, will you? I'm all out of them."

When they entered Slater's Hall the next night, Cliff said, "Same old hall. Just a new bunch of banners and stickers for Teller."

Tom grinned. "Even the two crowds look alike."

"Why wouldn't they? They're both crowds of U.S. citizens."

"More free eats, Cliff. Let's go."

They helped themselves to cider and doughnuts and sat down to listen to Joe Teller.

He had been a big man when in his prime, but he showed his age now.

Tom nudged Cliff.

"How old do you think he is?"

"Seventy, seventy-five. He's shrunk up some in his old age."

Teller still had an excellent speaking voice.

"I come before you good folks tonight and offer myself as a candidate because I'm sure you want one of your own to represent you on the City Council. And I am one of you. Your fathers and grandfathers can remember how we battled our way up off the streets together. I've worked with them — worked with these hands with them."

He held out his big, gaunt hands.

"I've been a laborer. I know our trials and troubles. I'm one of you. I have always been one of you. So let's not have any more of these silly charges that I'm anti-labor, anti-union.

"Sure, I've been against some unions. But that's because I stand for and believe in Americanism. I fought under the stars and stripes in two great armies to help save our American Way of Life — our democracy.

"When some unions stand for internationalism, Communism, and Fascism, Joe Teller stands against such unions. But I'm with — we all are with — those one hundred per cent American unions that love their country and support it.

"No man needs to worry about Joe Teller's patriotism. I stand with the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Sons of the Ameri-

can Revolution, and our great patriots in my support of our nation. Communist destroyers would get the rope from me. I'd disown my own son if he betrayed the trust of his country to an international outfit. These are the things that the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Sons of the American Revolution stand for, and I stand with them."

"Listen to that, Tom," Cliff whispered. "See how he's tying himself up with all these patriotic organizations. But he doesn't say why they have no use for him and won't endorse him. Isn't that one of those tricks of propaganda that you've been reading about?"

Tom grunted. "Sure. That's the good old 'transfer' device. You try to make people believe that you stand for groups that are pretty generally respected and that you have all their good qualities. What a flag-raising eagle-squeezer he is!"

"Green says he's a friend of mine." Teller's voice went up in anger. "But he's no friend of mine when he makes such lying charges against me as he did several nights ago.

"I'm opposed to playgrounds for the kids, am I? Who put the first playground into this district? Joe Teller. Who got you the first park on the lake? Joe Teller. Certainly I've been opposed to some parks and some playgrounds. Why? Because they were going into places where we didn't need them. Green wanted them in areas where he and his pals could get

real-estate benefits."

"Teller probably wanted 'em where he'd get the real-estate benefits," Tom muttered to Cliff.

"I tell you," roared Teller, "that I'll bring you more public improvements if I'm elected than Green can get you in a hundred years!"

"More empty promises," commented Tom out of the side of his mouth.

Cliff nodded in agreement. "I think he's going to wind this up. Listen."

Joe Teller wound it up in a roaring appeal.

"I'm your man. I've fought with you and for you for years. We're the people. We know what we want. You know I can deliver — and I *will* deliver to Ward Six. Everyone knows that Teller comes through. You're all for me. The people are for me. On election day there'll be thousands for Teller. The swing is here, folks. Don't stand aside and be left with the stragglers who'll be defeated with Green. Teller's the tiptop candidate. Teller's your winner. Win with us. We've got the program, the candidate, the voters. We can't lose."

He waved his hand and disappeared into the wings.

"What a stem-winder that guy is!" Cliff said it almost in awe.

"Yup, he sure is. Let's get outside and shove out these Jordan leaflets."

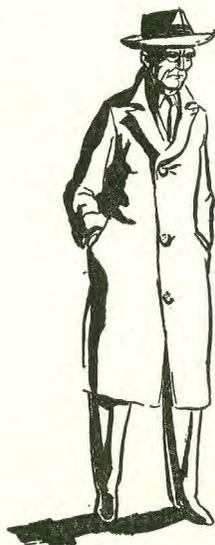
When they were outside the hall, Cliff said, "No mention of Jordan, was there?"

"Not once. And I don't know what's

behind it." But even as he said the words, he knew he had the answer.

"Cliff — I think these boys are giving Mr. Jordan the old silent treatment. Know what I mean?"

"Yeah. Everyone clams up, and the guy gets buried in silence. Maybe you got something there."



A hard voice broke into their conversation.

"Hey, kids, what you doin' givin' out them fliers?"

Tom carefully sized up the character who had spoken. He had a mouth like a knife blade and eyes that were black holes under beetling brows. He wasn't very big, but he looked tough.

Tom answered civilly, "Trying to help a good man get into office."

"Yeah?" The man moved closer to Tom. "There's only two men in this race, and Jordan ain't one of 'em. Got it, kid? Don't let me catch either of you givin' out none of them fliers after any more rallies. Gimme what you got

there."

"Nuts." Cliff's voice was hard. He moved slightly away from Tom.

Tom put the fliers under his arm. There was a sudden tightening in the pit of his stomach. So this was why he was going to need good luck. He knew they could outrun this tough, but he heard himself saying, "I'm keeping the fliers. And there's no law that says I can't give 'em away."

The man laughed in derision.

"Law? That's rich. Now, you young punks, get outa' here before I beat your ears off."

Cliff walked around to one side of the man. His voice was half laughing.

"You're taking on a big job, mister."

"What's your names, kids?" The man was undecided. Bridling at the manner and voice, Tom snapped, "What's it to you?"

"Wise guys, huh?" The tough gave them both the once-over and walked off muttering, "I'll see you punks again."

Cliff was all steamed up.

"Say, this job is a lulu. I thought we'd have to take on that character."

"Uh-huh," Tom agreed. "But I've a hunch he'd need some taking. I'm just as glad he decided to leave us alone."

"What, with the two of us! We'd have taken him like snow on a hot day. Come on, let's get home; I've book work."

"You've always got book work," Tom jeered. "If that skull of yours wasn't so thick —"

"I wouldn't have been so flip with

our friend," finished Cliff.

The next day Tom called at Mr. Jordan's office and told him about their near scrap with the stranger. The lawyer listened quietly, showing no emotion. When Tom finished, he said:

"We won't use you on that sort of work any more. If those boys want to play rough, we'll send men who are used to playing rough." He thought for a moment.

"You're right about the absent treatment, Tom. But I think we can make our program so attractive that we shall get votes aplenty. Then Teller and Green will change their tactics."

Terry, who had been listening to the conversation, had a suggestion.

"Why not come to Dad's first rally tonight, Tom? You'll learn exactly where we stand."

"I'd like to, Terry. And about my work, Mr. Jordan — that character we bumped into last night doesn't bother me."

"That's as may be, Tom." Mr. Jordan was positive. "But we are not using youngsters on any job where they are liable to get slugged or beaten up. There will be plenty of other work you can do in a few days."

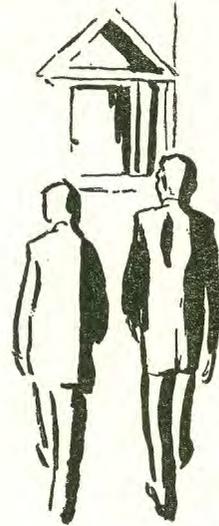
"Just let me know when I can be of help," said Tom, with a hint of disappointment in his voice.

That evening the Jordan car, carrying Tom, Terry, and Mr. Jordan, pulled up before a small church on the outskirts of Ward Six. Tom was puzzled.

"I thought we were going to a rally, Terry."

His companion smiled grimly. "We are. This is it."

"But I thought political rallies in Ward Six were held in Slater's Hall."



"That's right, Tom." Terry was calm. "We have been denied the use of Slater's Hall."

"You mean because —" Tom was beginning when Mr. Jordan interrupted.

"Because I am a Negro running for office, not just because I am a Negro. I could hire the hall for a concert or a banquet or a theatrical performance — but not for political purposes. The owners don't approve of Negroes holding public office."

No one said anything more. They walked into the church, and Mr. Jordan led the way to the social room. There were no banners, no posters, no tables heaped with free lunch. The room was crowded with perhaps a hundred and fifty people. Only a handful were white. Terry spoke to Tom.

"Let's sit here in the back of the

room, where we can see everything. Most of these people are influential in their neighborhoods. Dad is going to tell them exactly what he stands for. This is a sort of organization rally for our people."

"I'm surprised to see so few white people here, Terry." Tom's voice was sober. "It's a public rally, isn't it?"

Terry's voice was filled with irony.

"Surprised! No, you're not, Tom. What you mean is that you're sorry we're discriminated against."

"I guess you're right. Come to think of it, I guess I'm not surprised — just a little burned up over it."

"Believe me, I know how you feel, Tom. Now the white people who are here are doing a job." He turned and indicated persons in the audience.

"The white men in the front row are reporters. The one in the brown hat is the *Star* man — they'll give us some space. The others are here to cover just in case! The white man in the third row left is the front man for the local Commies. He's here probably to see if he can use us. The white woman is the wife of a local man who wants whatever printing we have done. The other woman is a press photographer, as you can see. The other five or six I know nothing about."

Tom looked at his school friend for a long moment.

"Terry, how do you stand it?"

Terry grinned in wry fashion.

"What you've seen is nothing, Tom. Things are good in this city. There isn't any legal segregation, no Negro

has ever been lynched or stoned to death, and we have never had a race riot. But things could be better, as you know. Listen! Dad is going to speak."

Mr. Jordan was a fine speaker. After thanking the group for their interest, he plunged straight into his subject. Tom listened intently.

"The reasons for my seeking office are hard, unpleasant truths.

"First, let us look at our section of the city — Ward Six. You all know that the playgrounds, libraries, and schools in this area are not comparable to those in other parts of the city. The schools all need repairing; the playgrounds should be better and more plentiful. There is only one branch of the public library in Ward Six, and its condition is frightful.

"But we must remember, too, that the money that has been spent in Ward Six should have given us much better public facilities than we have.

"Do you remember the swimming pool that was built in this Ward when Mr. Teller was our representative on the City Council?"

There was sardonic laughter from the audience. Tom spoke to Terry.

"What about it?"

Terry's words were clipped. "Bottom leaked; it sank in soft ground; the sides fell in."

"But why?" Tom was insistent.

"General chiseling on the specifications. You see, Teller's father-in-law was the contractor. We used it *one* summer."

Mr. Jordan had been driving full

speed ahead during the conversation between the boys. Tom's voice was filled with respect when he spoke to Terry a few minutes later.

"Your dad sure can speak. He seems to get in a lot more meat than Teller and Green."

"Dad's a good speaker, Tom, and he uses a lot of the tricks of speaking that most speakers use."

"Such as—?" Tom was curious.

"Listen a minute, and I'll show you."

Tom turned his attention back to Mr. Jordan.

"Remember the land sales when the new bridge was put in? Wasn't it peculiar how much of the land taken by the city had been bought recently by Councilor Green and his friends? Sometimes we can't prove that thieves are thieves, but that is no reason to trust them with our valuables.

"There was the case of the new plumbing in the modernized schools. Remember how it leaked and leaked until an investigation was started? Do you remember the cost of the new plumbing? It's interesting, too, that an old friend of Mr. Teller's was the highest bidder on the job—but he got the contract. Don't forget how Mr. Teller bought himself a new house six months after the plumbing contract had been paid for! No one has solved that one to this day. Teller was a drifter, a man without a steady job, until he was elected City Councilor; then he bought a \$30,000 house without a mortgage.

"Remember what Judge Raymond

Willisie said about the situation: 'There may be no moral or legal dishonesty involved in this situation, but such an assumption stretches my credulity beyond any proper limits.'

Tom whispered to Terry, "There's an example. Your dad just used Judge Willisie as a testimonial for Teller's dishonesty."

"Of course," Terry replied. "The Judge is thoroughly respected. When he says something, people listen. They often accept what he says about a person."

"Or thing or idea," added Tom.



"And so the record goes in our Ward." Mr. Jordan paused and spoke very deliberately. "But such practices are not confined to our part of the city.

"The payrolls of every city department are padded beyond belief. The people of this city are losing thirty to forty cents out of every dollar they pay in taxes through waste, inefficiency, or outright robbery. I don't have to spell out the story for this group.

"Where do I stand in this cam-

paing? Right with the people in their desires for honest, frugal, careful government."

Terry nudged Tom. "Get it? He stands with the people. The people are right, so he must be right."

"Uh-huh." Tom grinned. "Anything that comes from the people must be O.K., because it comes from the people."

Mr. Jordan was saying, "As your representative on the City Council, I will oppose the letting of contracts to the highest bidders. Furthermore, I shall make it my business to tell the people the truth about the deals made in the City Council.

"I will do my level best to improve conditions in Ward Six — particularly for the children. You may be sure I will oppose every improvement offered us, unless we get it honestly. We don't want any more Ward Six swimming pools and new plumbing."

He turned to the newsmen in the front row. "There's a story for you gentlemen. Who killed the investigation of the swimming pool's collapse?"

"What a bunch of crooks are running this city!" Tom was dumbfounded. "Your dad sure is pouring it on."

"When this rally is over, Tom, we'll give you the real inside. We know it, but can't prove it. We hope to stir up enough of a noise to get a full-dress investigation of the whole city. Dad's going to wind this up in a moment."

Mr. Jordan was already winding it up. "This group should be aware that in the event I am elected, I have promised to deliver nothing to this

district. All I can promise is to be honest, to expose dishonesty in the government, and to do my level best for our district. There is no one among you who has any illusions about how tough an election campaign this is going to be. We'll have to work as we've never worked before to carry Ward Six against Teller or Green. Many thanks for your interest. You know where to reach me if it's necessary."

The applause was hardhanded and sober. Groups of men surrounded Mr. Jordan as the rally broke up.

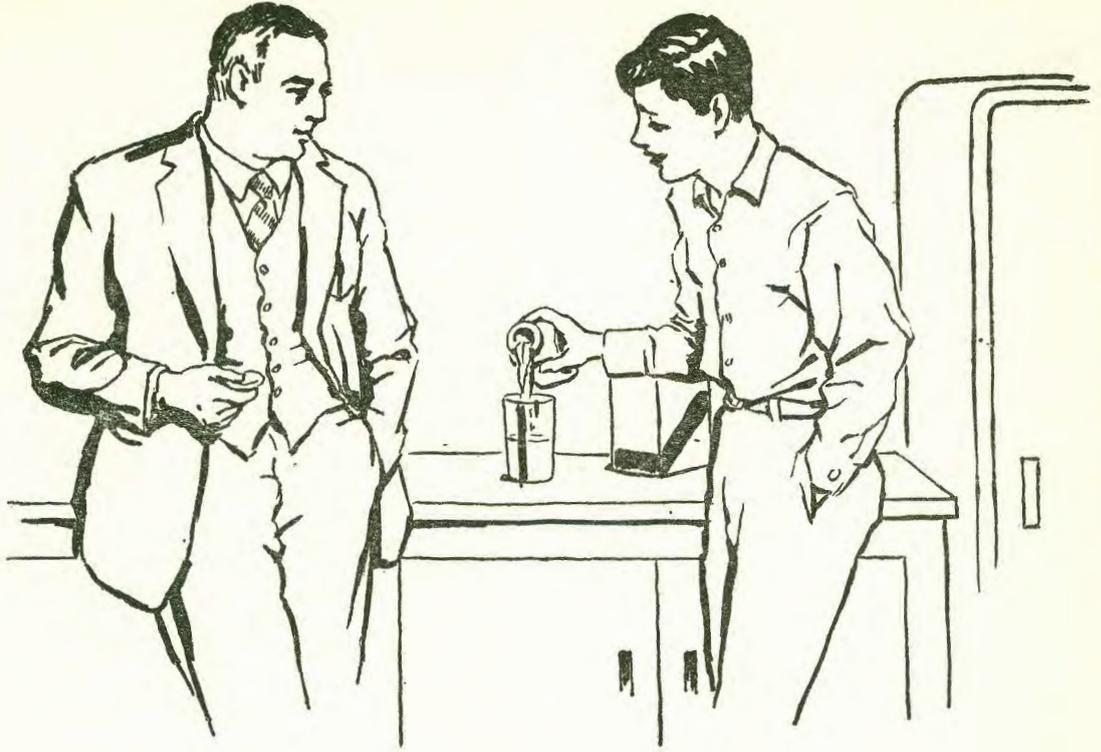
"We *must* get your dad elected, Terry." Tom's voice was hot with indignation. "When I think of those vultures living off the city — off us — I do a slow burn."

"Maybe we're optimistic to spend time and effort in the campaign, Tom, but some one's got to get things moving — make the first try."

When he answered, Tom spoke slowly. "Your dad isn't running just to help the Negroes, Terry. He's concerned first with the city and the rooking it's getting. Your dad's quite a guy, Terry, quite a guy. Sure, he wants to get things for the district, but not at any price, and he doesn't put his people first."

Terry was embarrassed by this praise of his father.

"I'm proud of him, Tom. He's slowly become our people's leader and spokesman. Let's go down to the platform and meet some of the people you'll be working with in the campaign."



That Is Only One Version

Tom stood on the sidewalk in front of his house and watched the Jordan's modest car out of sight. His thoughts were grim. What a setup those people faced! It would take a minor miracle to get Mr. Jordan elected. Well, he was going to do what he could to help.

Walking up to the house, Tom noticed a light in the library. His father probably was still working on some

financial reports. It was almost midnight.

Tom was just getting well into milk and crackers in the kitchen when Mr. Brent came to the door.

"Hello, Dad, some milk and crackers?"

Mr. Brent took a handful of crackers as Tom filled a glass for him. They settled down at the table.

"Isn't it a bit late for you to be get-

ting in, Son?"

"I've been to a political rally, Dad — stayed to talk with the candidate."

"That's what's on my mind, Tom. Is the candidate this Negro named Jordan?"

"That's right, Dad. Mr. Jordan is a very fine man."

Mr. Brent didn't miss the mild rebuke. He flushed, and his voice became crisp.

"So you are helping that fellow? I understand that you had a fight with some white men over him — that you took his side."

Tom thought, "Who has been filling him up with rubbish?" He said:

"Dad, I've been in no fight over Mr. Jordan or anything else lately. When was this fight supposed to have happened?"

"Last night in front of Slater's Hall. Cliff Horton was with you."

"Cliff and I were there, Dad. We distributed fliers for Mr. Jordan. There wasn't any fight. Do I look as if I'd been in a fight?" Tom extended his hands, knuckles up.

"No, you don't. What is this story about your brawling in the streets?"

Tom laughed. He told his father the story of the tough guy outside Slater's Hall, finishing by saying, "Now, Dad, suppose you'd been in my place, minding your own business. What would you have done with this tough character?"

Mr. Brent grinned slowly. "I'd probably have given him a good going over. You handled yourself well. How

do you suppose a talkfest like that got reported as a brawl in the streets?"

"On purpose, Dad." Tom was serious. "It's just another whispering campaign to discredit and undermine Mr. Jordan's attempt to get elected. There'll be others a lot worse than that about him."

Mr. Brent nodded. "That's probably true, Tom; but I think it would be very smart if you gave up this whole idea of helping Jordan."

"But why, Dad? He's far and away the best man."

"O.K., Son, O.K. Let's forget that part of the argument for a minute and look at something else. Let's be frank and face the brutal facts."

"Make 'em as brutal as you like, Dad."

"Son, I've nothing personal against the Negroes, but we can't just let them run wild."

"Run wild?" Tom questioned.

"Call it whatever you like, Tom, but the Negroes are aiming for political equality and job equality. And if they make gains in these fields, then they'll get social equality sooner or later. Maybe sooner."

"So what, Dad?"

"So just this: the Negro isn't as brainy as the white man. They are only a few generations from the jungle. They still need civilizing and educating."

Tom felt his control slipping. "Keep your shirt on," he told himself. "If you boil over, it will just make matters worse."

"Dad," he said quietly, "it seems to me that all my life I've been hearing you say, so often that I grew to hate the very words, 'Why don't you stop and think?' I don't want to be impertinent, but that's what I've been trying to do lately — think. Ever since Woody got in a jam, I've been trying to think things through. And I've been doing some reading, too, in the last few days on this Negro business."

Mr. Brent looked a bit surprised. Tom went on:

"Dad, there isn't any such thing as racial intelligence. An intelligence test merely tries to measure the intelligence you were born with, plus what has happened to you since birth. There is no way of measuring intelligence just as intelligence. The only way to measure it is to measure what you've done with it since birth.

"Now, if living conditions are poor and education is lacking, you're not going to do much with the equipment God gave you."

"Give me an example of that sort of thing, Tom." Mr. Brent was interested in spite of himself.

"Sure, Dad. The intelligence tests given to men in the Army in the First World War showed Negroes getting lower scores than Whites. But these tests also showed all Northern Negroes getting higher average scores than the Whites in Mississippi, Arkansas, and Kentucky. This was the result of poor education and bad living conditions for many people in those states. The Whites did badly in

areas where they lacked advantages, and so did the Negroes. These facts are all in a book Mr. Cline showed me. It's called 'Determinism in Education,' and it was written by William C. Bagley.

"The scientists Bagley tells about did something more, Dad. They made a study of genius — kids who were bright as all get out. They found kids with top scores among Negroes, Whites, and Orientals. And there are dummies in all these groups, too."

"Tom, how sound is all this dope?"

"Besides what Mr. Cline showed me, most of the things I've read came from the school library. Sometimes books are sent up to us from the main branch in the city library, though. One of your pals, Mr. Heller, is a trustee there. The books he allows to get in should be sound enough. Wait a sec until I get a book in my room."

He was back in a minute and put an opened book into his father's hands.

Mr. Brent read the page and the next one. He looked up and said with a near twinkle, "Well, that's only one version, Son."

Tom laughed. His father looked at him wide-eyed.

"Now, Dad, you're talking my language." Tom held out his hand.

"What's this for?" His father looked mystified, but he took Tom's hand.

"You just said there might be more than one version of a thing. You've heard a lot about Mr. Jordan's running for office from different people.

You have had one version of my 'brawling in the street.' Now let me give you the other version of Mr. Jordan's campaign for the city council."

Mr. Brent grinned slowly. "You've got me, Tommy. Let's hear the other side."

Tom noticed that his father listened to every word of the story about the political rallies: the charges and countercharges, the silent treatment given to Jordan. When Tom finished telling about Mr. Jordan's rally he said:

"Dad, I'm going to tell you some stuff that Terry Jordan told me. But you've got to sit on it until Mr. Jordan is ready to use it. Promise?"

"I won't say a word." Mr. Brent was thoughtful.

"Well, Mr. Jordan has pretty good circumstantial evidence about how the investigations of the swimming pool, the leaky plumbing, and the land takings were hushed up."

"How, Tom?"

"Well, there were twenty-three members of the grand jury that refused to indict Teller, and seven of them did some funny things. In less than a year, those seven had more than doubled their bank accounts, but they all had the same jobs at the same salaries. The foreman of the jury bought a new house. He was making \$2,900 a year before the jury met, and he is still making that.

"In the plumbing racket, the building inspector refused to admit that there was anything more wrong with the plumbing than ordinary wear.

The case was dropped before it ever reached the grand jury.

"The land takings for that new bridge over the Wegunsett smell worst of all. Green or his friends and relatives owned more than ninety-five per cent of the land approaches to the bridge. The city took the land, and it was bought for about thirteen times the figure that Green and his crowd gave for it."

"It was what?" Mr. Brent snapped.

"That's right, Dad. Thirteen times the purchase price. You can see the figures on Green's purchases over at the Registry of Deeds."

"You are sure this is straight stuff, Tom?"

"I have only Terry Jordan's story. There's another version, of course. But I don't think it's as reliable as Jordan's."

"I see," Mr. Brent said. "You certainly have done a lot of thinking."

"Thanks, Dad. Do you see why I think Mr. Jordan is the best man?"

His father looked at him for a long moment.

"One o'clock a.m. is about your sack time. Let *me* do some thinking, Tom. I'll see you at breakfast."

As Tom went off to bed he said to himself, "At least Dad listened, and he is going to think about it."

Breakfast the next morning shocked everyone. Mr. Brent arrived at the table empty-handed, and he didn't ask for the paper. He spoke a cheerful good morning to his family. In the middle of his eggs, he turned to Tom.

"Teller, Green, and their crowd are costing me money. Those investigations did close abruptly. The tax rate is out of sight. The city is in debt. The rotten streets slow up our business. Some plants pay off the building inspector so he won't make them follow a lot of stupid, ancient laws on buildings."

"Such as, Dad?"

"Such as doubling wood sills, beams, and supports over steel. I did a lot of thinking last night. If only twenty-five per cent of Jordan's charges are true, this city needs a good cleaning out.

"I also talked with Marvin Peters before I came down to breakfast. He confirmed about half of what you told me, Tom, and said it wouldn't surprise him a bit to learn that the rest of it was true."

"But what can you do about the awful things you told me about while you were shaving?" Mrs. Brent ventured.

"Do?" growled Mr. Brent. "Tom here is going to take me down and introduce me to Mr. Jordan."

"I'm what?" Tom half strangled with surprise.

"We're going down to see Jordan this morning." Suddenly Mr. Brent's face grew red. "Look here, Son, I'm no do-gooder and I'm not a reformer, but I still know enough to know when I've been had for a sucker — when my own son lays it on the line."

Woody looked up from his cereal. "What are you going to do at Jor-

dan's, Dad?"

"Do?" Mr. Brent was getting almost apoplectic. "Do you all think your father's a fool? I'm not allowing a few prejudices to stand in the way of helping to clean out this city. I'm going to tell Jordan I'm getting up a committee of McClintock businessmen to back him in this campaign."

He turned to Tom. "Don't get me wrong. This is a purely political move — the first one in an effort to clean up this city. We've sure been asleep."

Tom was goggling at his father, who went on:

"After all, there isn't much difference between running a business and running a city. The sooner the business group gets onto this idea, the sooner we clean house. And maybe businessmen might have some interests that push a little beyond business, if it comes to that."

He stood up. "Tom, you may work for Mr. Jordan week ends if you wish, but plug those books during the week."

He kissed his wife, rumbled Woody's hair, and turned to Tom.

"Let's go downtown and see what we can do to help Mr. Jordan."



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