

"I cain't do it."

She put the money behind her back.

"I cain't do it."

Outside the shop she stuffed the bills inside her blouse. She rode home on the loaded ice-truck.

She walked from the heart of the village out to the house, running the last of the way. The children were playing with chicken feathers in the sandy yard. Lige was lying awake in bed, smoking his pipe. He put his arm over his face in mock shame.

"Say it, Drenna," he grinned. "I got it comin'. Yore ol' man's disgraced ye, like I tol' you. But dog take it"—she sat on the bed, and he reached out his arms for her—"it was fine! Jest to turn thet ol' quart bottle topside down an' let 'er drip!"

She had to laugh at him. They wouldn't say any more about it. She had very nearly done as wrong as he. She had been wilder, crazier.

She was cooking dinner when the ice-truck lumbered up to the gate. Tim ran up the walk and into the house.

"Drenna! The Pondland bank's closed down! No more'n a good hour after you-all put yore money in. Tainter jest brought the word. Ev'ybody's caught."

He mopped his face and started away again.

"I got to go out back o' the Creek an' tell the Philbins."

At the gate he waved his hand to her and called:

"Tell Lige ev'ybody says they bet he'll wish he'd got twicet as drunk!"

He rattled off.

She watched the truck out of sight. She was not astonished. She had not been brought up to consider a bank the place for money. Her father had always said:

"Nothin' ain't safe ner sartin excusin' a iron pot o' gold or siller, put deep in a place where nobody else cain't find hit."

She went into the bedroom to Lige. He was getting his wracked body into clean clothes.

"I heard him! Oh my God, Drenna!"

Sweat rolled into his blood-shot eyes.

"I'll kill somebody fer this——"

He was unsteady on his feet. He picked up his shotgun from behind the head of the bed.

"Philbin's 'll go. Buckshot's too good fer thet bank preseedent."

"Lige," she said gently.

He stopped. His eyes softened.

"No need to take on so. Banks closes and you cain't blame nobody special."

She drew out the fifty dollars from her blouse. The stiff paper was warm from the skin of her breast. He stared. The money was real and tangible.

"Reckon I was jest led to keep it out in cash-money. It'll git us seed fer fall."

"But, Drenna—all thet other gone like as if 'twas stole——"

"Don't study that-a-way. I figger, we jest lost another bean-crop."

He replaced the shotgun slowly. He sat down on the side of the bed, his muscular hands closing and unclosing. He pondered. At last he nodded gravely.

"Jest done lost us another crop o' beans."

THE NAME OF LIFE

By Marjorie Allen Seiffert

THIS triumph, this delight,
This pause with panting breath
Is part of the wild, wounded flight,
And pain is part of it.

The pounding hoofs of the deer
Cry out: "Who followeth?"
Flight is more ecstasy than fear
At the very start of it,

For flight is the name of life,
And we have tasted death
Like the deer before the hunter's knife
Is plunged in the heart of it.

Simple Aveu

A STORY

By Nancy Hale

LISTEN, sweet," the girl said. She held the Tom Collins glass in both hands and turned it round and round between her palms. "You mustn't think I'm being awful."

"I don't think you're being awful," the man said.

"No, but I don't want you to think I'm just being promiscuous or anything. You know I'm not promiscuous, don't you?"

"Sure. I know you're not promiscuous."

"I mean, we agreed from way back that we'd tell each other if anything happened to change the way we felt."

"Sure, I know. I'm not kicking, am I?"

"No, I know you're not. But I just want you to know that I'm not just falling for this man."

"Well, what do you call it?"

She put her glass down and leaned across the table earnestly.

"Darling, don't be like that. I mean I don't want you to think I just went out and fell for him. I didn't want to fall for him."

"Sure, I know. He swept you off your feet."

"Darling, please don't talk like that. I wouldn't have fallen for him if I could have helped it."

"All right. Let's talk about something else."

"I just don't want this to end with you hating me."

"I don't hate you. Now let's talk about something else."

"All right, darling. What do you want to talk about?"

The man leaned back and put his feet up in the chair on the other side of the table.

"Hell," he said. "There's lots of things to talk about. Mussolini. Unemployment. The Spanish situation. All you have to do is read the papers."

"I wish you didn't hate me so."

"I told you I didn't hate you, for God's sake. I think you're fine. I'm just talking about something else. Can't I talk about something else?"

"Listen, why can't we go on being perfectly good friends?"

"Sure, why not? The three of us—you and me and your lovely friend. We'll all go on some swell parties together."

"I don't see why you have to hate him. He thinks you're fine."

"Tell him I'm so glad. Go out and buy him a bunch of geraniums with my compliments. Geraniums—that's for a pain in the neck."

"Oh, dear," the girl said. "I don't see why it has to end like this. I thought I was doing the right thing to tell you about it. Wouldn't you rather I told you about it and was perfectly square about it all than to just let it go on and on?"

"Sure I'm glad."

"I mean I could have just gone on letting you think I still loved you until things petered out by themselves."

"Nice picture, petering out."

"Well, just kind of rearranged themselves naturally."

"Yeah, I see."

"Oh, darling, please don't be so mad at me. I'm trying to do the best I can."

"What do you keep saying I'm mad at you for? I'm not mad at you."

"If you used to love me the way you said you did, I don't see how you could hate me so now."

"Oh, for God's sake. Let's have another drink."

"Do you think you'd better? You've had four."

The man held out his glass to the waiter. "Another Tom Collins."

"Please don't get drunk."

The man leaned toward her with elaborate attentiveness.

"Why not?"

"You know I hate to see you get drunk."

"You won't see me get drunk. You've never seen me drunk."