

VERSION ANGLAISE ET COURT THÈME

I. VERSION

Cal's discovery of his mother was more a verification than a new thing to him. For a long time he had known without details that the cloud was there. And his reaction was twofold. He had an almost pleasant sense of power in knowing, and he could evaluate actions and expressions, could interpret vague references, could even dip up and reorganise the past. But these did not compensate for the pain in his knowledge.

His body was rearranging itself towards manhood, and he was shaken by the veering winds of adolescence. One moment he was dedicated and pure and devoted; the next he wallowed in filth; and the next he grovelled in shame and emerged re-dedicated.

His discovery sharpened all of his emotions. It seemed to him that he was unique, having such a heritage. He could not quite believe Lee's words or conceive that other boys were going through the same thing.

The circus at Kate's remained with him. At one moment the memory inflamed his mind and body with pubescent fire, and the next moment nauseated him with revulsion and loathing.

He looked at his father more closely and saw perhaps more sadness and frustration in Adam than may have been there. And in Cal there grew up a passionate love for his father and a wish to protect him and to make up to him for the things he had suffered. In Cal's own sensitised mind that suffering was unbearable. He blundered into the bathroom while Adam was bathing and saw the ugly bullet scar and heard himself ask against his will, 'Father, what's that scar?'

Adam's fingers went up as though to conceal the scar. He said, 'It's an old wound, Cal. I was in the Indian campaigns. I'll tell you about it some time.'

Cal, watching Adam's face, had seen his mind leap into the past for a lie. Cal didn't hate the lie but the necessity for telling it. Cal lied for reasons of profit of one kind or another. To be driven to a lie seemed shameful to him. He wanted to shout, 'I know how you got it and it's all right.' But, of course, he did not. 'I'd like to hear about it,' he said.

Aron was caught in the roil of change too, but his impulses were more sluggish than Cal's. His body did not scream at him so shrilly. His passions took a religious direction. He decided on the ministry for his future. He attended all services in the Episcopal church, helped with the flowers and leaves at feast times, and spent many hours with the young and curly-

haired clergyman, Mr. Rolf. Aron's training in worldliness was gained from a young man of no experience, which gave him the ability for generalisation only the inexperienced can have.

Aron was confirmed in the Episcopal church and took his place in the choir on Sundays. Abra followed him. Her feminine mind knew that such things were necessary but unimportant.

It was natural that the convert Aron should work on Cal. First Aron prayed silently for Cal, but finally he approached him. He denounced Cal's Godlessness, demanded his reformation.

Cal might have tried to go along if his brother had been more clever. But Aron had reached a point of passionate purity that made everyone else foul. After a few lectures Cal found him unbearably smug and told him so. It was a relief to both of them when Aron abandoned his brother to eternal damnation.

John Steinbeck, *East of Eden* (1952).

II. THÈME

Martine estimait qu'ils auraient pu faire ménage ensemble mais ce n'était pas l'avis de Jacques qui n'abandonnait pas ses pratiques sanctificatrices et qui d'autre part venait de s'apercevoir qu'après tout il pourrait bien être amoureux de Dominique bien qu'il ne distinguât point encore très nettement si elle était pour lui de ce point de vue elle-même ou si elle ne représentait pour lui d'un point de vue voisin que cette espèce de but qu'il se proposait d'atteindre depuis sa rupture avec Camille et les débuts de sa carrière histrionique, carrière qu'il ne considérait pas comme telle mais qui n'était pour lui qu'un accident, le hasard, conséquences d'un sort, une écharde du destin, quelque chose qui n'avait rien à voir avec sa destinée essentielle laquelle ne saurait être autre ainsi pensait-il alors que l'équivalent de la préparation culinaire des lapins et des lièvres, écorchement, dépiautement, éjection des viscères, avec comme but dernier l'innocence absolue et gratuite de l'idiot privé de l'impatience coutumière à ceux de son espèce quant à la réalisation des besoins physiologiques élémentaires.

Raymond Queneau, *Loin de Rueil* (1944).

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