SARTORIS

WILLIAM FAULKNER

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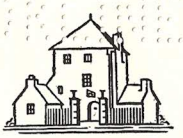
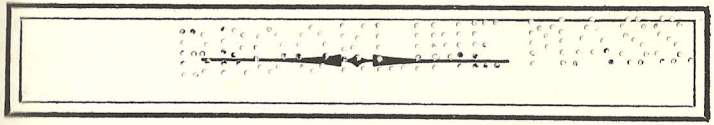


RANDOM HOUSE
New York



PART ONE

As USUAL, old man Falls had brought John Sartoris into the room with him, had walked the three miles in from the county Poor Farm, fetching, like an odor, like the clean dusty smell of his faded overalls, the spirit of the dead man into that room where the dead man's son sat and where the two of them, pauper and banker, would sit for a half an hour in the company of him who had passed beyond death and then returned.

Freed as he was of time and flesh, he was a far more palpable presence than either of the two old men who sat shouting periodically into one another's deafness while the business of the bank went forward in the next room and people in the adjoining stores on either side listened to the indistinguishable uproar of their voices coming through the walls. He was far more palpable than the two old men cemented by a common deafness to a dead period and so drawn thin by the slow attenuation of days; even now, although old man Falls had departed to tramp the three miles back to that which he now called home, John Sartoris seemed to loom still in the room, above and about his son, with his bearded, hawklike face, so that as old Bayard sat with his crossed feet propped against the corner of the cold

hearth, holding the pipe in his hand, it seemed to him that he could hear his father's breathing even, as though that other were so much more palpable than mere transiently articulated clay as to even penetrate into the uttermost citadel of silence in which his son lived.

The bowl of the pipe was ornately carved, and it was charred with much usage, and on the bit were the prints of his father's teeth, where he had left the very print of his ineradicable bones as though in enduring stone, like the creatures of that prehistoric day that were too grandly conceived and executed either to exist very long or to vanish utterly when dead from an earth shaped and furnished for punier things. Old Bayard sat holding the pipe in his hand.

"What are you giving it to me for, after all this time?" he had asked.

"Well, I reckon I've kept it long as Cunnel aimed for me to," old man Falls answered. "A po'house ain't no fitten place for anything of his'n, Bayard. And I'm gwine on ninety-fo' year old."

Later he gathered up his small parcels and left, but still old Bayard sat for some time, the pipe in his hand, rubbing the bowl slowly with his thumb. After a while John Sartoris departed also, withdrawn rather to that place where the peaceful dead contemplate their glamorous frustrations, and old Bayard rose and thrust the pipe into his pocket and took a cigar from the humidor on the mantel. As he struck the match the door across the room opened and a man wearing a green eyeshade entered and approached.

"Simon's here, Colonel," he said in a voice utterly without inflection.

"What?" old Bayard said across the match.

"Simon's come."

"Oh. All right."

The other turned and went out. Old Bayard flung the match into the grate and put the cigar in his pocket and closed his desk and took his black felt hat from the top of it and followed the other from the room. The man in the eyeshade and the cashier were busy beyond the grille. Old Bayard stalked on through the lobby and passed through the door with its drawn green shade and emerged upon the street, where Simon in a linen duster and an ancient top hat held the matched geldings glittering in the spring afternoon, at the curb. There was a hitching-post there, which old Bayard retained with a testy disregard of industrial progress, but Simon never used it. Until the door opened and Bayard emerged from behind the drawn shades bearing the words "Bank Closed" in cracked gold leaf Simon retained his seat, the reins in his left hand and the thong of the whip caught smartly back in his right and usually the unvarying and seemingly incombustible fragment of a cigar at a swaggering angle in his black face, talking to the shining team in a steady, lover-like flow. He spoiled horses. He admired Sartorises and he had for them a warmly protective tenderness, but he loved horses and beneath his hands the sorriest beast bloomed and acquired comeliness like a caressed woman, temperament like an opera star.

Old Bayard closed the door behind him and crossed to the carriage with that stiff erectness which, as a countryman once remarked, if he ever stumbled, would meet itself falling down. One or two passers and a merchant or so in the adjacent doorways saluted him with a sort of florid servility.

Nor did Simon dismount even then. With his race's fine feeling for potential theatrics he drew himself up

and arranged the limp folds of the duster, communicating by some means the histrionic moment to the horses so that they too flicked their glittering coats and tossed their leashed heads, and into Simon's wizened black face there came an expression indescribably majestical as he touched his whiphand to his hat-brim. Bayard got into the carriage and Simon clucked to the horses, and the onlookers, halted to admire the momentary drama of the departure, fell behind.

There was something different in Simon's air today, in the very shape of his back and the angle of his hat; he appeared to be bursting with something momentous and ill-contained. But he withheld it for the time being and at a dashing, restrained pace he drove among the tethered wagons about the square and swung into a broad street where what Bayard called paupers sped back and forth in automobiles; withheld it until the town was behind and they trotted on across burgeoning countryside cluttered still with gasoline-propelled paupers but at greater intervals, and his employer had settled back for the changing and peaceful monotony of the four-mile drive. Then Simon checked the team to a more sedate pace and turned his head.

His voice was not particularly robust nor resonant, yet somehow he could talk to old Bayard without difficulty. Others must shout in order to penetrate that wall of deafness within which Bayard lived, yet Simon could and did hold long, rambling conversations with him in that monotonous, rather high sing-song of his, particularly while in the carriage, the vibration of which helped Bayard's hearing a little.

"Mist' Bayard done got home," Simon remarked in a conversational tone.

Old Bayard sat perfectly and furiously still for a

moment while his heart went on, a little too fast and a little too lightly, cursing his grandson for a furious moment; sat so still that Simon looked back and found him gazing quietly out across the land. Simon raised his voice a little.

"He got offen de two o'clock train," he continued. "Jumped off de wrong side and lit out th'ough de woods. Section han' seed 'im. Only he ain't never come out home yit when I lef'. I thought he wuz wid you, maybe." Dust spun beneath the horses' feet and moiled in a sluggish cloud behind. Against the thickening hedgerows their shadow rushed in failing surges, with twinkling spokes and high-stepping legs in a futility of motion without progress. "Wouldn't even git off at de dee-po," Simon continued, with a kind of fretted exasperation, "de dee-po his own folks built. Jumpin' off de bline side like a hobo. He never even had on no sojer-clothes. Jes' a suit, like a drummer er somethin'. And when I 'members dem shiny boots and dem light yaller pants and dat 'ere double-jinted backin'-up strop he wo' home las' year . . ." He turned and looked back again. "Cunnel, you reckon dem foreign folks is done somethin' ter him?"

"What do you mean?" Bayard demanded. "Is he lame?"

"I mean, him sneakin' into his own town. Sneakin' into town on de ve'y railroad his own gran-pappy built, jes' like he wuz trash. Dem foreign folks done done somethin' ter him, er dey done sot dey po-lice atter him. I kep' a-tellin' him when he fust went off to dat 'ere foreign war him and Mr. Johnny neither never had no business at——"

"Drive on!" Bayard said. "Drive on, damn your black hide."

Simon clucked to the horses and shook them into a swifter gait. The road went on between hedgerows paralleling them with the terrific antics of their shadow. Beyond the bordering gums and locusts and massed vines fields new-broken or being broken spread on toward patches of woodland newly green and splashed with dogwood and judas trees. Behind laborious plows viscid shards of new-turned earth glinted damply in the sun.

This was upland country, lying in tilted slopes against the unbroken blue of the hills, but soon the road descended sheerly into a valley of good broad fields richly somnolent in the leveling afternoon, and presently they drove upon Bayard's own land and from time to time a plowman lifted his hand to the passing carriage. Then the road approached the railway and crossed it, and at last the house John Sartoris had built stood among locusts and oaks and Simon swung between iron gates and into a curving drive.

There was a bed of salvia where a Yankee patrol had halted on a day long ago. Simon brought up here with a flourish and Bayard descended and Simon clucked to the team again and rolled his cigar to a freer angle and took the road back to town.

Bayard stood for a while before his house. The white simplicity of it dreamed unbroken among ancient sunshot trees. Wistaria mounting one end of the veranda had bloomed and fallen, and a faint drift of shattered petals lay palely about the dark roots of it and about the roots of a rose trained on to the same frame. The rose was slowly but steadily choking the other vine. It bloomed now thickly with buds no bigger than a thumbnail and blown flowers no larger than silver dollars, myriad, odorless and unpickable.

But the house itself was still and serenely benignant and he mounted to the empty colonnaded veranda and crossed it and entered the hall. The house was silent, richly desolate of motion or any sound. He stopped in the middle of the hall.

"Bayard."

The stairway with its white spindles and red carpet mounted in a tall slender curve into upper gloom. From the center of the ceiling hung a chandelier of crystal prisms and shades, fitted originally for candles but since wired for electricity. To the right of the entrance, beside folding doors rolled back upon a dim room emanating an atmosphere of solemn and seldom violated stateliness and known as the parlor, stood a tall mirror filled with grave obscurity like a still pool of evening water. At the opposite end of the hall checkered sunlight fell in a long slant across the door, and from somewhere beyond the bar of sunlight a voice rose and fell in a steady preoccupied minor, like a chant. The words were not distinguishable, but Bayard could not hear them at all. He raised his voice again.

"Jenny."

The chanting ceased, and as he turned toward the stairs a tall mulatto woman appeared in the slanting sunlight at the back door and came sibilantly into the house. Her faded blue garment was pinned up about her knees and it was darkly and irregularly blotched with moisture. Beneath it her shanks were straight and lean as the legs of a tall bird, and her bare feet were pale coffee-splashes on the dark polished floor.

"Wuz you callin' somebody, Cunnel?" she said, raising her voice to penetrate his deafness. Bayard paused with his hand on the walnut newel post and looked down at the woman's pleasant yellow face.

"Has anybody come out here this afternoon?" he asked.

"Why, naw, suh," Elnora answered. "Dey ain't nobody here a-tall, dat I knows about. Miss Jenny done gone to her club-meetin' in town dis evenin'," she added. Bayard stood with his foot raised to the step, glowering at her.

"Why in hell can't you niggers tell me the truth about things?" he raged suddenly. "Or not tell me anything at all?"

"Lawd, Cunnel, who'd be comin' out here, lessen you er Miss Jenny sont 'um?" But he had gone on, tramping furiously up the stairs. The woman looked after him, then she raised her voice: "Does you want Isom, er anything?" He did not look back. Perhaps he had not heard her, and she stood and watched him out of sight. "He's gittin' old," she said to herself quietly, and she turned on her sibilant bare feet and returned down the hall whence she had come.

Bayard stopped again in the upper hall. The western windows were closed with lattice blinds, through which sunlight seeped in yellow dissolving bars that but served to increase the gloom. At the opposite end a tall door opened upon a shallow grilled balcony which offered the valley and the cradling semicircle of the eastern hills in panorama. On either side of this door was a narrow window set with leaded panes of varicolored glass that, with the bearer of them, constituted John Sartoris' mother's deathbed legacy to him, which his youngest sister had brought from Carolina in a straw-filled hamper in '69.

This was Virginia Du Pre, who came to them two years a wife and seven years a widow at thirty—a

slender woman with a delicate replica of the Sartoris nose and that expression of indomitable and utter weariness which all Southern women had learned to wear, bringing with her the clothing in which she stood and a wicker hamper filled with colored glass. It was she who told them of the manner of Bayard Sartoris' death prior to the second battle of Manassas. She had told the story many times since (at eighty she still told it, on occasions usually inopportune) and as she grew older the tale itself grew richer and richer, taking on a mellow splendor like wine; until what had been a hare-brained prank of two heedless and reckless boys wild with their own youth had become a gallant and finely tragical focal point to which the history of the race had been raised from out the old miasmic swamps of spiritual sloth by two angels valiantly fallen and strayed, altering the course of human events and purging the souls of men.

That Carolina Bayard had been rather a handful even for Sartorises. Not so much a black sheep as a nuisance, all of whose qualities were positive and unpredictable. His were merry blue eyes, and his rather long hair fell in tawny curls about his temples. His high-colored face wore that expression of frank and high-hearted dullness which you imagine Richard First as wearing before he went Crusading, and once he hunted a pack of fox hounds through a rustic tabernacle in which a Methodist revival was being held; and thirty minutes later (having caught the fox) he returned alone and rode his horse into the ensuing indignation meeting. In a spirit of fun, purely: he believed too firmly in Providence, as all his actions clearly showed, to have any religious convictions whatever. So

when Fort Moultrie fell and the governor refused to surrender it, the Sartorises were privately a little glad, for now Bayard would have something to do.

In Virginia, as an A.D.C. of Jeb Stuart's, he found plenty to do. As the A.D.C. rather, for though Stuart had a large military family, they were soldiers trying to win a war and needing sleep occasionally: Bayard Sartoris alone was willing, nay eager, to defer sleep to that time when monotony should return to the world. But this was a holiday.

The war was a godsend to Jeb Stuart also, and shortly thereafter, against the dark and bloody obscurity of the northern Virginia campaigns, Stuart at thirty and Bayard Sartoris at twenty-three stood briefly like two flaming stars garlanded with Fame's burgeoning laurel and the myrtle and roses of Death, incalculable and sudden as meteors in General Pope's troubled military sky; thrusting upon him like an unwilling garment that notoriety which his skill as a soldier could never have won him. And still in a spirit of pure fun: neither Jeb Stuart nor Bayard Sartoris, as their actions clearly showed, had any political convictions involved at all.

Aunt Jenny told the story first shortly after she came to them. It was Christmas time and they sat before a hickory fire in the rebuilt library—Aunt Jenny with her sad resolute face and John Sartoris bearded and hawk-like, and his three children and a guest, a Scottish engineer whom John Sartoris had met in Mexico in '45 and who was now helping him to build his railroad.

Work on the railroad had ceased for the holiday season and John Sartoris and his engineer had ridden in at dusk from the suspended railhead in the hills to the

north, and they now sat after supper in the firelight. The sun had set ruddily, leaving the air brittle as thin glass with frost, and presently Joby came in with an armful of firewood. He put a fresh billet on the fire, and in the dry air the flames crackled and snapped, popping in fading embers outward upon the hearth.

"Chris'mus!" Joby exclaimed, with the grave and simple pleasure of his race, prodding at the blazing logs with the Yankee musket barrel which stood in the chimney corner until sparks swirled upward into the dark maw of the chimney in wild golden veils. "Y'ear dat, chilluns?" John Sartoris' eldest daughter was twenty-two and would be married in June, Bayard was twenty, and the younger girl seventeen; and so Aunt Jenny, for all her widowhood, was one of the chilluns too, to Joby. Then he replaced the musket barrel in its niche and fired a long pine sliver at the hearth in order to light the candles. But Aunt Jenny stopped him, and he was gone—a shambling figure in an old formal coat too large for him, stooped and gray with age; and Aunt Jenny, speaking always of Jeb Stuart as Mister Stuart, told her story.

It had to do with an April evening, and coffee. Or the lack of it, rather; and Stuart's military family sat in the scented darkness beneath a new moon, talking of ladies and dead pleasures and thinking of home. Away in the darkness horses moved invisibly with restful sounds, and bivouac fires sank to glowing points like spent fireflies, and somewhere neither near nor far, the General's body servant touched a guitar in lingering, random chords. Thus they sat in the poignance of spring and youth's immemorial sadness, forgetting travail and glory, remembering instead other Virginian evenings with fiddles among the myriad candles and

slender grave measures picked out with light laughter and lighter feet, thinking "When will this be again? Shall I make one?"—until they had talked themselves into a state of savage nostalgia and words grew shorter and shorter and less and less frequent. Then the General roused himself and brought them back by speaking of coffee, or its lack.

This talk of coffee began to end a short time later with a ride along midnight roads and then through woods black as pitch, where horses went at a walk and riders rode with saber or musket at arm's length before them lest they be swept from saddle by invisible boughs, and continued until the forest thinned with dawn-ghosts and the party of twenty was well inside the Federal lines. Then the dawn accomplished itself yet more and all efforts toward concealment were discarded and they galloped again and crashed through astonished picket parties returning peacefully to camp, and fatigue parties setting forth with picks and axes and shovels in the golden sunrise, and swept yelling up the knoll where General Pope and his staff sat at breakfast *al fresco*.

Two men captured a fat staff-major. The others pursued the fleeing breakfasters for a short distance into the sanctuary of the woods, but most of them rushed on to the General's private commissary tent and emerged presently from the cyclonic demolition of it, bearing plunder. Stuart and the three officers with him halted their dancing mounts at the table and one of them swept up a huge blackened coffee-pot and tendered it to the General, and while the enemy shouted and fired muskets among the trees, they toasted one another in sugarless and creamless scalding coffee, as with a loving-cup.

"General Pope, sir," Stuart said, bowing to the captured officer. He drank and extended the pot.

"I'll drink it, sir," the major replied. "And thank God he is not here to respond in person."

"I had remarked that he appeared to leave hurriedly," Stuart said. "A prior engagement, perhaps?"

"Yes, sir. With General Halleck," the major agreed drily. "I am sorry we have him for an opponent instead of Lee."

"So am I, sir," Stuart answered. "I like General Pope in a war." Bugles were shrilling among the trees far and near, sending the alarm in flying echoes from brigade to brigade lying about the forest, and drums were beating wildly to arms and erratic bursts of musketry surged and trickled along the scattered outposts like the dry clatter of an opening fan, for the name Stuart speeding from picket to picket had peopled the blossoming peaceful woods with gray phantoms.

Stuart turned in his saddle and his men came up and sat their horses and watched him alertly, their spare eager faces like mirrors reflecting their leader's constant consuming flame. Then from the flank there came something like a concerted volley, striking the coffee-pot from Bayard Sartoris' hand and clipping and snapping viciously among the dappled branches above their heads.

"Be pleased to mount, sir," Stuart said to the captive major, and though his tone was exquisitely courteous, all levity was gone from it. "Captain Wylie, you have the heaviest mount: will you——?" The Captain freed his stirrup and hauled the prisoner up behind him. "Forward," the General said and whirled, roweling his bay, and with the thunderous coördination of a single centaur they swept down the knoll and

crashed into the forest at the point from which the volley had come, before it could be repeated. Blue-clad shapes plunged scattering before and beneath them, and they rushed on among trees vicious with Miniés like wasps. Stuart now carried his plumed hat in his hand, and his long tawny locks, tossing to the rhythm of his speed, appeared as gallant flames smoking with the wild and self-consuming splendor of his daring.

Behind them and on one flank muskets still banged and popped at their flashing phantoms, and from brigade to brigade lying spaced about the jocund forest bugles shrilled their importunate alarms. Stuart bore gradually to the left, bringing all the uproar into his rear. The country became more open and they swung into column at the gallop. The captured major bounced and jolted behind Captain Wylie, and the General reined back beside the gallant black thundering along beneath its double load.

"I am distressed to inconvenience you thus, sir," he began with his exquisite courtesy. "If you will indicate the general location of your nearest horse picket, I shall be most happy to capture a mount for you."

"Thank you, General," the major replied. "But majors can be replaced much easier than horses. I shall not trouble you."

"Just as you wish, sir," Stuart agreed stiffly. He spurred on to the head of the column again. They now galloped along a faint trace that was once a road. It wound on between vernal palisades of undergrowth and they followed it at a rapid but controlled gait and debouched suddenly into a glade, and a squadron of Yankee cavalry reined back in amazement, then hurled forward again.

Without faltering Stuart whirled his party and

plunged back into the forest. Pistol balls were thinly about their heads, and the flat tossing reports were trivial as snapping twigs above the converging thunder of hooves. Stuart swerved from the road and they crashed headlong through undergrowth. The Federal horse came yelling behind them and Stuart led his party in a tight circle and halted it panting in a dense swampy copse, and they heard the pursuit sweep past.

They pushed on and regained the road and retraced their former course, silently and utterly alert. To the left the sound of the immediate pursuit crashed on, dying away. Then they cantered again. Presently the woods thickened and forced them to a trot, then a walk. Although there was no more firing and the bugles too had ceased, into the silence, above the strong and rapid breathing of the horses and the sound of their own hearts in their ears, was a nameless something—a tenseness seeping from tree to tree like an invisible mist, filling the dewy morning woods with portent although birds flashed swooping from tree to tree, unaware or disregardful of it.

A gleam of white through the trees ahead; Stuart raised his hand and they halted and sat their horses, watching him quietly and holding their breath with listening. Then he advanced again and broke through the undergrowth into another glade. They followed, and before them stood the knoll with the deserted breakfast table and the rifled commissary tent. They trotted warily across and halted at the table while the General scribbled hastily upon a scrap of paper. The glade lay quiet and empty of threat beneath the mounting golden day; laked in it lay a deep and abiding peace like golden wine, yet beneath this solitude and permeating

it, was that nameless and waiting portent, patient and brooding and sinister.

"Your sword, sir," Stuart commanded. The prisoner removed his weapon and Stuart took it and pinned his scribbled note to the table top. The note read: "General Stuart's compliments to General Pope, and he is sorry to have missed him again. He will call again tomorrow."

Stuart gathered up his reins. "Forward," he said.

They descended the knoll and crossed the empty glade and at an easy canter they took the road they had traversed that dawn; the road that led home. Stuart glanced back at his captive, at the gallant black with its double burden. "If you will direct us to your nearest cavalry picket, I will provide you with a proper mount," he offered again.

"Will General Stuart, cavalry leader and General Lee's eyes, jeopardize his safety and that of his men and his cause in order to provide for the temporary comfort of a minor prisoner to his sword?" the major said. "This is not bravery: it is the rashness of a heedless and headstrong boy. There are fifteen thousand men within a radius of two miles of this point; even General Stuart cannot conquer that many, though they are Yankees, single-handed."

"Not for the prisoner, sir," Stuart replied haughtily, "but for the officer suffering the fortune of war. No gentleman would do less."

"No gentleman has any business in this war," the major retorted. "There is no place for him here. He is an anachronism, like anchovies. At least General Stuart did not capture our anchovies," he added tauntingly. "Perhaps he will send Lee for them in person."

"Anchovies," repeated Bayard Sartoris, who galloped near by, and he whirled his horse. Stuart shouted

at him, but Sartoris lifted his reckless stubborn hand and flashed on; and as the General would have turned to follow, a Yankee picket fired his piece from the roadside and dashed into the woods, shouting the alarm. Immediately other muskets exploded on all sides, and from the forest to the right came the sound of a considerable body put suddenly into motion, and behind them in the direction of the invisible knoll, a volley crashed. A third officer spurred up and caught Stuart's bridle.

"Sir, sir!" he exclaimed. "What would you do?"

Stuart held his mount rearing, and another volley rang behind them, dribbling off into single scattered reports, crashed again, and the noise to the right swelled nearer. "Let go, Alan," Stuart said. "He is my friend."

But the other clung to the bridle. "It is too late," he cried. "Sartoris can only be killed; you would be captured."

"Forward, sir, I beg," the captive major added. "What is one man to a renewed belief in mankind?"

"Think of Lee, for God's sake, General!" the aide implored. "Forward!" he shouted to the troop, spurring his own mount and dragging the General's onward as a body of Federal horse broke from the woods behind them.

"And so," Aunt Jenny finished, "Mister Stuart went on and Bayard rode back after those anchovies, with all Pope's army shooting at him. He rode yelling, 'Yaaaiiiiih, Yaaaiiiih, come on, boys!' right up the knoll and jumped his horse over the breakfast table and rode it into the wrecked commissary tent, and a cook who was hidden under the mess stuck his arm out and shot Bayard in the back with a derringer.

"Mister Stuart fought his way out and got back

home without losing but two men. He always spoke well of Bayard. He said he was a good officer and a fine cavalryman, but that he was too reckless."

They sat quietly for a time in the firelight. The flames leaped and popped on the hearth and sparks soared in wild swirling plumes up the chimney, and Bayard Sartoris' brief career swept like a shooting star across the dark plain of their mutual remembering and suffering, lighting it with a transient glare like a soundless thunder-clap, leaving a sort of radiance when it died. The guest, the Scottish engineer, had sat quietly, listening. After a time he spoke.

"When he rode back, he was no actually certain there were anchovies, was he?"

"The Yankee major said there were," Aunt Jenny replied.

"Ay." The Scotsman pondered again. "And did Muster Stuart return next day, as he said in's note?"

"He went back that afternoon," Aunt Jenny answered, "looking for Bayard." Ashes soft as rosy feathers shaled glowing on to the hearth and faded to the softest gray. John Sartoris leaned forward into the firelight and punched at the blazing logs with the Yankee musket-barrel.

"That was the goddamnedest army the world ever saw, I reckon," he said.

"Yes," Aunt Jenny agreed. "And Bayard was the goddamnedest man in it."

"Yes," John Sartoris admitted soberly, "Bayard was wild."

The Scotsman spoke again. "This Muster Stuart, who said your brother was reckless—who was he?"

"He was the cavalry general Jeb Stuart," Aunt Jenny answered. She brooded for a while upon the fire;

her pale indomitable face held for a moment a tranquil tenderness. "He had a strange sense of humor," she said. "Nothing ever seemed quite so diverting to him as General Pope in his night-shirt." She dreamed once more on some far-away place beyond the rosy battlements of the embers. "Poor man," she said; then she said quietly, "I danced a valse with him in Baltimore in '58," and her voice was proud and still as banners in the dust.

But the door was closed now, and what light passed through the colored panes was richly solemn. To Bayard's left was his grandson's room, the room in which his grandson's wife and her child had died last October. He stood beside this door for a moment, then he opened it quietly. The blinds were closed and the room had that breathless tranquillity of unoccupation, and he closed the door and tramped on with that heavy-footed obliviousness of the deaf and entered his own bedroom and crashed the door behind him, as was his way of shutting a door.

He sat down and removed his shoes, the shoes that were made to his measure twice a year by a St. Louis house, and in his stockings he went to the window and looked down upon his saddled mare tethered to a mulberry tree in the back yard and a negro lad lean as a hound, richly static beside it. From the kitchen, invisible from this window, Elnora's endless minor ebbed and flowed, unheard by Bayard, upon the lazy scene.

He crossed to the closet and drew out a pair of scarred riding-boots and stamped into them and took a cigar from the humidor on his night table, and he stood for a time with the cold cigar between his teeth. Through the cloth of his pocket his hand had touched

the pipe there, and he took it out and looked at it again, and it seemed to him that he could still hear old man Falls' voice in roaring recapitulation: "Cunnel was settin' thar in a cheer, his sock feet propped on the po'ch railin', smokin' this hyer very pipe. Old Louvinia was settin' on the steps, shellin' a bowl of peas fer supper. And a feller was glad to git even peas sometimes, in them days. And you was settin' back again' the post. They wa'n't nobody else thar 'cep' you' aunt, the one 'fo' Miss Jenny come. Cunnel had sont them two gals to Memphis to yo' gran'pappy when he fust went to Virginny with that 'ere regiment that turnt right around and voted him outen the colonelcy. Voted 'im out because he wouldn't be Tom, Dick and Harry with ever' skulkin' camp-robber that come along with a salvaged muskit and claimed to be a sojer. You was about half-grown then, I reckon. How old was you then, Bayard?"

"Fourteen."

"Hey?"

"Fourteen. Do I have to tell you that every time you tell me this damn story?"

"And thar you was a-settin' when they turned in at the gate and come trottin' up the carriage drive.

"Old Louvinia drapped the bowl of peas and let out one squawk, but Cunnel shet her up and told her to run and git his boots and pistols and have 'em ready at the back do', and you lit out fer the barn to saddle that stallion. And when them Yankees rid up and stopped —they stopped right whar that flower-bed is now— they wa'n't nobody in sight but Cunnel, a-settin' thar like he never even heerd tell of no Yankees.

"The Yankees they sot thar on the hosses, talkin' 'mongst theyselves if this was the right house or not,

and Cunnel settin' thar with his sock feet on the railin', gawkin' at 'em like a hill-billy. The Yankee officer he tole one man to ride back to the barn and look fer that 'ere stallion, then he says to Cunnel:

" 'Say, Johnny, whar do the rebel John Sartoris live?'

" 'Lives down the road a piece,' Cunnel says, not battin' a eye even. ' 'Bout two mile,' he says. 'But you won't find 'im now. He's away fightin' the Yanks agin.'

" 'Well, I reckon you better come and show us the way, anyhow,' the Yankee officer says.

"So Cunnel he got up slow and tole 'em to let 'im git his shoes and walkin'-stick, and limped into the house, leavin' 'em settin' thar waitin'.

"Soon's he was out of sight he run. Old Louvinia was waitin' at the back do' with his coat and boots and pistols and a snack of cawn bread. That 'ere other Yankee had rid into the barn, and Cunnel taken the things from Louvinia and wropped 'em up in the coat and started acrost the back yard like he was jest takin' a walk. 'Bout that time the Yankee come to the barn do'.

" 'They ain't no stock hyer a-tall,' the Yank says.

" 'I reckon not,' Cunnel says. 'Cap'm says fer you to come on back,' he says, goin' on. He could feel that 'ere Yank a-watchin' him, lookin' right 'twixt his shoulder blades whar the bullet would hit. Cunnel says that was the hardest thing he ever done in his life, walkin' on thar acrost that lot with his back to'a'ds that Yankee without breakin' into a run. He was aimin' to'a'ds the corner of the barn, where he could put the house between 'em, and Cunnel says hit seemed like he'd been walkin' a year without gittin' no closer and not darin' to look back. Cunnel says he wa'n't even

thinkin' of nothin' 'cep' he was glad the gals wa'n't at home. He says he never give a thought to you' aunt back thar in the house, because he says she was a full-blood Sartoris and she was a match fer any jest a dozen Yankees.

"Then the Yank hollered at him, but Cunnel kep' right on, not lookin' back nor nothin'. Then the Yank hollered agin and Cunnel says he could hyear the hoss movin' and he decided hit was time to stir his shanks. He made the corner of the barn jest as the Yank shot the fust time, and by the time the Yank got to the corner, he was in the hawg-lot, tearin' through the jimson weeds to'a'ds the creek whar you was waitin' with the stallion hid in the willers.

"And thar you was a-standin', holdin' the hoss, and that 'ere Yankee patrol yellin' up behind, until Cunnel got his boots on. And then he tole you to tell yo' aunt he wouldn't be home fer supper."

"But what are you giving it to me for, after all this time?" he had asked, fingering the pipe, and old man Falls had said a poorhouse was no fit place for it.

"A thing he toted in his pocket and got enjoyment outen, in them days. Hit 'ud be different, I reckon, while we was a-buildin' the railroad. He said often enough in them days we was all goin' to be in the po'-house by Sat'd'y night. Only I beat him, thar. I got thar fo' he did. Or the cemetery he meant mo' likely, him ridin' up and down the survey with a saddle-bag of money night and day, keepin' jest one cross tie ahead of the po'house, like he said. That 'us when hit changed. When he had to start killin' folks. Them two cyarpet-baggers stirrin' up niggers, that he walked right into the room whar they was a-settin' behind a

table with they pistols layin' on the table, and that robber and that other feller he kilt, all with that same dang der'nger. When a feller has to start killin' folks, he 'most always has to keep on killin' 'em. And when he does, he's already dead hisself."

It showed on John Sartoris' brow, the dark shadow of fatality and doom, that night when he sat beneath the candles in the dining-room and turned a wineglass in his fingers while he talked to his son. The railroad was finished, and that day he had been elected to the state legislature after a hard and bitter fight, and doom lay on his brow, and weariness.

"And so," he said, "Redlaw'll kill me tomorrow, for I shall be unarmed. I'm tired of killing men. . . . Pass the wine, Bayard."

And the next day he was dead, whereupon, as though he had but waited for that to release him of the clumsy cluttering of bones and breath, by losing the frustration of his own flesh he could now stiffen and shape that which sprang from him into the fatal semblance of his dream; to be evoked like a genie or a deity by an illiterate old man's tedious reminiscing or by a charred pipe from which even the rank smell of burnt tobacco had long since faded away.

Old Bayard roused himself and went and laid the pipe on his chest of drawers. Then he quitted the room and tramped heavily down the stairs and out through the back.

The negro lad waked easily and untethered the mare and held the stirrup. Old Bayard mounted and remembered the cigar at last and fired it. The negro opened the gate into the lot and trotted on ahead and opened the second gate and let the rider into the field beyond.

Bayard rode on, trailing his pungent smoke. From somewhere a ticked setter came up and fell in at the mare's heels.

Elnore stood barelegged on the kitchen floor and soused her mop into the pail and thumped it on the floor again.

Sinner riz fum de moaner's bench,
Sinner jump to de penance bench;
When de preacher ax 'im whut de reason why,
Say, "Preacher got de women jes' de same ez I."
Oh, Lawd, oh, Lawd!
Dat's whut de matter wid de church today.

2

Simon's destination was a huge brick house set well up to the street. The lot had been the site of a fine old colonial house which stood among magnolias and oaks and flowering shrubs. But the house had burned, and some of the trees had been felled to make room for an architectural garbling so imposingly terrific as to possess a kind of majesty. It was a monument to the frugality (and the mausoleum of the social aspirations of his women) of a hill-man who had moved in from a small settlement called Frenchman's Bend and who, as Miss Jenny Du Pre put it, had built the handsomest house in Frenchman's Bend on the most beautiful lot in Jefferson. The hill-man had stuck it out for two years, during which his women-folk sat on the veranda all morning in lace-trimmed "boudoir caps" and spent the afternoons in colored silk, riding about town in a rubber-tired surrey; then the hill-man sold his house to a newcomer to the town and took his women back to the country and doubtless set them to work again.

A number of motor cars ranked along the curb lent a formally festive air to the place, and Simon with his tilted cigar stub wheeled up and drew rein and indulged in a brief, colorful altercation with a negro sitting at the wheel of a car parked before the hitching-block. "Don't block off no Sartoris ca'iage, black boy," Simon concluded, when the other had moved the motor and permitted him access to the post. "Block off de commonality, ef you wants, but don't intervoke no equipage waitin' on Cunnel er Miss Jenny. Dey won't stan' fer it."

He descended and tethered the horses, and his spirit mollified by the rebuke administered and laved with the beatitude of having gained his own way, Simon paused and examined the motor car with curiosity and no little superciliousness tinged faintly with respectful envy, and spoke affably with its conductor. But not for long, for Simon had sisters in the Lord in this kitchen, and presently he let himself into the yard and followed the gravel driveway around to the back. He could hear the party going on as he passed beneath the windows—that sustained, unintelligible gabbling with which white ladies could surround themselves without effort and which they seemed to consider a necessary (or unavoidable) adjunct to having a good time. The fact that it was a card-party would have seemed neither paradoxical nor astonishing to Simon, for time and much absorbing experience had taught him a fine tolerance of white folks' vagaries and for those of ladies of any color.

The hill-man had built his house so close to the street that the greater part of the original lawn with its fine old trees lay behind it. There were once crape myrtle and syringa and lilac and jasmine bushes without order,