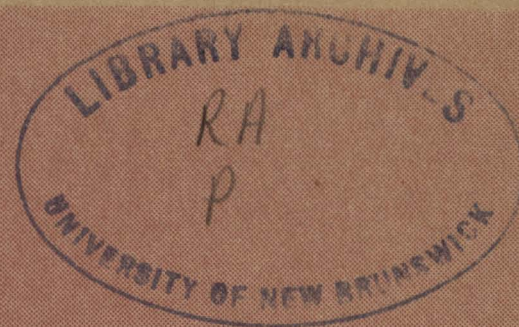


PREVIEW



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P.K.PAGE N.SHAW B.RUDDICK P.ANDERSON F.R.SCOTT

MONTREAL, CANADA

MARCH, 1943

INCIDENT WITH A FACTUAL BASIS ...

NEUFVILLE SHAW

The streetcar rattled its crowded cargo as an aging dinosaur might shake a mess of indigestible peas in its stomach. Eyes clung to a bar just able to hold his newspaper before his face uneasily aware that it was scraping the neck of the small thin man who stood in front of him,

"Guts," he commented, "Guts, that's what they got."

The tram swung around a corner and a small pellet of energetic people pushed itself in at the front door where the conductor was. A tall reedy woman wedged herself into the seige of Stalingrad, crumbling it against his face and he had to put the war along with sundry Parliamentary bickerings, an announcement that an albatross had landed on Captain Eddie Richenbacker's head and an episcopal warning as to the machinations of the provincial Rotary into his pocket.

He began studying the familiar facades of the houses as they teetered across the frame of his vision. "Laundry. Whorehouse. Garage. Doctor. If there's one more doctor before we make Sherbrooke, I get a million dollars." None. He fell to examining the people about him.

The small thin man grabbed a seat and Eyes shared the general wave of indignation which was at its hottest behind the spectacles of the thin woman who had pushed the second world war against his nose.

His attention swung away. "Nice girl," he registered. "Auburn hair, real breasts, hot lips, too. Bit pale."

The girl was clutching the overhead bar with both hands.

He edged nearer so as to get a better look at her. "Wouldn't mind---". He was trying to catch her eyes when suddenly she collapsed falling across the knees of a young business man sitting in front of her.

Eyes looked at her sprawling while the young clerk with a surprised and indignant face tried to pull his paper from under her body.

"Fainted," Eyes diagnosed confidently.

The girl's purse fell to the floor and its owner began to slide down after it. The man made a quick grab at her and sat staring in a frightened fashion at the people about him with the large doll form on his knees, and the crumpled newspaper in his hand.

Everybody looked gravely back at him. With an almost simultaneous click a series of papers snapped down revealing a row of interested faces. A mood of polite concern gripped the occupants of the rear end of the tram car.

The thin reedy woman broke this courteous attention by pushing her way towards the frightened man. "Well, get up!" she ordered.

"Of course." The young man leapt to his feet and, as if upon a cue, the four people adjacent to him stood up leaving a stretch of seat which could serve as a bed. They laid the girl out on it and Eyes, stooping, picked up the purse and carefully placed it on the fair one's stomach.

The older woman bent over her then glanced up at the silent watching faces. "Tell the conductor to stop," she said.

The thin little fellow turned to the man standing in front of him and tapped him on the shoulder. The other turned around angrily.

"Tell the conductor to stop."

The startled features relaxed. "Why?" he asked.

"She's fainted," the little man said pointing.

"Oh, O.K." The second man spoke to the man in front of him but somewhere in the upper reaches of the car the message was lost and the vehicle rattled stolidly on.

Eyes wondered what they would do if the car did stop.

The elderly woman bent over the pale recumbent girl rubbing her hands. "Can't somebody do something?" she asked nervously.

The people stared back at her silently, sympathetically.

A small girl with a sallow complexion, a bony serious face and great gleaming spectacles elbowed her way through the crowd. "Madame," she said - the passengers leant forward with a puzzled expression on their interested countenances - "Madame, je pense qu'il ya un médecin à la prochaine arrêté."

The amateur nurse with a gesture of infinite yet uncomprehending tenderness bent over her and patted her on the shoulder. "Yes," she said, "Yes."

The little girl looked up at her for an instant then popped back behind the curtain of shielding bodies from behind which she had appeared.

The lady looked after her smiling gently until somebody nudged her and the general focus of attention returned to stricken beauty. The girl was moving slowly and uttering a series of faint moans. Awkwardly she sat up rubbing her forehead.

" "It's all right, dear," the woman said, "You must have felt sick and fainted."

The girl looked up at her with blank gray eyes.

"You've fainted. It's all right now, dear."

The girl opened her mouth making an effort to speak. Eyes leant forward straining his ears, hoping. She tried again and this time he could just make out the furry words. "I feel sick," she said.

"What did she say?" the little man bruskiy poked Eyes.

"She feels sick," Eyes replied.

"Oh." The little man nodded as if a thought had been confirmed and resumed his pose of interested detachment.

The girl stood up shakily and somebody pushed a button. The streetcar jerked to a stop and the elderly nurse helped her out at the door.

"You'll be all right now, dear. A breath of fresh air will fix you up."

Eyes looked after her smiling compassionately, trying to radiate a warmth of tenderness and secret understanding.

The five people who had given up their seats jumped back and one by one the newspapers snapped up. A kind of satisfied silence settled over the streetcar and Eyes, after a struggle, managed to get out his newspaper.

THE CONQUEROR ...

BRUCE RUDDICK

Leaving the details to the Big Boys, still at a smart one twenty to the minute he turned the corner and discovering the number plumbed the subterranean entrance to his castle. The woman he embraced at the door compared favourably with a three-year memory and last month's jaunty little English broad. He patted the backside of a two-year old alien and colicky in his arms. Startled by the older boy's carious grin, was immediately sorry for them and for himself, looked at the unknown walls and for a moment sensed a wild enemy no bayonet stills. Took up with words while he sat and plucked the city's scraps of welcome off his coat. Folded his uniform and resumed his life.

Through the window the street-light stormed
 while he lay wakened by a stranger's cry.
 Heard rats scamper in corner and
 hurled the door-knob memento from Berlin.
 Then, dreamed of morning when stalwart
 he stalked, burdened with badge, beloved.
 Later, hounds the streets, his old inherited stand,
 loved by the world like a whore with varicose legs.

CANDIDA ...

PATRICK ANDERSON

What are you?
 I am a Canadian.
 What is a Canadian?
 It is one and none, pin and pine, snow and slow.
 Are you a dominion of them?
 Yessir! Most loyal and empirical, and subjects of the
 King's most gratuitous modesty.
 What are you called?
 I am cold.
 Tell me of your country, name me your table-lands.
 I am St. Lawrence's leman, Man Manitoba, Rose of
 Ontario, wheatgerm.
 What do you do then?
 Lumbering is what I do and whiteining is what
 I wheat. Rivers are where I run but I am full
 of hills and sadness,
 Are you lonely?
 Being a colony I am wombsick and I am moany
 provinces of it.
 What do you dance?
 Distance, shuddering at the north, reeling away.
 Have you a railway?
 Transports of it. It leads me on, carries me off,
 frightens me. It begins with a syren and ends
 with a sigh.
 You have many fine views, do you not?
 Oh yes. Pity as a puncture.
 And hotels, I suppose?
 There are shadows on every lake, bottlelements and
 barbeques of them.
 Have you a history?
 Let us hurry.
 What are your problems?
 The Universal Catlick of Summer Saliva, Copitallism,
 the Royal Mind- It Please. Also
 there are the Rookie Mountains.
 What country lies adjacent to you?
 Amerryca- cahouts of it- the stores and strips.
 But you are a nation?
 A notion of one, as the sighing goes.
 And you are growing stronger day by die?
 I heap so.

Well, I thank you for all you information.
It was nothing as far as I snow.
Goodbye.
Fearwell.
See you again some time.
Props.
O.K.
O Canada!

FLUX ...

F.R. SCOTT

Under the constant impact, the swift response.
We leap from crumbling footholds, gulfs below,
Or like the Arctic male seeking a pole
Traverse the sea-lanes when the floes touch.
Trained to the tram-line and the office walk
The week-end outing and the game of bridge
Little avails us now the trim routine.

Refugees in the mind load their loved bric-a-brac
Glass Gew-gaws and their little tea-set faiths
On the piled ox-cart of tradition; make for the rear.
This self-imprisonment obstructs the roads
And only the mobile heart allows escape.

Now from each corner of their settled ways
Egos draw to the mass, millions move.
Robot men swarm in their steel shells
Over the crust of seven continents.
There's naught for me and you, only for us.

Strip for this venture forth, my pretty man.
Props and property are caving in.
The roar of masonry and smothered towns,
Ice-cap solitudes on money-marts
And four winds out of untested skies ---
This is the thunder of the still small voice.

And if the ultimate I, the inner mind,
The only shelter proof against attack,
Sustain these days, carry this banner out
To the clumsy dawn: A green seed
Lies on the ground, under a leafless tree.

PARADISE LOST ...

F.R. SCOTT

Before any tree grew
On the ground
Or clip of bird wing
Made sound,

Before cool fish drove
Under wave
Or any stone man
Made cave,

The clean aimless worlds
Spun true and blind
Unseen and Undisturbed
By mind,

Till some irregular molecule
Of odd construction
Learned the original sin
Of reproduction,

Startling the tall void
With new activity,
Something beyond the grave
And more than gravity.

And so in shallow bays
And warm mud
Began the long tale
Of bone and Blood,

The tale of man alive,
And loth to die,
Of mine and thine and ours,
And the question why.

This was the turn of the tide,
The fall from heaven,
The spear in the side of God,
And time's division.

LEISURE CLASS ...

P.K. PAGE

They were tired, they said. They turned into the hotel like a parade of ghosts -- they laid their thin bodies on upholstered chairs in the lobby, pressed their worn clothes against florid chintz.

The first one marked a tall ash tray with a stained forefinger, saying, Ping, as he jerked his thumb; the second held his right foot in his hands, and stared at its broken sole. The third one sat with his palms upward, scrutinizing their cushions and lines, wondering at the colours of skin and the designs it wore.

Ping, said the first one again, Ping, Ping, and his thumb jerked like a reflex. His hair was black and very thin so the grey scalp showed through. His eyes were large, thick-lidded, drooping at the outside corners. His mouth was smooth but slid into knots as he spoke. He wore a tan sweat shirt very short in the sleeves, faded green trousers and dirty sneakers.

The second one worked at the instep of the foot he held, watching the thick sock appear and vanish through the split in the sole as he twisted the shoe. His black suit was too narrow in the shoulders. The seam of one arm hole had pulled out. He had a small pink face like a baby's with blue vacant eyes and very small low-set flat ears.

The third sat straight and still, staring at the palms of his hands, marking the shadows curving them and the deep grooved lines that cut. His long chin half covered the dirty collar of his shirt.

People stopped on the way to the desk, stared at the three men, shook their heads, shrugged their shoulders. A small child with a short skirt and little blue knees ran from her mother's side and looked at the man nursing his foot. She dipped like a miniature ballerina over the shoe, pale and fair by the black-suited man, interested as he in the sole of his foot. Her mother at the desk looked down and found the child gone, glanced about with a darting movement of her head, saw the child, ran to her, slapped her narrow wrist and pulled her away.

The man in the sweat shirt changed his aim, levelled his forefinger at the woman, and jerking his thumb, said, Ping.

Pong, said the man who nursed his foot.

Sleek as a pearl the manager appeared from behind a column, teetered on his patent leather shoes, came towards them. The first man focussed carefully, pointed his finger below and to the right of the manager's tie-pin. He jerked his thumb quickly. Ping, he said.

Get him? the second man asked.

Yep.

Through the heart? the third man asked.

Yep.

They got up and walked through the lobby, single file, through the swing door and onto the street.

The manager watched them go, turned on a ball-bearing and smiled at his guests.

ACTUARIAL REPORT ...

A.M. KLEIN

We, the undersigned
Magi of your actuarial staff
Having examined the data of the year
And drawn therefrom the hereto-appended graph
(The hanging gardens of Death, shown tier by tier)
Regretfully prognosticate a rising trend:
They will increase, our policy-holders,
Doomed to an untimely end.

We have seen the medical certificates
~~Guessing the cause of death~~; we have examined
The corpses slabbed in our filing cabinets;
We have deduced the necessary deductions.
The incidence of earthquake has been studied,
Not overlooked are pestilence and dangerous interesections.
The act of God is equated;
And the will-to-self-destruction (two premuims paid)
Is also calcolated.

Had there, however, been only these
Funereal figures on our adding-machines
It would have been easy: to wit, the status quo.
There was to be considered, unfortunately,
A state of hostilities.

Wander within the train, turn in its run,
reverse its steady search. (In history
we act and think like that, turn and are carried.)
Move, and speed jerks their movements into fun
swaying between the seats. Self-consciously
fetch paper cups, bump off each other's smiles,
walk tightropes of the rattling frozen miles-
the windows scrawled with caricature of breath
or with child's drawing of the peering hand
shows evening deepen through the slapdash lattice.

Arrive at night, detach, shouldering skis,
whom cold makes solemn under starry fells,
bid in false French, are alien, rock on sleighs
behind rough horses plowing parallels-
they have arrived. Tomorrow's blinding slopes
will grope and strain beneath them. Dazzle and dip
into the meaning that is always being-
climbing a landscape, falling into it-
and they will swing, spray at a turn, and lean
into the future which is what they mean.

We would remind our readers that we welcome contributions,
although we are not able to pay for them at present.
Subscriptions (\$1.00 per year) and manuscripts should be
sent to Mrs. Kit Shaw, 5593 Cote St. Luke Road, N.D.G.,
Montreal.

