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F R SCOTT P K PAGE BRUCE RUDDICK PATRICK ANDERSON NEUFVILLE SHAW

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NOTE

With this number we have completed the six issues of Preview which it was our original intention to produce. This may be the last time Preview appears in its present form but if it does not continue as it is, another publication will replace it. A plan of work for the coming seasons has yet to be decided upon. We invite suggestions from our readers and would ask them to fill out the enclosed questionnaire.

As we said in our first number this is not a magazine but rather an example of work in progress within the group. Any work in progress is bound to be uneven and we are conscious of the fact that this has been true of what has been published in Preview. However, publication in even this minor form has been of value to the authors who have been able to see their work in better perspective. We have received enough letters and comment to encourage us in the belief that the experiment has been welcomed.

We wish to thank our eighty subscribers and all who helped us with the mechanics of Preview's production.

THE LORD'S PLAN.

Seumas carried his suitcase in his right hand. It was heavy and his feet were hot--swelling, bulging against the bumpy uppers of his shoes. His toes felt puffy and webbed.

The sun was in mid heaven exactly. It shone on the top of his hat. The dent in his green fedora caught all the sun, held it in a pool. Seumas gave a dusty grin thinking of his suitcase, thinking of the Word of God--the Words of God--packed tightly layer upon layer.

His new sales psychology had worked.

The Lord had given him a plan to sell His Word. Only yesterday, while Seumas was lying in a haystack, airing his feet, the Lord had explained His Plan. He had heard the Lord say: "Seumas, Lamb of the Lord, in order to sell my word you must have a plan." Seumas had jolted forward in the hay. He had tried to convince himself that there was nothing strange in being spoken to by the Lord. But it had been strange, none the less.

Seumas had parked his gum behind his ear and stubbed his cigarette and put the butt in his breast pocket--the least he could do for the Lord. And then the Lord had boomed. His Voice had sounded like thunder and Seumas had looked up to the sky and found it blue and clear. The Lord had boomed, "Psychology." Seumas had nodded. It didn't do to let the Lord know he was an ignorant man. Seumas smiled and repeated the word "psychology". It rattled round in his head for a few minutes afterwards. But the Lord had been kind. He had explained the word, just as any Christian gentleman would do, pretending that Seumas knew it all the while.

And--but of course it would, as it was the Lord's Plan--it worked. At the very first house he had come to it had worked. He had stopped at the door of a farmhouse and knocked. A woman opened it. She was pale and immense as though she were made of bread dough, Seumas thought, and had been rising before the kitchen range for years--rising and swelling. Seumas looked at her arms hanging from her sleeveless dress. She had said, "What would you want?" And he had almost forgotten to answer her, almost forgotten the Lord's Plan, because after her arms he had seen her stomach and then he had had to remind himself that he was on the Lord's

Business. By that time she had noticed his bag and she had said, "Salesman?" How her eyes had folded under the fat lids--how the brown slits that showed through had looked like molasses in the sun; and how close Seumas had come to walking away, then and there, quickly.

But he remembered the Lord's Plan.

He put down his bag and said, "I'm tired, I've walked a long way. Could I--" and he smiled, "come in and rest a minute?"

The bulk in the doorway had moved. Seumas stepped inside the large kitchen and sat down. He put his suitcase on the kitchen table. She looked at it once or twice. He pretended it wasn't there. He passed the time of day with her as she beat cookie batter. He watched the flesh of her arms flowing free from the bone, flapping, flapping, flapping; and then her stomach, like a large jelly, wobbling, shivering, under the flowered dress. When she moved one part of her, all moved.

He said, "Could I fetch a cup of water from the well? There is dust in my mouth." She lowered the dipper into a water bucket and handed it to him, dripping. She could see the drops of water on the dipper's lip sparkling. It was all part of the Lord's Plan. He drank. He hung the dipper on the nail again. He thought of that himself. It was as the Lord would have done. He went back to his seat. She kept turning to look at his suitcase. And then he said, "D'you mind if I smoke?" She shook her head. He waited a minute until her flesh had quietened. That one shake had started her arms, her belly, her buttocks. . . . He stopped in horror at the words in his mind and he opened his suitcase for his makings. For now, now, did the psychology really begin. As he lifted the lid he saw the booklets piled neatly--booklets of the Lord. But he pretended he didn't notice them and he took out his tobacco and rolled a cigarette. She came over to the suitcase, chose a spoon from a drawer in the table and looked at the booklets in the bag. She returned to the batter, dipped it out into little hummocks on a pan. But in a minute she came back. She put out a finger like a large pale sausage with a little bit of gristle shining at the end of it. She touched one of the booklets and left a smudge of cookie dough on it. "Books," she said.

He feigned unconcern. "Yes, books." He waited, examining the end of his cigarette.

She turned the pages. "Words, words," she said.

"Yes, God's."

"Oh, God's?"

"Yes." He blew smoke out through his nose. "Take a look," he said.

It had all been so easy. But then it had been the Lord's Plan. She bought.

He finished his cigarette, fastened his suitcase and walked to the door. But on the way--ah, if only the Lord had helped him there!--as he passed her, his hand shot out and fell on her buttocks, hard enough to start her flesh jiggling again. And he had laughed. She picked up the spoon and brought it down on his head. It had hurt. She used words too--words he wanted to forget, being on the Lord's Business. He had decided she was a very common woman.

He laughed now when he thought of it, even though the sun was hot and the lump on his head ached where his hat pressed on it. If he'd done that to a pretty girl she'd have liked it; and anyway that was his psychology--make up to the ladies. True, the Lord hadn't suggested it, but it had always worked before, so he might as well keep on. And too, the next house he had come to after that, hadn't it worked? It sure had. But it was a girl there, young and pretty. Her eyes had flashed when he had chuckled her under the chin and she'd tossed her head and said, "You're some smart, you are." Some smart! He'd say he was. Seumas O'Reilly, never seen Ireland, Salesman in the Lord's Business. Some smart! And she was some smart too--some pretty. He thought of her as he walked. He forgot his feet.

At the end of the blueberry plains there was a store. Gasoline pumps outside and signs on the store. He thought of the Lord's Plan. He thought of the sun in a pool in the dent of his hat. He walked into the store. It was dark and he couldn't see much at first. A girl's voice inquired, "Sell-in?"

"Nothing that'd interest you," he said. He ordered a bottle of Lime Rickey and it walked across the counter to him. Imagine that! He was going to say something to the girl about it but she interrupted him.

"How d'you know?" she asked.

He laid his suitcase beside him and tapped it saying, "Because it's not candy or cosmetics or silk stockings"--but not before he'd noticed the girl. Not too bad, but drab he figured. His plan and the Lord's together ought to make this sale a cinch. He drank up the Lime Rickey and ordered another

bottle. Boy, how those bottles could walk!

"How's business?" he asked.

"Not bad," she answered. "How's yours?"

"Good," he said. "Better and better. See a pretty face and business is swell." He watched her as he said it. She smirked and poked a pound of bacon on the counter. And he forgot the Lord's Plan. She walked round beside him. He put his arm round her waist and squeezed her. She pulled away a little.

"Fresh eh?"

He laughed.

"What you sellin?"

He saw her eye his suitcase. "Wouldn't you like to know!"

"Come on, give!"

"Maybe I don't sell. Maybe I'm a college guy hitch hikin' to college."

"Maybe I'm a pair of chickens!"

"Maybe you are." He squeezed her again. She wriggled and looked down. Stuck out her tongue a little. It was pink like a kitten's.

"What's your name?"

"Mabel. What's yours?"

"Seumas."

"Gee! what a handle."

It was the way she said 'handle' that did it. The way her mouth opened and her lips curled. It wasn't his fault. He kissed her. She was like barbed wire in his arms then. The way she pulled away, bristling, spiked with anger. She hauled back her hand and slapped his face. Women! He loved them. He caught her hand, kissed the palm of it, laughing. She walked away. But her hand. . .he still held it. Saints alive! it had come off. She looked black. She stumped away into the darkness, her arm hanging, handless.

He looked at the hand. The skin was rough, red a little, and the nails were like small pearl buttons sewn on the fingers. He was alone in the store with the hand; the hand wearing a gold ring with 'M' on it. He slipped the ring off; he had no right to that; it was hers.

And then he remembered the Lord's Plan. And he knew. The Lord was reminding him to use His Psychology. This was the Lord's Way--miracles.

He opened his suitcase and saw the Lord's Word. He took out a booklet and laid it on the counter, with the ring on top of it. He thought of that himself. It was as the Lord would have done. And he packed the hand in the suitcase. That would remind him of the Lord's Plan, remind him to keep about the Lord's Business. The Lord was looking after His Own. Seumas understood.

He snapped the fasteners on his bag and put on his hat and walked out into the sunshine. He gave a happy grin thinking of his suitcase--thinking of the Word of God--the Words of God--packed tightly layer on layer; thinking of the hand, God's Miracle, God's Reminder.

He pushed his hat back so it didn't press on the bump on his head. He took an old stub from his breast pocket and lit up. Gee! He gave a long whistle of pleasure. Seumas O'Reilly, never seen Ireland, Salesman in the Lord's Business, some smart.

He'd say!

P.K. PAGE

INCIDENCE IN AN ALL-NIGHT CAFE

Twice tonight there was haggling over the bill.
In the cafe where the mildewed track

Of loneliness persisted, keeping awake
Men who would otherwise kill

In killing Time they were a part of.
Then the unlustred decrepit,

Eyes shredding torn roots, displaying with furtive
Zeal the discolored leaf below the itch to accept.

The words written on the serviette
Damaged the paper; the curt

Avoidance was a terrific hurt;

But not to the coffeeshop's prestige--

And the man lay immune and ignorant of siege--

And the eyes opened and went further yet.

RONALD HAMBLETON

NOVELLA

One last tired regret
For those who under the clawing olive tree
Have known the magnificence of men
Who held a destiny as a hero might--
In lands
Where coloured saints of wood
Hold forth a rotting hand,
And where the metal men of past
Lean on gentle antique spears
To see the candle's metal blade
Cut down a nervous swinging night.

One last tired regret
And
Then our heavy debt
Be paid of certain hate
Tall muscled of our love
For those who watched the shouting moors advance
(Their knives dance in the spanish light,
Their sacred hearts upon their sleeves)
And the withered lands which held their fate;
Who stood against
The general who would sew the sun upon his coat,
The men who tell their lands as on a chain,
The tinkling sanctus bell before the solid paunch
That leads them to a final wall.

These bitter things that bear tomorrows
In wanton flow by those who wait
And watch their distant passage as in a wind
Which fondles by a weightless load
Till all is counted and the time is come.

NEUFVILLE SHAW

OBITUARY WITHOUT END.

As to how many are dead
The question has its difficulties,
Because
The telegraph poles that bear finalities,
The newspapers that yell obsequies,
And the wireless that answers questions,
Were all blown up yesterday.
Flat they are now
And the dead are stacked up like
Railway tracks.

It's difficult.
You see
They assume the character of mud,
Ooze into fingering roots,
And, quietly, in a million minute ways,
Change to grass, to elms, to oaks;
And then to mice or stoats or grass again.

Systems, they say, are so important.
Like the way the Evening Post Poet
Says

That Joe Smith, the Average American,
Who served canned soup at the A & P,
Or Labelle, the corny littl Quebecois,
Who gurgled like a year old kid
The day the corvette sank
Took off time and died
To protect our way of life,
Our right to criticize the other guy
Even though he, owning a chain of papers,
Can whisper so that it sounds a roar.

O.K., they died. They became turnips
Or, perhaps, even a quinine tree.
And we who count the dead,
Who measure them on other's faces,
Are so certain of our uncertainties,
So sure that any old system is O.K.,
It makes one want to weep.

NEUFVILLE SHAW

FRAGMENT

Suddenly the last boundary broke
And every land was claimed by somebody else.
The closed world swarmed with a throng of roads
Where caterpillars span a thread of our blood
To sew our flags into the history-quilt.
The net of tracks kept the mind from release
So every man tended his cuffs of steel.
The clearest call came from the citadels.
Over the churches flew the black birds.
Trumpets blew but only echoes came
And pamphlet thought scuttled from iron heels.
A lease of fight was lent to far friends,
Prodigious ways were found through sand and ice,
Boats rolled on land while engines swam
And dropping men captured the centre first.
Bound in the box of hate, all were packed
In neat grades, slivered in oil. The shape
of mind and hand fitted the pressed groove.
Less than a horde was nothing. Zeros grew
On integers, adding an ache of size.
Off assembly-lines came motor-men
Held by rivets of fear. Identical cogs
Meshed in reverse directions, gathering speed,
Knotted distance into a lace for boots
That never trod upon ground. A single shaft,
You would say, could use this force, one hub
For such power would supercharge a world,
Man is a god decked out in bayonets,
Cutting the Burma Road of his own escape.
But dust and dials cover the heart with zones
And lay their stigma on the occasional song.

F R SCOTT

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Here, at evening, away from war and city
Grass shrills with myriad thin-winged things.
Petal and leaf, dead and budding equate intricately
And evergreens, birds' homes, like beard stubble the hills.
Worm-fed, grub-fed bird on grey post flits and becomes flocks.
Rabbits in gardens, skunks on dung heaps feed.
In lake roe and egg, tadpole and fry mark race histories.
Named, unknown stars link up, lock up me with these.

Oh, lay about with axe, clear, build rooves--
Shingle stems back storm, brick shuts out plant and bug.
Regenerate ova with occasional sperm and man haunts streets.
Till competing cells proliferate and inundate man's lanes and
bones.

But today in field, in gully my many brothers die unseasonably.
The perennial world reels, fevered with pregnancies.
Surely my only annual brothers serve more than hoe and spanner,
Save more than tunneled, chambered, hard-backed vaults.

BRUCE RUDDICK

THE BOYS.

Sexed with cigarettes that burn to ash
between their fingers, dropping from the navel
the knife line pants, whose chemistry turns blue
their meagre hidden legs--
the angel shoulders built on sloping bone--
the double breasted boys
out the air with a whistle
whose hilt is decayed tooth.

In coloured drugstores amongst dummies,
the cardboard blonde, the shining passionate glance
wrapped up in cellophane, they tap
while the indifferent waitress wears their eyes,
jerks syrups, starts the milkshakes hula:
then, leaning down, the brief electric fizz
pitting their faces
or their tongues playing
with the cold dome of the world.

The smooth ancestral lawns of poolrooms
through billowing trees of smoke
are where they watch from track of eye and cue
ball drop to pocket
as gene across horizon in earth's curve.

Down streets that broadcast brown to brownstone brown,
by shattered pools
and crumbling glass
the waves are stiff upon their windless heads:
the candy bar unfixed like girl or city
while from the parapet they watch
the slow soiled river
passing between their thighs.

PATRICK ANDERSON

GRAPH.

Thefeat flame bounding through this powerful dungeon
bespeaks an arc for most endeavour to reach
with tail to teach and hoist above a stroke.
Strike down and let the wail return itself
an interest compounded of feather dust.
Its soaring once and too often falling far
it learned to sweep achievement with a broom
that one forsaken should not look at last
below the level of the creaking node.
Placate these cycles with an upward swing,
for fan the flame, and power rule the blast!

ALFRED G. BAILEY

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