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Reflections in a Golden Eye

By Chapman Mortimer

Private Williams!

Report to Major Penderton's house
for a work detail.

Weldon!

Yeah?

I'm going for a ride, Weldon.

Okay.

What do you mean,

"just a little scratch"?

Look at that! He's been kicked.

It's just a nick, ma'am. He ain't hurt.

Where's my boy? The boy

that takes care of Firebird?

- Private Williams?

- I guess so.

Why, ma'am,

he's up at your house.

What do you mean, my house?

What's he doing up there?

He's doing some work for the major.

I asked Weldon to have

the garden tilled out in the back.

I've invited so many people

to my party...

...they're just gonna spill

out of the house.

Come on, you sweet old thing.

All right, now, private. This...

This section of woods

is to be cleared here.

Take away all the undergrowth

and the briar and the bushes.

Any of the limbs of the large trees

growing at a level of less than six feet...

...are to be cut away.

You understand?

- Yes, sir.

- That's a level of less than six feet.

- Yes, sir.

- Fine.

Now, your boundary

will be this large oak tree here.

You won't have to clear beyond it...

...just from the edge of the grass here

to the oak tree there.
I'll expect you
to complete this work today.
All the tools we've got
will be found in the garage.
I'll be back sometime
late this afternoon.
Listen, I think that the thing
we all overlook, everybody forgets...
...is that who really knows...
...what happened to her in her mind?
Nobody knows that.
- Also...
- "Also"? Also what?
Hell, Leonora,
it's been three months.
Now, she hasn't tried
to do anything like that since...
...and she seems to be okay.
Oh, what does that prove, Morris?
That Alison really is all right?
Well, yes, I guess so.
She hasn't tried to do it again.
How could she?
What she did is something a lady
can only do once, now, isn't it?
Give me your cap.
I want to pick some blackberries.
There.
Now let's take
two things Clausewitz says.
First, the theory of warfare
tries to discover...
...how we make any preponderance
of physical forces...
...and material advantages
at a decisive point.
And two, one of the strongest
weapons of offensive warfare...
...is the surprise attack.
Now, I would not like
to improve on Clausewitz...
...but I would say
that the night detect...

...is one of the strongest weapons
of offensive warfare.
We can look to Major General Terry Allen
when he commanded his forces in Africa.
He employed the night detect
to the maximum.
Economy of force...
Economy of force.
Concentration, surprise, security...
...offensive action,
movement, cooperation.
All of these have their application
in the night operation.
Susie!
Susie, I'm home!
Hi, there, soldier.
- Hi.
- Hi.
Wait a minute.
Pull!
I think I'll have my drink
out here.
I might as well do those invitations
while I'm at it too.
Soldier...
...I heard you were here this morning,
down at the stables.
My Firebird has been kicked.
- How?
- That, I would like to know.
Probably by some damn mule, or maybe
they put him in with the mares.
I was pretty mad about it.
I asked for you.
Thanks, Susie.
Soldier, do you want a drink?
Want a drink, soldier?
- No, ma'am.
- Don't you ever drink?
- No, ma'am.
- Not ever?
No, ma'am.
Damn.
Evening, Leonora.

There they are. All 64 of them.
I hope I haven't left anybody out.
How do you spell "cordially"?
Cordially.
C-O-R-D-I-A-double L-Y.
Oh, no!
Don't tell me I have to do them
all over again.
Well, I expect you better.
Oh, God.
What's the matter with you?
Private, the whole idea
was in the big oak tree.
The instructions were to clear
the ground just to the oak tree.
The way the branches
swept down and made a background...
...shutting off the rest of the wood
was the whole point.
Now it's all ruined.
What would the major like me to do?
Well, the major would like you
to pick up the branches...
...and nail them back on again.
No, no. Just get some leaves here...
...and cover the bare spots
where the bushes been removed.
Then you can go.
Here.
That's the boy from the stables,
the one that takes care of Firebird.
Yes, well...
He's also the soldier that
ruined a brand new silk suit for me.
Spilled the better part of a coffeepot
all over my knees.
That was two years ago,
wasn't it?
It'll be a lot longer than that
before you'll forget.
I dislike clumsiness,
willful or otherwise.
Well, there's nothing clumsy
about the way he handles Firebird.

Morris says he's never seen
an enlisted man...
...to handle a horse to equal him.
Morris would find something to like
in any enlisted man.
All right, then, Firebird likes him.
Firebird's a horse.
Firebird is a stallion.
So these two little queers
went into this bar...
...and this great big old barman
was looking at them for a long time.
Finally he said, "Are you two sisters?"
And they said, "Hell, no.
We're not even Catholic."
Oh, you're so funny.
For God's sakes, Leonora, why don't you
go upstairs and put your shoes on?
Oh, my.
Oh, my good...
You look like a slattern
going around the house this way.
Langdons come to dinner...
...I suppose you're gonna sit down
at the table like that.
Sure. Why not, prissy?
You disgust me.
I'll kill you. I swear, I'll kill you.
I'll do it! I will kill you!
Son, have you ever been collared...
...and dragged out into the street...
...and thrashed by a naked woman?
- Would anyone like a drink?
- I would, thanks.
Alison?
Very, very light, please.
Sugar?
Do you want another card?
- Big one?
- Oh, not too big, not too small.
Make mine straight on the rocks.
Not too big, not too small.
I'll have the same, Weldon,
and a little of that branch water.

Weldon, your wife's cheating.

- She tried to look at this card to see if...

- I did not.

You caught me before I had a chance to.

What have you got there?

I'm surprised at you, Morris.

Sitting down playing cards with a woman.

Expecting her not to cheat you.

What's this,

a new sweater for your husband?

It's for Captain Weincheck.

Captain Weincheck. I forgot to invite him.

Well, that's the story of his life, isn't it?

Everybody forgets about Weincheck,
including the promotion board.

He's about the oldest captain in the Army.

Will somebody please tell me
why Captain Weincheck is unpopular?

Is it because he plays the violin,
reads Proust?

Oh, do you remember that tea he gave?

Classical records and cat hairs.

And before God, tea. Only tea.

Captain Weincheck is a gentleman...

...and he's not a thief.

Who said he was?

That afternoon you were speaking of,
at his apartment?

Somebody stole a little
silver Georgian teaspoon.

One of a set of eight
belonging to his great-grandmother.

It was gone when we went to tidy up.

He asked me never to tell about it,
but somebody stole that spoon.

Well, I didn't. It wasn't me.

Well, I'm gonna put everything I have
on this one hand...

...and if I win,

I'll have every chip on the table.

Hit me.

Are aces ones?

Blackjack.

I must be getting along.

But you stay, Morris.
Don't break up the party.
Good night, everybody.
Alison, I'll see you to your doorstep.
Good night, Alison.
She is crazy.
No, she's not.
You know, I had the best doctors for her.
They all say she's fine.
Well, now, look here.
You know we're scared for her...
...just to go from our front door
to yours alone.
Oh, well...
Cutting off her nipples
with a pair of garden shears.
You call that normal?
My God. Garden shears.
No, but she's not, you know.
Doctor says she's neurotic.
- It will take time, that's all.
- Time?
It's been three years
since she had that baby.
So it died...
...but that was three years ago.
She's not getting any better.
She's just getting worse.
Do you think she has any idea about us?
No.
Well, I hope not.
I like Alison.
Look...
...now that Alison's gone home...
...you two don't mind
if I do a little work, do you?
Play a couple of hands with us.
Well, I got my lecture to prepare.
You work too hard, Weldon.
Why don't you come
riding with us tomorrow?
Well, we'll see.
It will do you good. Shake up your liver.
Well, I might. I might.

Blackjack.
Good night, Weldon.
But I don't need a suit, Anacleto.
But you do.
You haven't bought a garment
in more than a year...
...and the green frock
is bien use at the elbow...
...and ready for the Salvation Army.
My God, you're a rare bird, you are.
How much is it?
What I wouldn't give to get you
in my battalion for just a day.
It is trs cher.
But one could not expect
to get such quality for anything else.
- And think of the years of service.
- We'll see about it.
Oh, go on and buy the dress,
for God's sake.
And while we are about it,
we might order an extra yard or so.
Then I can have a jacket.
All right, if I decide to get it.
What is that?
You and Captain Weincheck were playing it
last Thursday afternoon.
The opening bar of the Franck
A-major sonata.
Look.
Just this minute
made me compose a ballet.
Black velvet curtains.
And a glow like winter twilight.
Very slowly with the whole cast.
Then a spotlight follows solo like a flame.
Very dashing.
And with the waltz...
...Mr. Sergei Rachmaninoff play.
Bravo, bravo, Anacleto.
Did he hurt himself?
I'm all right, Madame Alison.
I wish you had broken your damn neck.
Williams, bring out Firebird.

The lady is here.
I believe if a horse really
wants to throw you, well, he will.
But I think most of the time
they're just feeling good.
They're just having fun.
Well, now, you take Firebird.
The minute he starts to feel me slip...
...he stops messing around.
Of course, he's a gentleman.
There's my sweet old baby.
Quit that.
If the major could see himself from behind,
he would never get on a horse.
You see, this uncle of mine
had this cabin up in the mountains...
...and my brothers and I
used to go up all the time to hunt.
About six of us would go out
in the afternoon with our dogs.
Oh, really more the evening.
My God, it would be cold.
A little colored boy
would be running behind...
...with a big jug of liquor
on his back.
Sometimes we'd be in the mountains
all night hunting coon.
I just can't tell you what it was like.
- What do you want?
- May I take out the black mare?
- Did you do all your stalls?
- Yeah.
Okay.
- You all right, Weldon?
- Incompetent brute.
It's not the horse's fault. It's yours.
I mean, you can't expect a horse
to take a jump if you don't ride him at it.
- Weldon, that's Private Williams, isn't it?
- It certainly is.
Bare back to bare ass.
It's outrageous.
You go on ahead. I'll attend to him.

Oh, what, spoil his fun?
I thought all that old mare could do
is stumble and shamble...
...but look at her move now.
Would you look at that?
Now that boy can horseback.
He's got a great pair of hands.
A disgrace.
Oh, come off it, Weldon.
Leonora.
Leonora, come on. Get up.
Get up.
Come on. Get up.
Go on to bed.
Come on.
Go on up to bed now.
Sure you're not sleepy?
Oh, no, Madame Alison.
I had a nap this afternoon.
And I dreamt about Catherine.
What was it you dreamed?
Rather like...
...holding a butterfly in my hands.
And I was nursing her in my lap.
Then the dream changed.
Instead of Catherine...
...I had on my knees
one of the colonel's riding boots.
The boot...
...was full of squirming
newly born mice...
...and I was trying to keep them in.
Keep them from crawling up
all over me.
Anacleto, please.
Dreams.
They are strange things to think about.
In the afternoons in the Philippines...
...when the pillow is damp...
...and the sun shines in the room...
...the dream is of another sort...
...than in the north.
At night...
...when it is snowing, then it is...

Look.
A peacock.
A sort of ghastly green...
...with one immense golden eye.
And in it...
...these reflections of something
tiny and...
Tiny and...
Grotesque.
Exactly.
Oh, charming.
Aren't they pretty?
I haven't seen any since I was a girl.
I remember these
and a crystal paperweight...
...that made a snowstorm
when you shook it.
Anacleto, are you happy?
Why, certainly, when you are well.
Madame Alison,
do yourself really believe...
...that Mr. Sergei Rachmaninoff knows
that a chair is something to be sat on...
...and that the clock
shows one the time?
And if I should
take off my shoe...
...and hold it up to his face and say:
"What is this,
Mr. Sergei Rachmaninoff?"
Then he would answer like anyone else:
"Why, Anacleto, that is a shoe.
I myself find it hard to realize."
I could have knocked
on that door downstairs until doomsday...
...before either one of you would have
heard me over all that music.
Oh, thank you.
Alison, how are you?
I didn't sleep at all last night.
Oh, I am sorry.
Well, you just take
a good nap this afternoon...
...because you just gotta make it

for tonight.

- Make what?

- For God's sakes, Alison, my party.

I've been working like a fool for three days getting everything ready.

Why, I don't give a party like this but twice a year.

Of course. It just slipped my mind for the moment.

Listen. Here's the way it's gonna go.

I'm gonna put

all the leaves in the table...

...so everybody can just kind of mill around and help themselves.

I have two baked Virginia hams...

...one huge turkey, fried chicken, cold sliced pork...

...and plenty of barbecued spareribs, and all kinds of little knickknacks...

...like, oh, pickled onions and olives and radishes.

Oh, and we're going to start off by serving hot rolls...

...and hot little cheese biscuits and stuff like that.

Oh, and I'm gonna have the punch bowl in the corner.

And for those that like their liquor straight I'll have on the sideboard...

...eight bottles of Kentucky bourbon...

...five of rye...

...five of scotch...

Oh, and listen, I'm bringing in an entertainer from out of town...

...who will play the accordion, and later on...

But who on earth is going to eat all that food?

Well, the whole shebang.

I've invited everybody...

...from Old Sugar and his wife on down.

Leonora, how can you call a commanding general "Old Sugar"?

Oh, Alison, I've known Julius

practically all my life.
Why, he was my daddy's chief of staff.
Oh, Alison, I wanna ask you a favor.
Do you think Anacleto
could please serve the punch for me?
Well, I'm sure Anacleto
would be delighted.
Oh, thank you, honey.
Oh, and Susie's two brothers
are helping out in the kitchen.
- I've never seen anything to equal it.
- By the way, is Susie married?
Susie? Oh, good heavens, no.
She won't have anything to do with men.
She was caught when she was
about 14 years old...
...and she's never forgotten. But why?
I was almost sure I saw someone
come out of your house by the back door...
...just before dawn.
You just imagined it, honey.
Perhaps so.
- Alison?
- Yes.
I hope you'll forgive my saying this...
...but I really don't see
how you're gonna get any better...
...staying in this dark room all day long.
Now, whenever I'm sick
or tired or nervous...
...I get on the back of a horse
and I ride myself better.
Now, I know you could do
the same thing.
I know you can ride. Why, you told me
you used to foxhunt, didn't you?
Yes.
Did I ever tell you about the time
I was out foxhunting...
...with a 13-year-old girl, the whipper-in,
and she broke her neck?
Yes, you have told me every
terrible detail five times.
Your lunch, Madame Alison.

Oh, lunchtime? I've gotta go...
...but listen,
I'll see you later on tonight...
...and you be there at 4:30, okay?
Now, don't you see me out to the door.
I'll see you later, honey, okay? Bye-bye!
Anacleto,
I am going to divorce the colonel.
Madame Alison,
where shall we go after that?
That I have not yet decided.
- Do you think we might live in a hotel?
- It's a possibility.
Or we could run
a prawn boat somewhere.
We could live on the boat.
How much money
do you have in the bank?
\$425.06.
Do you want me to draw it out?
No, not now,
but we might need it later.
I'll kill you,
you dirty bastard.
Please.
Oh, God.
My daddy was an eight-goal man.
I got up to four goals once myself.
Leonora, they let a lady play polo?
Why, sure, sometimes.
And I was pretty good.
Of course, my daddy
was Old Leatherbreeches.
We were stationed at Fort Myer
at the time.
The men thought
they'd have to accommodate me.
You know, a girl playing.
Well, I taught them a thing or two.
Before the first chukker was over
they had to carry two of them off the field.
I just had to go and ride them off...
- Good evening, colonel.
- How are you, captain?

Fine. Fine, thank you.

Anacleto tells me that Mrs. Langdon will not be here this evening.

No, she's not feeling well.

I wonder, would it be all right if I ran over for a few minutes?

Sure. You go on over there.

Listen to me.

There's nothing wrong with her...

- Where's Weldon?

- Yeah, where is Weldon?

Go on over and talk to her.

She'll be real glad to see you.

- Run along.

- Thank you, sir.

Can't you see him?

Trudging down the highway...

...the stick over his shoulder and his precious Clausewitz in a bandana.

Who? Who?

My husband.

My horse threw me and then ran away.

Yes, sir, I know.

Private Williams found him and brought him in.

- He here?

- Yes, sir.

He's in the stall with Firebird.

Oh, sounds like a good party.

It's probably the last party

I'll attend on this post.

- Or any other.

- Why, Murray...

Penderton called me in this afternoon.

He said, "I want you to know what I'm doing, Weincheck.

I can't, in all conscience, give you better than satisfactory...

...on your efficiency report."

It was quite a blow.

He went on. He said,

"It's not that you're remiss in your duties.

It's just that you lack

certain qualities of leadership."

Oh, dear.
So I said, "In that case,
I'm leaving the service."
And Penderton said, "I hoped that
that would be your reaction, Weincheck...
...because frankly, I don't see much
of a future for you in the Army."
He said he was really doing me a favor.
Well, maybe he was.
Hey, what's the joke?
The little Filipino put perfume
in a specimen of Alison Langdon's urine...
...before taking it
to the hospital for analysis.
- Who says?
- You know something else?
The same boy got through
one day to the general.
He asked the general
to stop the soldier...
...from blowing his bugle

at 6:

...because it disturbed
Mrs. Langdon's rest.
The general said,
"You know who you're talking to?"
He said, "Of course."
He was trying to say "house boy"
in French.
Weldon?
Weldon?
What in the world happened to you?
Well, the horse...
The horse stumbled,
and I fell into a blackberry bush.
He ran off, and...
Oh, my.
Well, you are a mess.
What horse were you riding?
What horse were you riding?
Firebird.
Firebird?
What in the world

were you doing on him?
You know you can't horseback
well enough to ride him.
You say he ran away?
Is he loose?
Well...
Well, he found his...
He found his way back to the stable.
Well, how is he?
He's all right.
Are you sure he's all right?
Yeah.
Any cuts on him?
No, he's all right.
Who beat him?
Nobody here, ma'am.
Oh, that son of a bitch.
Well, certainly, horse cavalry is a thing
of the past, but that's not the point.
The point is that polo playing
is great trainership...
Training for the leadership of an officer.
That's what I say.
And the polo grounds
have produced more great leaders...
...than the playing fields of Eton anytime.
Pershing played polo, didn't he, general?
- Patton played polo.
- Summerall.
- MacArthur.
- Right.
- Devers.
- Terry Allen.
Right. It's just a damn shame that
a country as rich and powerful as ours...
...can't spend a few dollars
to buy some oats for some horses.
So Firebird's all right, is he?
You lousy bastard...
...beating my horse, my Firebird!
What did Major Penderton do?
He stood like a statue.
He did not defend himself.
She struck him time and again...

...as hard as she could,
right across the face.
His face was already torn
from the riding accident...
...which made it all the more horrible.
Was she drunk?
Everybody thought so, but she wasn't.
I should know. I was the barman.
I dispensed the drinks.
- Are you sleepy, Madame Alison?
- Not at all.
Shall I get our watercolors
so we paint for a while?
- If you like.
- I shall be back suddenly.
- Soon.
- Oh, yes, soon.
Excuse me, colonel.
Are...? Are you asleep, my dear?
Yes. Dead asleep.
Well, my God.
What a... What a debacle.
I've heard all I want to hear
from Anacleto.
Well, my dear,
you should have been there.
Mercifully, I wasn't.
Well...
...just a little kiss.
Kiss you night-night.
Good night, Morris.
Thirty, 17.
Couldn't get my breath.
I couldn't breathe.
It's all right. I am here.
Thank you, sergeant.
Parade, hut!
Code 10, hut!
Parade present!
Order!
Report!
Order!
She keeps imagining all these things,
you know?

Yesterday, she thought
the house was on fire.
Said she could smell smoke.
Then this morning when I was home...
...she swore up and down
she could hear some kid screaming.
There had been an accident with a car...
...and she said Anacleto and I have
to go around and ask all the neighbors.
So we did. I felt like a damn fool.
How's it going with you and Weldon?
Better. A lot better. A hell of a lot better.
Why, he's a changed boy.
He's even polite to me when we're alone.
I guess I shouldn't have done it.
But what the hell.
He had it coming, beating my horse.
I guess everybody thinks
I was drunk, don't they?
I guess so.
You know, it's a damn
good thing for Weldon.
A damn lucky thing the general
used to bounce you on his knee, because...
If Alison pulled a stunt like that...
...I'd get transferred so fast
it would make your hair grow.
Well, now, Alison wouldn't do
a thing like that, now, would she?
No. Hey, the fights are tonight.
- You wanna go to the fights?
- Yeah, sure, I'd love to.
What's so damn funny?
Weldon said he fell in a blackberry patch.
Can you imagine?
Of all things, a blackberry patch.
- ibetween Corporal Jose Fernandez
in black trunks...
...and Private First Class Harry Higby
in white trunks.
Oh, hit him back! Come on.
Come on!
No!
Get up!

Get up!

Get up!

No! I don't believe it.

Well, I think I'll be going along now.

I'm going back to the office.

The office this time of night?

You crazy?

I've got a lot of work to do,
finish up. I'll see y'all later.

Have someone drive you there
and wait for you.

No, thanks, Morris.

I think the walk will do me good.

- I'll see y'all later. Bye.

- All right.

- He's still down.

- Oh, he's all right.

Hey, mister, over here.

I'll tell you what...

- I'll tell you what I'll do.

- Yeah.

- If he buys the food then I'll buy the drinks.

- Come on.

Morris?

I think you had better go up
to your wife's room.

She's not alone.

My husband is with her.

Alison, you shouldn't be wandering
around like this. I'll take you home.

You don't mean to sit there
and tell me you know this...

...and do nothing about it?

Alison.

Alison.

I went to see where you were,
and you weren't there.

Where have you been?

There's something you should know.

Leonora isn't only
deceiving her husband.

She's deceiving you too,
with an enlisted man.

Furthermore, I'm going to get a divorce.

And as I have no money, I would appreciate your lending me the sum of \$500.

I will pay you back

at five percent interest...

...with Anacleto and Captain Weincheck as guarantors.

You need not feel any further responsibility toward me.

Anacleto and I will go into some business together or buy a prawn boat, maybe.

And now will you please help him bring my trunk up from the cellar?

We have to pack and be out of here early tomorrow morning.

I just remembered, Anacleto.

Moltrieville, South Carolina.

It's beautiful and small.

I went there once

when I was 7 to visit a great-aunt.

My great-aunt Evelyn.

It's near Charleston. It is on the sea...

...and the people are most civilized.

Bring the timetables.

Where are they?

Good.

Columbia. Columbia.

10:

We shall leave this house forever at 8 in the morning.

That will give us plenty of time to buy the tickets and get the Pullman seats.

Oh, Anacleto.

We will want a picnic basket.

I do not care for Pullman fare.

Oh, what shall we do?

But Madame Alison,

today I bought a poussin.

- I shall go and prepare it now.

- And hard-boiled eggs.

- And sweet pickles.

- Yeah.

Colonel Kelly, please.

Hey, where were you last night?

Got something going for you, huh?
Him? You kidding?
His daddy told him
women carry a terrible disease...
...and you mustn't ever touch them.
L.G.'s a virgin. Ain't you, L.G.?
Our doctor's from Walter Reed.
You know, Colonel Kelly.
But after he looked at her
he said he had to bring in another doctor.
Some psychiatrist.
And it was...
...plain awful.
I just felt so damn ashamed for her.
They were lighting matches
and holding them up in front of her face...
...and asking her all kinds of questions...
...and Anacleto kept interfering.
We had to lock him up in his room.
She wouldn't cooperate
with them, anyway.
So...
...finally, they said...
Said we have to send her away to a...
To a sanitarium.
And I said, "Now, listen.
I don't want her in some place...
...where they're gonna have straitjackets.
None of that stuff.
Just...
...someplace where she can be quiet
and comfortable...
...and listen to her records if she wants to
and have a room for Anacleto."
So they said they know
an institution that's in Virginia...
...that's just like a luxury hotel.
How soon?
Well...
...as soon as they make
the arrangements, whatever they do.
Good afternoon. No, don't get up.
I'm Dr. Burgess.
Welcome to our small community.

Will you be staying overnight, colonel?

No. No, I have to get right back.

Well, you may be sure

we'll take good care of Mrs. Langdon.

You won't be getting up tomorrow.

You'll stay in bed,

and we'll start making you well again.

Well...

...it's a nice place, isn't it?

Alcoholics.

Senility.

Paresis.

Oh, my God.

What a choice crew.

Soldier, pick up that cigarette butt.

Fieldstrip it.

A soldier is a soldier 24 hours a day.

- Do you understand?

- Yes, sir.

Soldier.

Who checked you out of barracks?

Why is that pocket unbuttoned?

Button it.

When did you blitz that buckle?

- Don't you have any shoe polish?

- Yes, sir.

- Report to the orderly room right away.

- Yes, sir.

Major. Major Penderton.

Major Penderton, have you heard?

- Heard what?

- Alison. Mrs. Langdon. She's dead.

No, no. No, no. I haven't heard.

What? What?

Alison. Mrs. Langdon. She's dead.

- Well, but the... The colonel isn't back yet.

- No, he's on the noon train.

It was a coronary.

It happened just after he left, it seems.

We received a telegram

at division headquarters. We opened it.

We didn't know

what was in it, naturally.

Alison?

I'm almost finished, Morris.
Why not give them to Weincheck?
All these records.
He'd be happy to have them.
Oh, I think I'll keep them
over in my room.
I might wanna play them sometime.
Oh, now, Morris,
you know you hate classical records.
Don't talk like that. It's...
Well, it's morbid.
Well, she gave that little thing to Anacleto,
and he kept it up here.
Damn, I wish he'd come back.
Strange he didn't show up
at the funeral, isn't it?
He just packed up all her things and got out
of that hospital the morning after she died.
Just... Just disappeared.
Funny, isn't it?
You know, I never told you this...
...but when Catherine was born...
...Alison had a hell of a time of it.
Thirty-three hours in labor.
Thirty-three solid hours.
When it got so I couldn't stand to listen
to her anymore... Screaming, you know?
You know who she hung on to?
Anacleto.
Yeah.
The little Filipino was there...
...sweat pouring down his face.
Doctor told her she wasn't
bearing down hard enough, so he'd...
He'd bear down right along with her.
Bending his knees.
Screaming when she'd scream.
Hell.
Leonora, I didn't know
there was anything wrong with her.
I mean, I didn't know
she was really sick.
I just thought she was...
I didn't realize, that's all.

Of course you didn't realize.
Nobody did.
Well...
...I guess there's just
two things left for me now:
Keep myself fit and do my job.
Serve my country.
Only two things?
Only two things?
No.
Not here, now.
I'll tell you what let's do.
Let's go riding.
May be some blackberries left.
Now, a man does not flee because...
...he's fighting in an unjust cause.
He does not attack
because his cause is just.
He flees because he's the weaker,
and he conquers because he's the stronger.
Or more to the point,
because his leaders made him feel stronger.
Rommel...
...Patton, Marshall, MacArthur. They...
They had it.
How did they...?
How did they make their troops
believe that they were stronger?
Leadership is intangible.
It's hard to measure, difficult to describe.
Leadership must include
a measure of inherent ability...
...to control and direct self-confidence...
...based on initiative,
loyalty to superiors...
...and a sense of pride.
Pride.
It's far easier to recognize a leader...
...than to define leadership in clear
and in universally understood terms.
Now...
Is leadership learned?
Is it taught?
Is a man born with it?

How did it come to Patton?

Class dismissed.

Sergeant.

Afternoon, Major Penderton.

I'll have the black mare.

Sorry, sir. Williams has her out.

Well, saddle any horse then.

It doesn't matter.

Yes, sir.

Blackjack.

Damn.

You know, I used to tease

Anacleto all the time...

...about what I'd do to him

if I got him in a battalion.

Of course, I was kidding him mostly...

...but I think if he'd joined the Army, that
would have been the best thing for him.

He certainly would be flattered...

...if he could hear the way

you carry on about him now.

He wouldn't have been

happy in the Army...

...but it might have made

a man out of him.

Knocked some of that nonsense

out of him, anyway.

It is a pretty awful thing

to see a grown-up man...

...dancing around on his toes

to some kind of silly music...

...and painting all kind of funny-looking
pictures with watercolors.

Oh, we'd have run him ragged

in the Army, all right.

He sure would have been miserable...

...but I think anything would be better

than all that... All that other mess.

Any fulfillment obtained

at the expense of normality is wrong...

...and should not be allowed

to bring happiness.

In short, it's a...

It's better,

because it's morally honorable...
...for the square peg to keep
scraping about in a round hole...
...rather than to discover and use
the unorthodox one that would fit it.
Well, yeah, that's right, Weldon.
Don't you agree with me?
No.
No, I don't.
Excuse me.
Oh, Weldon.
Poor Rufus.
I've had him ever since
I was in boarding school.
Now you've broken him...
...after all these years.
I'm sorry, Leonora.
It's just all this clutter is...
What's the matter with clutter?
I like it.
Well...
...I'd rather live without it.
Bare floors. Plain white walls.
No window curtains. Nothing but essentials.
If that's the way you feel about it,
why don't you resign your commission...
...and start over again
as an enlisted man?
Of course you're laughing...
...but there's much to be said
for the life of men among men...
...with no luxuries, no ornamentation.
Utter simplicity.
It's rough and it's coarse, perhaps,
but it's also clean.
It's clean as a rifle.
There's no speck of dust inside or out...
...and it's immaculate in its hard,
young fitness.
Its chivalry.
They're seldom
out of one another's sight.
They eat, and they train,
and they shower, and they play jokes...

...and go to the brothel together.
They sleep side by side.
The barracks room offers many a lesson
in courtesy and how not to give offense.
They guard the next man's privacy
as though it was their own.
And the friendships... My lord.
There are friendships formed
that are stronger than...
Stronger than the fear of death.
And they're never lonely.
They're never lonely.
And sometimes I envy them.
Well, good night.
Well, I guess Alison's death
has kind of hit him hard too.
Well, do you want a card?
No.
I wish Anacleto would come back.
Well, I wish Alison would come back.
I wish everything would be
the way it was before.
Come on, you guys.
Get out of here.
Out!
Hey, what is this?
Hey, come on. What's wrong?
Son of a...
Come on!
What's the matter?
You started it. Come on.
Come on.
Bastard.
Where's my towel?