

THE VALIANT

A Play in one Act by Holworthy Hall and  
Robert Middlemass.

CHARACTERS

WARDEN HOLT, about 60  
FATHER DALY, the prison chaplain  
JAMES DYKES, the prisoner  
JOSEPHINE PARIS, the Girl, about 18  
DAN, a Jailer  
AN ATTENDANT

SCENE-- The Warden's office in the State's Prison at Wethersfield,  
Connecticut.

TIME-- About half-past eleven on a rainy night.

The curtain rises upon the Warden's office in the State's Prison at Wethersfield, Connecticut. It is a large, cold, unfriendly apartment, with bare floors and staring, whitewashed walls; it is furnished only with the WARDEN'S flat-topped desk, and swivel-chair, with a few straight-backed chairs, one beside the desk and others against the walls, with a water-cooler and an eight-day clock. On the WARDEN'S desk are a telephone instrument, a row of electric push-buttons, and a bundle of forty or fifty letters. At the back of the room are two large windows, crossed with heavy bars; at the left there is a door to an anteroom, and at the right there are two doors, of which the more distant leads to the office of the deputy warden, and the nearer is seldom used.

WARDEN HOLT, dressed in a dark-brown sack suit, with a negligee shirt and black string-tie, carelessly knotted in a bow, is seated at his desk, reflectively smoking a long, thin cigar. He is verging toward sixty, and his responsibilities have printed themselves in italics upon his countenance. His brown hair and bushy eyebrows are heavily shot with gray; there is a deep parenthesis of wrinkles at the corners of his mouth and innumerable fine lines about his eyes. His bearing indicates that he is accustomed to rank as a despot, and yet his expression is far from that of an unreasoning tyrant. He is no sentimentalist, but he believes that in each of us there is a constant oscillation of good and evil; and that all evil should be justly punished in this world, and that all good should be generously rewarded --in the next.

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Behind the WARDEN, the prison chaplain stands at one of the barred windows, gazing steadily out into the night. FATHER DALY is a slender, white-haired priest of somewhat more than middle age; he is dressed in slightly shabby clericals. His face is calm, intellectual and inspiring; but just at this moment, it gives evidence of a peculiar depression.

The WARDEN blows a cloud of smoke to the ceiling, inspects the cigar critically, drums on the desk, and finally peers over his shoulder at the chaplain. He clears his throat and speaks brusquely.

THE WARDEN.... Has it started to rain?

FATHER DALY.....(ANSWERS WITHOUT TURNING). Yes, it has.

THE WARDEN.....(GLARING AT HIS CIGAR AND IMPATIENTLY TOSsing IT ASIDE). It would rain tonight. (HIS TONE IS VAGUELY RESENTFUL, AS THOUGH THE WEATHER HAD ADDED A NEEDLESS FRACTION TO HIS IMPATIENCE.)

FATHER DALY..... (GLANCES AT A BIG SILVER WATCH). It's past eleven o'clock. (HE DRAWS A DEEP BREATH AND COMES SLOWLY TO THE CENTER OF THE ROOM). We haven't much longer to wait.

THE WARDEN..... No, thank God! (HE GETS UP, AND GOES TO THE WATERCOOLER; WITH THE GLASS HALFWAY TO HIS LIPS HE PAUSES). Was he quiet when you left him?

FATHER DALY..... (A TRIFLE ABSTRACTEDLY). Yes, yes, he was perfectly calm and I believe he'll stay so to the very end.

THE WARDEN (..... (FINISHED HIS DRINK, COMES BACK TO HIS DESK, AND LIGHTS A FRESH CIGAR). You've got to hand it to him, father; I never saw such nerve in all my life. It isn't bluff, and it isn't a trance, either, like some of 'em have--it's plain nerve. You've certainly got to hand it to him. (HE SHAKES HIS HEAD IN FRANK ADMIRATION.)

FATHER DALY..... (SORROWFULLY). That's the pity of it- that a man with all his courage hasn't a better use for it. Even now, it's very difficult for me to reconcile his character, as I see, it, with what we know he's done.

THE WARDEN..... (CONTINUES TO SHAKE HIS HEAD). He's got my goat, all right.

FATHER DALY....(WITH A SLIGHT GRIMACE). Yes, and he's got mine, too.

THE WARDEN..... When he sent for you tonight, I hoped he was going to talk.

FATHER DALY.... He did talk, very freely.

THE WARDEN..... What about?

FATHER DALY..... (SMILES FAINTLY, AND SITS BESIDE THE DESK). Most every thing.

THE WARDEN.....(LOOKS UP QUICKLY). Himself?

FATHER DALY..... No. That seems to be the only subject he isn't interested in.

THE WARDEN..... (SITS UP TO HIS DESK, AND LEANS UPON IT WITH BOTH ELBOWS). He still won't give you any hint about who he really is?

FATHER DALY..... Not the slightest. He doesn't intend to, either. He intends to die as a man of mystery to us. Sometimes I wonder if he isn't just as much of a mystery to himself.

THE WARDEN..... Oh, he's trying to shield somebody, that's all. James Dyke isn't his right name --we know that; and we know all the rest of his story is a fake, too. Well, where's his motive? I'll tell you where it is. It's to keep his family and his friends, wherever they are, from knowing what's happened to him. Lots of 'em have the same idea but I never knew one to carry it as far as this, before. You've certainly got to hand it to him. All we know is that we've got a man under sentence; and we don't know who he is, or where he comes from, or anything else about him, any more than we did four months ago.

FATHER DALY..... It takes moral courage for a man to shut himself away from his family and his friends like that. They would have comforted him.

THE WARDEN..... Not necessarily. What time is it?

FATHER DALY..... Half-past eleven.

THE WARDEN..... (RISES AND WALKS OVER TO PEER OUT OF ONE OF THE BARRED WINDOWS). I guess I'm getting too old for this sort of thing. A necktie party didn't use to bother me so much; but every time one comes along nowadays, I've got the blue devils beforehand afterward. And this one is just about the limit.

FATHER DALY..... It certainly isn't a plessant duty even with the worst of them.

THE WARDEN.....(WHEELS BACK ABRUPTLY.) But what gets me is why I should hate this one more than any of the others. The boy is guilty as hell.

FATHER DALY..... Yes, he killed a man. "Wilfully, feloniously, and with malice aforethought."

THE WARDEN..... And he pleaded guilty. So he deserves just what he's going to get.

FATHER DALY..... That is the law. But has it ever occurred to you, Warden, that every now and then when a criminal behaves in a rather gentlemanly fashion to us, we instinctively think of him as just a little less of a criminal?

THE WARDEN..... Yes, it has. But, all the same, this front of his makes me as nervous as the devil. He pleaded guilty all right, but he doesn't act guilty. I feel just as if tonight I was going to do something every bit as criminal as he did. I can't help it. And when I get to feeling like that, why, I guess it's pretty nearly time I sent in my resignation.

FATHER DALY..... (REFLECTIVELY) His whole attitude has been very remarkable. Why, only a few minutes ago I found myself comparing it with the fortitude that the Christian martyrs carried to their death, and yet--

THE WARDEN..... He's no martyr.

FATHER DALY..... I know it. And he's anything in the world but a Christian. That was just what I was going to say.

THE WARDEN..... Has he got any religious streak in him at all?

FATHER DALY..... I'm afraid he hasn't. He listens to me very attentively, but-- (HE SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS) It's only because I offer him companionship. Anybody else would do quite as well-- and any other topic would suit him better.

THE WARDEN..... Well, if he wants to face God as a heathen, we can't force him to change his mind.

FATHER DALY..... (WITH GENTLE REPROACH). No, but we can never give up trying to save his immortal soul. And his soul tonight seems as dark and foreboding to me as a haunted house would seem to the small boys down in Wethersfield. But I haven't given up hope.

THE WARDEN..... No--- you wouldn't.

FATHER DALY..... Are you going to talk with him again yourself?

THE WARDEN..... (OPENS A DRAWER OF HIS DESK, AND BRINGS OUT A LARGE ENVELOPE). I'll have to. I've still got some Liberty Bonds that belong to him. (HE GAZES AT THE ENVELOPE, AND SMILES GRIMLY). That was a funny thing--when the newspaper syndicate offered him twenty-five hundred for his autobiography, he jumped at it so quick I was sure he wanted the money for something or other. (HE SLAPS THE ENVELOPE ON THE DESK) But now the bonds are here, waiting for him, he won't say what to do with 'em. Know why? (FATHER DALY SHAKES HIS HEAD) Why, of course you do! Because the story he wrote was pure bunk from start to finish and the only reason he jumped at the chance of writing it was so's he could pull the wool over everybody's head a little farther. He don't want the bonds, but I've got to do something with 'em. (HE PUSHES A BUTTON ON THE DESK) And besides, I want to make one more try at finding out who he is.

FATHER DALY..... Shall I go with you to see him or do you want to see him alone?

THE WARDEN..... (SITS DELIBERATING WITH ONE HAND AT HIS FOREHEAD, AND THE OTHER HAND TAPPING THE DESK) Father, you gave me a thought--I believe I'm going to do something tonight that's never been done before in this prison --that is to say-- not in all the twenty-eight years that I've been warden.

FATHER DALY-..... Whats' That?

THE WARDEN..... (WHO HAS EVIDENTLY COME TO AN IMPORTANT DECISION, RAPS THE DESK MORE FORCIBLY WITH HIS KNUCKLES). Instead of our going to see him, I'll have that boy brought into this office and let him sit here with you and me until the time comes for us all to walk through that door to the execution room.

FATHER DALY..... (STARTLED). What on earth is your idea in doing a thing like that?

THE WARDEN..... Because maybe if he sits here awhile with just you and me, and we go at him right, he'll loosen up and tell us about himself. It'll be different from being in his cell; it'll be sort of free and easy, and maybe he'll weaken. And the, besides, if we take him to the scaffold through this passage-way, maybe I can keep the others quiet. If they don't know when the job's being done, they may behave 'emselves. I don't want any such yelling and screeching tonight as we had with that Greek. (A JAILER IN BLUE UNIFORM ENTERS FROM THE DEPUTY'S ROOM AND STANDS WAITING). Dan, I want you to get Dyke and bring him to me here. (THE JAILER STARES BLANKLY AT HIM AND THE WARDEN'S VOICE TAKES ON AN ADDED NOTE OF AUTHORITY). Get Dyke and bring him in here to me.

THE JAILER..... Yes, sir. (HE STARTS TO OBEY THE ORDER BUT HALTS IN THE DOORWAY AND TURNS AS THE WARDEN SPEAKS AGAIN. IT IS APPARENT THAT THE WARDEN'S IS A STRICT DISCIPLINARIAN OF THE PRISON STAFF.)

THE WARDEN..... Oh, Dan!

THE JAILER..... Yes, sir?

THE WARDEN..... How nearly ready are they?

THE JAILER..... They'll be all set in ten or fifteen minutes, sir. Twenty minutes at the outside.

THE WARDEN.....(VERY SHARP AND MAGISTERIAL) Now, I don't want any hitch or delay in this thing tonight. If there is, somebody's going to get in awful Dutch with me. Pass that along.

THE JAILER..... There won't be none, sir.

THE WARDEN..... When everything's ready --not a second before-- you let me know.

THE JAILER..... Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN..... I'll be right here with Dyke and Father Daly.

THE JAILER..... (EYES WIDENING) Here?

THE WARDEN..... (PEREMPTORILY). Yes, here!

THE JAILER..... (CRUSHES DOWN HIS ASTONISHMENT). Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN..... When everything and everybody is ready, you come from the execution room through the passage-- (HE GESTURES TOWARD THE NEARER DOOR ON THE RIGHT) Open that door quietly and stand there.

THE JAILER..... Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN..... You don't have to say anything, and I don't want you to say anything. Just stand there. That all clear?

THE JAILER..... Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN..... That'll be the signal for us to start -understand?

THE JAILER..... Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN..... (DRAWS A DEEP BREATH) All right. Now bring Dyke to me.

THE JAILER..... Yes, sir. (HE GOES OUT DAZEDLY.)

FATHER DALY..... What about the witnesses and the reporters?

THE WARDEN..... They're having their sandwiches and coffee now-- the deputy'll have 'em seated in another ten or fifteen minutes. Let 'em wait. (HIS VOICE BECOMES SAVAGE) I'd like to poison the lot of 'em. Reporters! Witnesses! (THE TELEPHONE BELL RINGS) Hello-- yes-- yes-- what's that? --Yes, yes, right here--who wants him? (TO FATHER DALY) Father, it's the Governor! (HIS EXPRESSION IS TENSE.)

FATHER DALY..... (HIS VOICE ALSO GIVES EVIDENCE OF INCRECUDILITY AND HOPE). What! (HE WALKS SWIFTLY OVER TO THE DESK) Is is about Dyke?

THE WARDEN..... Ssh. (HE TURNS TO THE TELEPHONE). Yes, this is Warden Holt speaking. Hello --oh, hello, Governor Fuller, how are you? Oh, I'm between grass and hay, thanks. Well, this isn't my idea of a picnic exactly --yes-- yes-- Oh, I should say in about half an hour or so-- everything's just about ready. (HIS EXPRESSION GRADUALLY RELAXES, AND FATHER DALY, WITH A LITTLE SIGH AND SHAKE OF THE HEAD, TURNS AWAY) Oh, no, there won't be any slip-up-- yes, we made the regular tests, one this afternoon and another at nine o'clock tonight-- Oh, no, Governor, nothing can go wrong-- Well, according to the law I've got to get it done as soon as possible after midnight, but you're the Governor of the state-- How long?-- Certainly, Governor, I can hold it off as long as you want me to-- What Say?-- A girl! --You are going to send her to me? --you have sent her! --she ought to be here by this time? All right, Governor, I'll ring you up when it's over. Good-bye, (HE HANGS UP THE RECEIVER, MOPS HIS FOREHEAD WITH HIS HANDKERCHIEF, AND TURNS TO FATHER DALY IN GREAT EXCITEMENT) Did you get that? Some girl thinks Dyke's her long-lost brother, and she's persuaded the old man to let her come out here tonight-- he wants me to hold up the job until she's had a chance to see him. She's due here any minute, he says--in his own car-- escorted by his own private secretary! Can you beat it?

FATHER DALY..... (DOWNCAST) Poor girl!

THE WARDEN..... (BLOTS HIS FOREHEAD VIGOROUSLY). For a minute there I thought it was going to be reprieve at the very least. Whew!

FATHER DALY..... So did I.

(The door from the deputy's room is opened, and Dyke comes in, followed immediately by the Jailer. Dyke halts just inside the door and waits passively to be told what to do next. He has a lean, pale face, with a high forehead, good eyes, and a strong chin; his mouth is ruled in a firm straight line. His wavy hair is prematurely gray. His figure has the elasticity of youth, but he might pass among strangers either as a man of forty, or as a man of twenty-five, depending upon the mobility of his features at a given moment. He is dressed in a dark shirt open at the throat, dark trousers without belt or suspenders, and soft slippers. The JAILER receives a nod from the WARDEN, and goes out promptly, closing the door behind him)

THE WARDEN...(SWINGS HALF-WAY AROUND IN HIS SWIVEL-CHAIR) Sit down, Dyke. (HE POINTS TO THE CHAIR AT THE RIGHT OF HIS DESK)

DYKE.... Thanks. (HE GOES DIRECTLY TO THE CHAIR AND SITS DOWN)

THE WARDEN...(LEANS BACK, AND SURVEYS HIM THOUGHTFULLY. FATHER DALY REMAINS IN THE BACKGROUND) Dyke, you've been here under my charge for nearly four months and I want to tell you that from first to last you've behaved yourself like a gentleman.

DYKE..... (HIS MANNER IS VAGUELY CYNICAL WITHOUT BEING IN THE LEAST IMPERTINENT) Why should I make you any trouble?

THE WARDEN... Well, you haven't made ~~me~~ me any trouble, and I've tried to show what I think about it. I've made you every bit as comfortable as the law would let me.

DYKE..... I've been very kind to me. (HE GLANCES OVER HIS SHOULDER AT THE CHAPLAIN) And you, too, Father.

THE WARDEN..... I've had you brought in here to stay from now on. (DYKE LOOKS INQUIRINGLY AT HIM). No, you won't have to go back to your cell again. You're to stay right here with Father Daly and me.

DYKE.....(CARELESSLY). All right.

THE WARDEN..... (PIQUED BY THIS COOL RECEPTION OF THE DISTINGUISHED FAVOR). You don't seem to understand that I'm doing something a long way out of the ordinary for you.

DYKE.....Oh, yes, I do, but maybe you don't understand why it doesn't give me much of a thrill.

FATHER DALY..... (COMES FORWARD). My son, the Warden is only trying to do you one more kindness.

DYKE..... I know he is, Father, but the Warden isn't taking very much of a gamble. From now on, one place is about the same as another.

THE WARDEN..... What do you mean?

DYKE.....(HIS VOICE IS VERY FAINTLY SARCASTIC). Why, I mean that I'm just as much a condemned prisoner here as when I was in my cell. That door (HE POINTS TO IT) leads right back to my cell. Outside those windows are armed guards every few feet. You yourself can't get through the iron door in that anteroom (HE INDICATE THE DOOR TO THE LEFT) until somebody on the outside unlocks it; and I know as well as you do where that door (HE POINTS TO THE NEARER DOOR ON THE RIGHT) leads to.

THE WARDEN.....(STIFFLY) Would you rather wait in your cell?

DYKE..... Oh, no, this is a little plessanter. Except--

THE WARDEN..... Except what?

DYKE..... In my cell, I could smoke.

THE WARDEN.....(SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS). What do you want--cigar or cigarette?

DYKE..... A cigarette, if it's all the same. (THE WARDEN OPENS A DRAWER OF HIS DESK, TAKES OUT A BOX OF CIGARETTES, REMOVES ONE AND HANDS IT TO DYKE. THE WARDEN STRIKING A MATCH, LIGHTS DYKE'S CIGARETTE? AND THE CAREFULLY PUTS OUT THE MATCH).

DYKE .....(SMILES FAINTLY). Thanks. You're a good host.

THE WARDEN..... Dyke, before it's too late I wish you'd think over what Father Daly and I've said to you so many times.

DYKE.....I've thought of nothing else.

THE WARDEN..... Then-- as man to man-- and this is your last chance-- who are you?

DYKE .....(INSPECTS HIS CIGARETTE) Who am I? James Dyke-- a murderer.

THE WARDEN..... That isn't your real name and we know it.

DYKE..... You're not going to execute a name-- you're going to execute a man. What difference does it make whether you call me Dyke or something else?

THE WARDEN..... You had another name once. What was it?

DYKE..... If I had, I've forgotten it.

FATHER DALY..... Your mind is made up, my son?

DYKE..... Yes, Father, it is.

THE WARDEN..... Dyke.

DYKE..... Yes, sir?

THE WARDEN..... Do you see this pile of letters? (HE PLACES HIS HAND OVER IT.)

DYKE..... Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN.....(FINGERS THEM). Every one of these letters is about the same thing and all put together we've got maybe four thousand of 'em. These here are just a few samples.

DYKE..... What about them?

THE WARDEN..... We've had letters from every State in the Union and every province in Canada. We've had fifteen or twenty from England, four or five from France, two from Australia and one from Russia.

DYKE..... Well?

THE WARDEN..... (INCLINES TOWARD HIM). Do you know what every one of those letters says-- what four thousand different people are writing to me about?

DYKE..... No, sir.

THE WARDEN..... (SPEAKS SLOWLY AND IMPRESSIVELY) Who are you-- and are you the missing son-- or brother-- or husband--or sweetheart?

DYKE..... (FLICKS HIS CIGARETTE ASHES TO THE FLOOR). Have you answered them?

THE WARDEN..... No, I couldn't. I want you to.

DYKE..... How's that?

THE WARDEN..... I want you to tell me who you are. (DYKE SHAKES HIS HEAD) Can't you see you ought to do it?

DYKE..... No, sir, I can't exactly see that. Suppose you explain it to me.

THE WARDEN..... (SUDDENLY) You're trying to shield somebody, aren't you?

DYKE..... Yes-- no, Im not!

THE WARDEN..... (GLANCES AT FATHER DALY AND NODS WITH ELATION). Who is it? Your family?

DYKE..... I said I'm not.

THE WARDEN..... But first, you said you were.

DYKE..... That was a slip of the tongue.

THE WARDEN..... (HAS GROWN PERSUASIVE) Dyke, just listen to me a minute. Don't be narrow, look at this thing in a big, broad way. Suppose you would tell me your real name, and I publish it, it'll bring an awful lot of sorrow, let's say, to one family, one home, and that's your own. That's probably what you're thinking about. Am I right? You want to spsre your family and I don't blame you. On the surface, it sure would look like a mighty white thing for you to do. But look at it this way: suppose you came out with the truth, flat-footed, why, you might put all that sorrow into one home-- your own-- but at the same time you'd be putting an immense amount of relief in four thousand-- others. Don't you get that? Don't you figure you owe something to all these other people?

DYKE..... Not a thing.

FATHER DALY..... (HAS BEEN FIDGETING). My boy, the Warden is absolutely right. You do owe something to the other people--you owe something to the other people--you owe them peace of mind-- and for the sake of all those thousands of poor, distressed women, who imagine God knows what, I beg of you to tell us who you are.

DYKE..... Father, I simply can't do it.

FATHER DALY..... Think carefully, my boy, think very carefully. We're not asking out of idle curiosity.

DYKE..... I know that, but please don't let's talk about it any more. (TO THE WARDEN) You can answer those letters whenever you want to, and you can say I'm not the man they're looking for. That'll be the truth, too. Because I haven't any mother--or father--or sister-- or wife--or weathert. That's fair enough, isn't it?

FATHER DALY..... (SIGHS WEARILY) As you will, my son.

THE WARDEN..... Dyke, there's one more thing.

THE WARDEN..... Here are the Liberty Bonds (HE TAKES UP THE LARGE ENVELOPE FROM HIS DESK) that belong to you. Twenty-five hundred dollars in real money.

DYKE..... (REMOVES THE BONDS AND EXAMINES THEM). Good-looking, aren't they?

THE WARDEN.....(CASUALLY) What do you want me to do with them?

DYKE..... Well, I can't very well take them with me, so under the circumstances, I'd like to put them where they'll do the most good.

THE WARDEN.....(MORE CASUALLY YET) Who do you want me to send 'em to?

DYKE..... (LAUGHS QUIETLY) Now, Warden Holt, you didn't think you were going to catch me that way, did you?

THE WARDEN.....(SCOWLS) Who'll I send'em to? I can't keep 'em here, and I can't destroy'em. Why do you want to do with 'em?

DYKE.....(PONDERING DILIGENTLY AND TOSSES THE ENVELOPES TO THE DESK). I don't know. I'll think of something to do with them. I'll tell you in just a minute. Is there anything else?

THE WARDEN..... Not unless you want to make some sort of statement.

DYKE..... No, I guess I've said everything. I killed a man and I'm not sorry for it-- that is, I'm not sorry I killed that particular person I--

FATHER DALY.....(RAISES HIS HAND) Repentance--

DYKE..... (RAISES HIS OWN HAND IN TURN). I've heard that repentance, Father, is the sick bed of the soul-- and mine is very well and flourishing. The man deserved to be killed; he wasn't fit to live. It was my duty to kill him, and I did it. I'd never struck a man in anger in all my life, but when I knew what that fellow had done, I knew I had to kill him, and I did it deliberately and intentionally-- and carefully. I knew what I was doing, and I haven't any excuse-- that is, I haven't any excuse that satisfies the law. Now, I learned pretty early in life that whatever you do in this world you have to pay for in one way or another. If you kill a man, the price you have to pay is this (HE MAKES A GESTURE WHICH SWEEPS THE ENTIRE ROOM) and that (he points TO THE NEARER DOOR ON THE RIGHT) and I'm going to pay it. That's all there is to that. And an hour from now, while my body is lying in there, if a couple of angel policemen grab my soul and haul it up before God--

FATHER DALY.....(PROFOUNDLY SHOCKED). My boy, my boy, please--

DYKE..... I beg your pardon, Father. I don't mean to trample on anything that's sacred to you, but what I do mean to say is this: If I've got to be judge by God Almighty for the crime of murder, I'm not afraid, because the other fellow will certainly be there, too, won't he? and when God hears the whole story and both sides of it,



DYKE...(cont.).. which you never heard and never will-- and they never heard it in the court room, either-- why, then, if he's any kind of a God at all, I'm willing to take my chances with the other fellow. That's how concerned I am about the hereafter. And, if it'll make you feel any better, Father, why I do rather think there's going to be a hereafter. I read a book once that said a milligram of musk will give out perfume for seven thousand years, and a milligram of radium will give out light for seventy thousand. Why shouldn't a soul--mine, for instance-- live more than twenty-seven? But if there isn't any hereafter-- if we just die and are dead and that's all-- why, I'm still not sorry and I'm not afraid, because I'm quits with the other fellow-- the law is quits with me, and it's all balanced on the books. And that's all there is to that (AN ATTENDANT ENTERS FROM THE ANTEROOM.)

THE WARDEN..... Well? What is it?

THE ATTENDANT..... Visitor to see you, sir. With note from Governor Fuller. (HE PRESENTS IT.)

THE WARDEN .....(BARELY GLANCES AT THE ENVELOPE) Oh! A young woman?

THE ATTENDANT.... Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN..... Is Mrs. Case there?

THE ATTENDANT..... Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN..... Have the girl searched, and then take her into the ante-room and wait till I call you.

THE ATTENDANT..... Yes, sir. ( HE GOES OUT).

THE WARDEN..... Dyke, a young woman has just come to see you--do you want to see her?

DYKE..... I don't think so. What does she want?

THE WARDEN..... She thinks maybe she's your sister, and she's come a thousand miles to find out.

DYKE..... She's wrong. I have'nt any sister.

THE WARDEN..... (HESITATES). Will I tell her that, or do you want to tell it to her yourself?

DYKE..... Oh, you tel her.

THE WARDEN..... All right. (HE STARTS TO RISE BUT RESUMES HIS SEAT AS DYKE SPEAKS.)

DYKE..... Just a second---she's come a thousand miles to see me, did you say?

THE WARDEN..... Yes, and she's got special permission from the Governor to talk to you-- that is, with my O. K.

DYKE..... A year ago, nobody'd have crossed the street to look at me, and now they come a thousand miles!

FATHER DALY..... This is one of your debts to humanity, my boy. It wouldn't take you two minutes to see her, and, if you don't, anfter she's made that long journey in hope and dread and suffering--

DYKE..... Where can I talk with her-- here?

THE WARDEN..... Yes.

DYKE..... Alone? (THE WARDEN IS DOUBTFUL) Why, you don't need to be afraid, I haven't the faintest idea who the girl is, but if she happens to be some poor misguided sentimental fool, with a gun or pocket full of cyanide of potassium, she's wasting her time. I wouldn't cheat the sovereign state of Connecticut for anything in the world-- not even to please a young lady.

THE WARDEN..... Dyke, there's something about you that gets everybody.

DYKE..... How about the jury?

THE WARDEN..... You've got a sort of way with you.--

DYKE..... How about that spread-eagle district attorney?

THE WARDEN..... I'm going to let you talk with that girl in here-- alone.

DYKE..... Thanks.

THE WARDEN..... It's a sort of thing that's never been done before, but if I put you on your honor--

DYKE..... (CYNICALLY) My honor! Thank you, so much.

FATHER DALY..... Warden, are you sure it's wise?

DYKE..... Father, I'm disappointed in you. Do you imagine I'd do anything that could reflect on Warden Hold-- or you--or the young lady-- or me?

THE WARDEN..... Father, will you take Dyke into the deputy's room? I want to speak to the young lady first.

FATHER DALY..... Certainly. Come, my boy. (FATHER DALY AND DYKE START TOWARD THE DEPUTY'S ROOM.)

THE WARDEN..... I'll call you in just a couple of minutes.

DYKE..... We promise not to run away. (THEY GO OUT TOGETHER.)

THE WARDEN..... (CALLS) Wilson! (THE ATTENDANT ENTERS FROM THE LEFT.)

THE ATTENDANT..... Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN..... Is the girl there?

THE ATTENDANT..... Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN..... Frisked?

THE ATTENDANT..... Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN..... Everything all right?

THE ATTENDANT..... Yes, sir.

THE WARDEN..... (THROWS AWAY HIS CIGAR). Bring her in.

THE ATTENDANT..... Yes, sir. (HE SPEAKS THROUGH THE DOOR AT THE LEFT) Step this way, Miss. This here's the Warden.

(A young girl appears on the threshold, and casts about in mingled curiosity and apprehension. She is fresh and wholesome, and rather pretty; but her manner betrays a certain spiritual aloofness from the ultra-modern world-- a certain delicate reticence of the flesh--which immediately separates her from the metropolitan class. Indeed, she is dressed far too simply for a metropolitan girl of her age; she wears a blue tailored suit with deep white cuffs and a starched white sailor-collar, and a small blue hat which fits snugly over her fluffy hair. Her costume is not quite conservative enough to be literally old-fashioned, but it hints at the taste and repression of an old-fashioned home.

She is neither timid nor aggressive; she is self-unconscious. She looks at the Warden squarely, but not in boldness, and yet not in feminine appeal; she has rather the fearlessness of a girl who has lost none of her illusions about men in general. Her expression is essentially serious; it conveys, however, the idea that her seriousness is due to her present mission, and that ordinarily she takes an active joy in the mere pleasure of existence.)

THE WARDEN..... (HE HAD EXPECTED A VERY DIFFERENT TYPE OF VISITOR, SO THAT HE IS SOMEWHAT TAKEN ABACK). All right, Wilson.

THE ATTENDANT..... Yes, sir. (HE GOES AOUT.)

THE WARDEN.....(WITH GRAVE DEFERENCE, FALF RISES). Will you sit down?

THE GIRL..... Why--thank you very much. (SHE SITS IN THE CHAIR BESIDE THE DESK AND REGARDS HIM TRUSTFULLY).

THE WARDEN.....(HE IS PALPABLY AFFECTED BY HER YOUTH AND INNOCENCE, AND HE IS NOT QUITE SURE HOW BESTO TO PROCEED, BUT EVENTUALLY HE MAKES AN AWKWARD BEGINNING). You've had an interview with the Governor, I understand?

THE GIRL..... Yes, sir. I was with him almost an hour.

THE WARDEN..... And you want to see Dyke, do you?

THE GIRL..... Yes, sir. I hope I'm not-- too late.

THE WARDEN..... No, you're not too late. (HE IS APPRAISING HER CAREFULLY) But I want to ask you a few questions beforehand. (HER REACTION OF UNCERTAINTY INDUCES HIM TO SOFTEN HIS TONE) There isn't anything to get upset about. I just want to make it easier for you, not harder. Where do you live?

THE GIRL..... In Ohio.

THE WARDEN..... (VERY KINDLY). What place?

THE GIRL..... In Pennington, sir. It's a little town not far from Columbus.

THE WARDEN..... And you live out there with your father and mother?

THE GIRL..... No, sir-- just my mother and I. My father died when I was a little baby.

THE WARDEN..... Why didn't your mother come here herself, instead of sending you?

THE GIRL..... She couldn't. She's sick.

THE WARDEN..... I see. Have you any brothers or sisters?

THE GIRL .....(SLIGHTLY MORE AT EASE) Just one brother, sir-- this one. He and I were the only children. We were very fond of each other.

THE WARDEN..... He was considerably older than you?

THE GIRL..... Oh, yes. He's ten years older.

THE WARDEN..... Why did he leave home?

THE GIRL..... I don't really know, sir, except he just wanted to be in the city. Pennington's pretty small.

THE WARDEN..... How long is it since you've seen him?

THE GIRL..... It's eight years.

THE WARDEN..... (HIS VOICE IS ALMOST PATERNAL.) As long as that? Hm! And how old are you now?

THE GIRL..... I'm almost eighteen.

THE WARDEN.....(REPEATS SLOWLY). Almost eighteen. Hm! And are you sure after all this time you'd recognize your brother if you saw him?

THE GIRL..... Well-- (SHE LOOKS DOWN, AS IF EMBARRASSED TO MAKE THE ADMIS-  
SION) Of course I think so, but maybe I couldn't. You see, I  
was only a little girl when he went away --he wasn't a bad boy, sir,  
I don't think he could ever be really bad-- but if this is my  
brother, why he's been in a great deal of trouble and you know that  
trouble makes people look different.

THE WARDEN..... Yes, it does. But what makes you think this man Dyke may  
be your brother-- and why didn't you think of it sooner? The case  
has been in the papers for the last six months.

THE GIRL..... Why, it wasn't until last Tuesday that Mother saw a piece in  
the Journal-- that's the Columbus paper-- that he'd written all about  
about himself, and there was one little part of it that sounded so  
like Joe-- like the funny way he used to say things-- and then there  
was a picture that looked the least little bit like him-- well,  
mother just wanted me to come East and find out for sure.

THE WARDEN..... It's too bad she couldn't come herself. She'd probably  
know him whether he'd changed or not.

THE GIRL..... Yes, sir. But I'll do the best I can.

THE WARDEN..... When was the last time you heard from him, and where was  
he, and what was he doing?

THE GIRL..... Why, it's about five or six years since we had a letter  
from Joe. He was in Seattle, Washington.

THE WARDEN..... What doing?

THE GIRL..... I don't remember. At home, though, he worked in the  
stationery store. He liked books.

THE WARDEN..... (SUSPICIOUSLY). Why do you suppose he didn't write home?

THE GIRL..... I--couldn't say. He was just--thoughtless.

THE WARDEN..... Wasn't in trouble of any kind?

THE GIRL..... Oh, no! Never. That is --unless he's--here now.

THE WARDEN.....(DELIBERATES). How are you going to tell him?

THE GIRL..... I don't know what you mean.

THE WARDEN..... Why, you say maybe you wouldn't know him even if you  
saw him-- and I'll guarantee this man Dyke won't help you out very  
much. How do you think you're going to tell? Suppose he don't  
want to be recognized by you or anybody else? Suppose he's so  
ashamed of himself he--

THE GIRL..... I'd thought of that. I'm just going to talk to him-- ask him  
questions-- about things he and I used to do together-- I'll watch  
his face, and if he's my brother, I'm sure I can tell.

THE WARDEN.... (WITH TOLERANT DOUBT). What did you and your brother ever used  
to do that would help you out now?

THE GIRL..... He used to play games with me when I was a little girl, and  
tell me stories--that's what I'm counting on mostly-- the stories.

THE WARDEN..... I'm afraid.

THE GIRL..... Especially Shakespeare stories.

THE WARDEN..... Shakespeare!

THE GIRL..... Why, yes. He used to get the plots of the plays--all the  
Shakespeare plays--out of a book by a man named Lamb, and then he'd  
tell me the stories in his own words. It was wonderful!

THE WARDEN..... I'm certainly afraid he--

THE GIRL..... But best of all he'd learn some of the speeches from the plays themselves. He liked to do it--he was sure he was going to be an actor or something--he was in all the high school plays, always. And then he'd teach some of the speeches to me, and we'd say them to each other. And one thing--every night he'd sit side of my bed, and when I got sleepy there were two speeches we'd always say to each other, like good night--two speeches out of Romeo and Juliet, and then I'd go to sleep. I can see it all.  
(THE WARDEN SHAKES HIS HEAD) Why do you do that?

THE WARDEN..... This boy isn't your brother.

THE GIRL..... Do you think he isn't?

THE WARDEN..... I know he isn't.

THE GIRL..... How do you?

THE WARDEN..... This boy never heard of Shakespeare--much less learned him.  
(HE PRESSES A BUTTON OF HIS DESK) Oh, I'll let you see him for yourself, only you might as well be prepared. (THE ATTENDANT ENTERS FROM THE ANTEROOM) Tell Dyke and Father Daly to come in here--they're in the deputy's room.

THE ATTENDANT..... Yes, sir. (HE CROSSES BEHIND THE WARDEN, AND GOES OFF TO THE RIGHT.)

THE WARDEN..... If he turns out to be your brother-- which he won't-- you can have, say, an hour with him. If he don't, you'll oblige me by cutting it a short as you can.

THE GIRL..... You see, I've got to tell Mother something perfectly definite. She's worried so long about him, and--and now the suspense is perfectly terrible for her.

THE WARDEN..... I can understand that. You're a plucky girl.

THE GIRL..... Of course, it would be awful for us if this is Joe, but even that would be better for Mother than just to stay awake nights, and wonder and wonder, and never know that became of him.

(THE ATTENDANT OPENS THE DOOR TO THE DEPUTY'S ROOM, AND WHEN DYKE AND FATHER DALY HAVE COME IN, HE CROSSES AGAIN BEHIND THE WARDEN, AND IS GOING OUT AT THE LEFT WHEN THE WARDEN SIGNS TO HIM AND HE STOPS.)

THE WARDEN..... (GETS TO HIS FEET). Dyke, this is the young lady that's come all the way from Pennington, Ohio, to see you.

DYKE.....(WHO HAS BEEN TALKING IN AN UNDERTONE TO FATHER DALY, RAISES HIS HEAD QUICKLY). Yes, sir?

THE WARDEN..... I've decided you can talk with her here--alones.  
(THE GIRL HAS RISEN; BREATHLESS, AND STANDS FIXED; DYKE INSPECTS HER COLDLY FROM HEAD TO FOOT.)

DYKE..... Thank you. It won't take long.

THE WARDEN.....(HAS BEEN SCANNING THE GIRL'S EXPRESSIONS NOW, AS HE SEES THAT SHE HAS NEITHER RECOGNIZED DYKE NOR FAILED TO RECOGNIZE HIM, HE MAKES A LITTLE GRIMACE IN CONFIRMATION OF HIS OWN JUDGMENT). Father Daly and I'll stay in the deputy's office. We'll leave the door open. Wilson, you stand in the anteroom with the door open.

DYKE.....(BITTERLY)..My honor!

THE WARDEN..... What say?

THE WARDEN...(TO THE GIRL) Will you please remember what I told you about the time?

THE GIRL..... Oh, yes, sir.

THE WARDEN..... Come, Father. (THEY GO OFF INTO THE DEPUTY'S ROOM, AND THE ATTENDANT, AT A NOD FROM THE WARDEN, GOES OFF AT THE LEFT.)

(Dyke and the Girl are now facing each other; Dyke is well poised and insouciant and gives the impression of complete indifference to the moment. The Girl, on the other hand, is deeply agitated and her agitation is gradually increased by Dyke's own attitude.)

THE GIRL..... (AFTER SEVERAL EFFORTS TO SPEAK.) Mother sent me to see you.

DYKE.....(POLITELY CALLOUS). Yes?

THE GIRL..... (COMPELLED TO DROP HER EYES.) You see, we haven't seen or heard of my brother Joe for ever so long, and mother thought-- after what we read in the papers--

DYKE..... That I might be your brother Joe?

THE GIRL.....(OBVIOUSLY RELIEVED). Yes, that's it.

DYKE..... Well, you can easily see that I'm not your brother, can't you?

THE GIRL..... (STARES AT HIM AGAIN,) I'm not sure. You look a little like him, just as the picture in the paper did, but then again, it's so long-- (SHE SHAKES HER HEAD DUBIOUSLY) and I'd thought of Joe so differently--

DYKE.....(HIS MANNER IS SCHEWAT INDULGENT, AS THOUGH TO A CHILD). As a matter of fact, I could'nt be your brother, or anybody else's brother, because I never had a sister. So that rather settles it.

THE GIRL..... Honestly?

DYKE..... Honestly.

THE GIRL.....(UNCONVINCED, BECOMES MORE APPEALING). What's your real name?

DYKE..... Dyke--James Dyke.

THE GIRL..... Thats sure enough your name?

DYKE..... Sure enough. You don't think I'd tell a lie at this stage of the game, do you?

THE GIRL..... (MUSING.) No, I don't believe you would. Where do you come from-- I mean where were you born?

DYKE..... In Canada, but I've lived all over.

THE GIRL..... Didn't you ever live in Ohio?

DYKE..... No never.

THE GIRL..... What kind of work did you do--what was your business?

DYKE..... Oh, I'm sort of Jack-of-all-trades. I've been everything a man could be--except a success.

THE GIRL..... Do you like books?

DYKE..... Books?

DYKE..... I dont' read when there's anything better to do. I've read a lot here.

THE GIRL..... Did you ever sell books--for a living, I mean?

DYKE..... Oh, no.

THE GIRL.....(GROWING CONFUSED). I hope you don't mind my asking so many questions. But I--

DYKE..... No--go ahead, if it'll relieve your mind any.

THE GIRL..... You went to school somewhere, of course--high school?

DYKE..... No, I never got that far.

THE GIRL..... Did you ever want to be an actor? Or were you ever?

DYKE..... No, just a convict.

THE GIRL.....(HELPLESSLY). Do you know any poetry?

DYKE..... Not to speak of.

THE GIRL.....(DELAYS A MOMENT, AND THEN, WATCHING HIM VERY EARNESTLY, SHE RECITES JUST ABOVE HER BREATH.)

Thou knowst the mask of night is  
on my face  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint  
my cheek  
For that which--

(Realizing that Dyke's expression is one of utter vacuity she falters, and breaks off the quotation, but she continues to watch him unwaveringly)

Don't you know what that is?

DYKE..... No, but to tell the truth, it sounds sort of silly to me.  
Doesn't it to you?

THE GIRL.....(HER INTONATION HAS BECOME SLIGHTLY FORLORN, BUT SHE GATHERS COURAGE, AND PUTS HIM TO ONE MORE TEST.)

Good night, good night, parting  
is such sweet sorrow  
That I shall say good night till it  
be morrow.

DYKE.....(HIS MOUTH TWITCHES IN AMUSEMENT) Eh?

THE GIRL..... What comes next?

DYKE..... Good Lord, I don't know.

THE GIRL.....(GAZES INTENTLY, ALMOST IMPLORINGLY, AT HIM AS THOUGH SHE IS MAKING A STRUGGLE TO READ HIS MIND. THEN SHE RELAXES AND HOLDS OUT HER HAND.) Good-bie. You--you're not Joe, are you? I--had to come and find out, though. I hope I've not made you too unhappy.

DYKE.....(IGNORES HER HAND.) You're not going now?

THE GIRL.....(SPIRITLESS) Yes. I promised the--is he the Warden? that man in there?--I said I'd go right away if you weren't my brother. And you aren't, so--

DYKE..... You're going back to your mother?

THE GIRL..... Yes.

DYKE..... I'm surprised that she sent a girl like you on a sorry errand like this, instead of--

THE GIRL..... She's very sick.

DYKE..... Oh, that's too bad.

THE GIRL.....(TWISTING HER HANDKERCHIEF). No, she's not well at all. And most of it's from worrying about Joe.

DYKE..... Still, when you tell her that her son isn't a murderer-- at least, that he isn't this one--that'll comfort her a good deal, won't it?

THE GIRL.....(RELUCTANTLY). Yes, I think maybe it will, only--

DYKE..... Only what?

THE GIRL..... I don't think Mother'll ever be really well again until she finds out for certain where Joe is and what's become of him.

DYKE.....(SHAKES HIS HEAD COMPASSIONATELY). Mothers ought not be treated like that. I wish I'd treated mine better. By the way, you didn't tell me what your name is.

THE GIRL..... Josephine Paris.

DYKE.....(IS SUDDENLY ATTENTIVE). Paris? That's an unusual name. I've heard it somewhere, too.

THE GIRL..... Just like the name of the city--in France.

DYKE.....(KNITTING HIS BROWS) And your brother's name was Joseph?

THE GIRL..... Yes--they used to call us Joe and Josie--that's funny, isn't it?

DYKE.....(THOUGHTFULLY). No, I don't think it's so very funny. I rather like it. (HE PASSES HIS HAND OVER HIS FOREHEAD AS IF TRYING TO COERCE HIS MEMORY).

THE GIRL..... Whats the matter?

DYKE.....(FROWNING). I was thinking of something--now, what on earth was that boy's name! Wait a minute, don't tell me--wait a minute--I've got it! (HE PUNCTUATES HIS TRIUMPH WITH ONE FIST IN THE PALM OF THE OTHER HAND) Joseph Anthony Paris!

THE GIRL.....(AMAZED). Why, that's his name! That's Joe! How did you ever-

DYKE.....(HIS MANNER IS VERY FORCIBLE AND CONVINCING) Wait! Now listen carefully to what I say, and don't interrupt me, because we've only got a minute, and I want you to get this all straight, so you can tell your mother. When the war came along I enlisted and I was overseas for four years--with the Canadians. Early one morning we'd staged a big trench raid, and there was an officer who'd been wounded coming back, and was lying out there in a shell-hole under fire. The Jerries were getting ready for a raid of their own so they were putting down a box barrage with light guns and howitzers and a few heavies. This officer was lying right in the middle of it. Well, all of a sudden a young fellow dashed out a trench not far from where I was, and went for that officer. He had to go through a curtain of shells and, more than that, they opened on him with rifles and machine guns. The chances were just about a million to one against him, and he must have known it, but he went out just the same. He got the officer in his arms and started back, but he'd only gone a few yards when a five point nine landed right on top of the two of them. Afterward, we got what was left--the identification tag was still there--and that was the name-- Joseph Anthony Paris!

THE GIRL..... (CARRIES BOTH HANDS TO HER BREAST) Oh!

DYKE.....If that was your brother's name, then you can tell your mother that he died like a brave man and a soldier, three years ago, in France.

THE GIRL..... Joe--my brother Joe--is dead?

DYKE..... On the field of battle, It was one of the wonderful, heroic things that went almost unnoticed, as so many of them did. If an officer had seen it, there'd have been a decoration for your mother to keep and remember him by.

THE GIRL..... And you were there--and saw it?



DYKE..... I was there and saw it. It was three years ago. That's why you and your mother haven't heard from him. And if you don't believe what I've said, why, you just write up to Ottawa and get the official record. Of course (SHE SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS CONTEMPTUOUSLY) those records are in terribly poor shape, but at least they can tell you what battalion he fought with, when he went overseas. Only you mustn't be surprised no matter whether they say he was killed in action, or died of wounds, or is missing or even went through the whole war with his outfit, and was honorably discharged. They really don't know what happened to half the men! But I've told you the truth. And it certainly ought to make your mother happy when she knows that her boy died as a soldier, and not as a criminal.

THE GIRL..... (IS TRANSFIGURED) Yes, yes, it will!

DYKE..... And does it make you happy, too?

THE GIRL..... (NODS REPEATEDLY) Yes, So happy--after what we were both afraid of-- I can't even cry--yet. (SHE BRUSHES HER EYES WITH HER HANDKERCHIEF) I can hardly wait to take it to her.

DYKE.....(STRUCK BY A SUDDEN INSPIRATION). I want to give you something else to take to her. (HE PICKS UP FROM THE DESK THE ENVELOPE CONTAINING THE LIBERTY BONDS AND SEALS IT) I want you to give this to your mother from me. Tell her it's from a man who was at Vimy Ridge and saw your brother die, so it's a sort of memorial for him. (HE TOUCHES HER ARM AS SHE ABSENTLY BEGINS TO TEAR OPEN THE ENVELOPE) No, don't you open it--let her do it.

THE GIRL..... What is it? Can't I know?

DYKE.... Never mind, now, but give it to her. It's all I've got in the world and it's too late now for me to do anything else with it. And have your mother buy a little gold star to wear for her son--and you get one, too, and wear it--here--(HE TOUCHES HIS HEART) Will you?

THE GIRL..... Yes, I will. And yet somehow I'll almost feel that I'm wearing it for you, too.

DYKE.....(SHAKES HIS HEAD SOBERLY). Oh, no! You mustn't ever do that. I'm not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with a boy like your brother, and now I'm afraid it is time for you to go. I'm sorry, but--you'd better. I'm glad you came before it was too late, though.

THE GIRL.....(GIVES HIM HER HAND). Good-bye, and thank you. You've done more for me--and Mother-- than I could possibly tell you. And--and I'm so sorry for you--so truly sorry--I wish I could only do something to make you a tiny bit happier, too. Is there anything I could do?

DYKE.....(STARES AT HER AND BY DEGREES HE BECOMES WISTFUL) Why--yes, there is. Only I--(HE LEAVES SENTENCE UNCOMPLETED.)

THE GIRL..... What is it?

DYKE..... (LOOKS AWAY). I can't tell you. I never should have let myself think of it.

THE GIRL..... Please tell me. I want you to. For--Joe's sake, tell me what I can do.

DYKE..... (HIS VOICE IS LOW AND DESOLATE). Well--in all the months I've been in this hideous place, you're the first girl I've seen. I didn't ever expect to see one again. I'd forgotten how much like angels women look. I've been terribly lonesome tonight, especially and if you really do want to do something for me--for your brother's sake--you see, you're going to leave me in just a minute and--and I haven't any sister of my own, or anybody else, to say good-bye to me--so, if you could--really say good-bye--(SHE GAZES AT HIM FOR A MOMENT, UNDERSTANDS, FLUSHES, AND THEN SLOWLY MOVES INTO HIS OUTSTRETCHED ARMS. HE HOLDS HER CLOSE TO HIM, TOUCHES HIS LIPS TO HER FOREHEAD TWICE, AND RELEASES HER.)

DYKE.....(THICKLY) Good-bye, my dear.

THE GIRL..... Good night. (SHE ENDEAVORS TO SMILE, BUT HER VOICES  
CATCHES IN HER THROAT) Good-bye.

DYKE.....(IMPULSIVELY) What is it?

THE GIRL.....(SHAKES HER HEAD). N=othing.

DYKE..... Nothing?

THE GIRL....(CLUTCHES HER HANDKERCHIEF TIGHT IN HER PALM). I was thinking--  
I was thinking what I used to say to my brother--for good night.  
(SHE VERY NEARLY BREAKS DOWN) If I only could have--have said  
it to him just once more--for good-bye.

DYKE..... What was it?

THE GIRL..... I--I told it to you once, and you say it was silly.

DYKE.....(SOFTLY) Say it again.

THE GIRL.....(SHE CANNOT QUITE CONTROL HER VOICE.)

Good night, good night, parting  
is such sweet sorrow  
That I shall say good night till it  
be morrow.

(She goes uncertainly toward the anteroom, hesitates, almost turns back, and then with a choking sob she hurries through the door and closes it behind her. For several seconds Dyke stands rigidly intent upon that door; until at length, without changing his attitude or his expression, he speaks very tenderly and reminiscently.)

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes,  
peace in thy breast;  
Would I were sleep and peace, so  
sweet to rest.

(The Warden and Father Daly come in quietly from the Deputy's room; and as they behold Dyke, how rapt and unconscious of them he is, they look at each other, questioningly. The Warden glances at the clock and makes as though to interrupt Dyke's solitary reflections but Father Daly quietly restrains him. The Chaplain sits down in one of the chairs at the back wall; the Warden crosses on tip-toe and sits at his desk; he is excessively nervous and he continually refers to the clock. Dyke turns, as though unwillingly, from the door; there are depths in his eyes, and his thoughts are evidently far away. He sits in the chair to the right of the Warden's desk and leans outward, his right hand on his knee. He puts his left hand to his throat as though to protect it from a sudden pain. He gazes straight ahead into the unknown and speaks in reverie.)

Of all the wonders that I yet have  
heard,  
It seems to me most strange that  
men should fear;  
Seeing that death, a necessary  
end,  
Will come when it will come.

(He stops and muses for a time, while the Warden glances perplexedly at Father Daly to discover if the Priest can interpret what Dyke is saying. Father Daly shakes his head. Abruptly Dykes' face is illumined by a new and welcome recollection; and again tries in vain to comprehend him.)

Cowards die many times before  
their death;  
The valiant never taste of death  
but once.

(He stops again and shudders a trifle; his head droops and he repeats, barely above a whisper.)

The valiant never taste of death  
but once.

(The nearer door on the right is opened noiselessly and the Jailer, in obedience to his instructions, steps just inside the room and stands there mute. Father Daly and the Warden glance at the Jailer, and with significance at each other, and both rise, tardily. The Warden's hand, as it rests on his desk is seen to tremble. There is a moment of dead silence; presently Dyke lifts his head and catches sight of the motionless Attendant at the open door. With a quick intake of his breath, he starts half out of his seat and stares, fascinated; he sinks back slowly, and turns his head to gaze first at Father Daly and then at the Warden. The Warden averts his eyes, but Father Daly's expression is of supreme pity and encouragement. Involuntarily, Dyke's hand again goes creeping upward toward his throat, but he arrests it. He grasps the arms of his chair and braces himself; he rises then, and stands very erect, in almost the position of a soldier at attention.)

THE WARDEN.....(SWALLOWS HARD.) Dyke!

FATHER DALY..... (BRUSHES PAST THE WARDEN HIS RIGHT HAND LIFTED AS THOUGH IN BENEDICTION.) My son!

DYKE.....(REGARDS THEM FIXEDLY; HIS VOICE IS LOW AND STEADY.) All right, let's go. (HE FACES ABOUT, AND WITH HIS HEAD HELD PROUD AND HIGH AND HIS SHOULDERS SQUARED TO THE WORLD, HE MOVES SLOWLY TOWARD THE OPEN DOOR. FATHER DALY, WITH THE LIGHT OF HIS CALLING IN HIS EYES, STEPS IN LINE JUST AHEAD OF DYKE. THE WARDEN, HIS MOUTH SET HARD, FALLS IN BEHIND. WHEN THEY HAVE ALL GONE FORWARD A PACE OR TWO, FATHER DALY BEGINS TO SPEAK, AND DYKE TO REPLY. FATHER DALY'S VOICE IS TROG AND SWEET; AND DYKE SPEAKS JUST AFTER HIM, NOT MECHANICALLY, BUT IN BRAVE AND UNFALTERING RESPONSE.)

Q

FATHER DALY...."I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills--"

DYKE..... "The valiant never taste of death but once".

FATHER..... "From whence cometh my help".

DYKE..... "The valiant never taste of death but once."

FATHER..... (HAS ALMOST REACHED THE DOOR; HIS VOICE RISES A SEMI-TONE, AND GAINS IN EMOTION.) "My help cometh from the Lord which made Heaven and earth".

DYKE..... "The valiant never taste of death--but once".

(WHEN THE WARDEN, WHOSE HANDS ARE TIGHTLY CLENCHED, HAS PASSED THE THRESHOLD, THE JAILER FOLLOWS AND CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM. THERE IS A VERY BRIEF PAUSE AND THEN)

CURTAIN

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