

CHAPTER V

A Brief Farewell

They came, those who were to come, to say a brief farewell of the season to the vast unruly stretches of the Atlantic ocean that brooded in its lair at Old Orchard. For it was Labor Day, the last of ~~the~~ summer's vacation.

Whether by coincidence or design they were all there: Mr. Jerome Black, Bob Black, Forrest and Clara, Dr. Capen; and even Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Dreen. ~~All George's friends.~~ The Dervins were there, but George hadn't gone with them. He had come alone by trolley. Blanca ^{had} thought it better that way - in her father's mood.

Blanca hadn't expected to find Cynthia at George's side; then she spied them munching hot dogs on the pier. Something he said or she said provoked mirth, for they were both laughing. Was their meeting planned, she wondered, or was ^{it} coincidence? People meet accidentally at Old Orchard all the time. Maybe they want it appear accidentally. The blood rushed to her face. She felt ~~her muscles~~ her face tighten. She wasn't jealous, she told herself. Jealous of Cynthia, a mousy little thing! Besides, she is Foster's steady. Yet, she had often noticed George's attitude in Cynthia's presence - his tenderness, as if she were something sacred, not to be touched. Not the way he mauls me, she thought bitterly. The way she looks up at him, with beaming face, the little minx! And where was Foster? Probably at the shooting gallery, and the two making the most of the moment alone.

"Hello, George," she approached. After a hesitant moment, "hello, Cynthia."

"Oh, hello," Blanca," George greeted her.

"Hello," Cynthia smiled good naturedly.

"Come, join in the feast," George said as he moved toward the hot-dog stand.

"Thank you," she said soberly, "Thanks a lot, I had my dinner." She stressed the "thanks a lot" with superior tone.

George, ignoring her pique, said, "A cola then. Good after a heavy meal!"

"Don't be so solicitous, it doesn't become you," she glared at him.

"Aw, come off it," he teased, "join in the general merriment of the plebian. Let your hair down, and have fun."

"The sun affect you?"

"The sun, the merry blue sea. The merry bright crowd. The merry hollow sound of the pier." He stamped his feet heavily on the boards to demonstrate the sound to her. "The merry smell of the crowd. The sour, but merry smell of the frenchfries, the frankfurters, the mustards, the chillies, the merry smell of summer's farewell. The holiday under God's blue heaven, and over the green-blue sea. Come, I invite you to be merry."

She gave him a look of haughty indignity. "A poet on crutches, limping on words. Words, words, bah!" She turned and left.

"A spirited wench, my cousin," George laughed.

"Sorry I was the cause of it."

"Now, Cynthia, don't you go sour on me," George said as he took her arm and led her down the pier. "I enjoyed the brief interlude. The law of checks and balances, the law of compensation in nature, for good or evil. We have most of the afternoon to enjoy together. Foster will be away to represent me at the little confab here how best to salvage my uncle's lease, which on good authority I have that it'll be salvaged anyway. He will state, ^{to Old Forrester} that no matter the outcome it'll have no effect on my Dreen report which goes in tomorrow. Foster was quite elated with the task. He'll have a chance to exercise his tongue besides his muscles. Meanwhile you and I....". "You and I alone on a derelict ship, suspended between heaven and earth," she finished. "And I'll stand by you to the last. - the last drop

of water," he said as he tightened his arm about her.

PART SEVEN

Of Solomon

Chapter I

Impression I
Between Two Worlds

The people of Portgrave warmed to the story of Solomon Dreen as George pictured him in his first installment. Solomon was not merely a figment of the mind, a mythical figure of the past, created and fashioned by the sculptor's ¹mallet and chisel, but one of flesh and blood, who lived in their midst. Those who had seen him in his little theatre, or on the streets, remembered him as a man of a distant land, on the horizon of memory. They wanted a closer view. What did he know or think of them? What did he think of the land of his adoption? How does a sensitive soul feel at the moment of departure from one's land of birth for the Unknown?

Explorings through the vigils of the long night brought to the two friends a communion of minds, an understanding, an akinness of thought, a kinship, as lucent as the rainbow that rises through the cloud. George saw with the clearness of a vision through the vistas of Solomon's past - as Solomon reconnoitred and reconstructed them, as if they were of the present, and touched with the nostalgia of a beautiful dream. A pouring out of the soul, with its pain and anguish, but with sublime joy also. The warm heart-beat for the greatness and glorious vastness of his New Land, for its great founders and the everlasting foundation they had laid; but also his heart-ache and grief for the few marauders and destroyers!