The Judge

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The shadows in the library of the big house cause eerie figures to dance and play across the walls and ceiling. One small light is burning on the thick wooden library desk. The air is stuffy and smells of worn pages and battered bindings. There is also the odor of new, slick pages, and bright smooth backs of books. It is quiet, except for the crisp sound of a page occasionally turning. Being attracted to this sound, one looks for its source, and is successful. Sitting in a huge leather rocking chair is a man in his middle seventies, with a bald head rimmed by snow white hair. As he shifts his stout body in the chair, the leather creaks loudly. His eyes are encircled by black, shell-rimmed spectacles. The furrows which are creased between his shaggy white eyebrows give one the impression that upon this man rest the problems of the world. This is my grandfather, and whenever I think of him, it is in this setting.

My grandfather is one of the most remarkable men I have ever known. He graduated from the University of Michigan fifty years ago. While there he studied law, and he still practices this profession in this middle-sized, Indiana town. He held the position of judge in the county, and still goes by this title, which pleases him very much. He has also studied music, and in recent years has composed works for piano and band. My grandfather was a lieutenant colonel in World War I, and he resents the fact that Washington recently turned him down for active service in this war because of his age. His libraries are overloaded with books concerning wars, generals, and war presidents.

Grandfather is a stern man, and quiet, yet he has a great sense of humor and is very witty on certain occasions. He is kindly and sweet natured, but he can deal with opposers of the law with stubborn strength. Grandfather has always been strong and exceedingly intelligent, but is sometimes very one-sided in his views. When I was younger I feared him, yet loved him. Now my fear is gone.

There is nothing my grandfather would rather do than march in parades. Since he belongs to many organizations, among them being Knights Templars, American Legion, and bands, he has many beautiful uniforms, and they are his pride and joy.

I am very proud of him, and I like to tell about him. He has always seemed a pillar of strength, but one incident stands out in my mind in which he turned into an old man, overnight. Last March my grandmother died in the night, having been ill only a few minutes. When we left my grandfather after the funeral it was snowing very hard. He accompanied us to the bus station, and when I looked back I saw him walking away into the blinding fury of the snow, leaning heavily on his cane. He had, for that moment, lost his strength, his power. He was an old, tired man.