

The Man With The Loud Voice

LOREN MOORE

WAR had been declared about one year, I guess; anyway, the first killed - in - action notice had been received in Cripton, Indiana, and the news shocked the whole county seat for that Halen boy was a good-natured lad who had married the Foster girl. It was a cold Saturday morning when we first heard of it and hardly anything else was discussed at the dinner table. Father was angry that we had ever got in the war in the first place saying that it was a shame that fine young man like the Halen boy should die for nothing. Harvey, that's my older brother, answered that it just couldn't be helped that we were fighting to rid the world of the enemies of democracy. I thought Harvey was right because my history teacher had said the same thing only the day before. My mother made me keep still because Father was visibly upset and could not eat his pie. The door opened and in came Emily Philips who lived next door. She was all out of breath from running and could hardly speak. My mother told her to wait till she caught breath before telling us what was wrong. She said that Kato Inamoto, the restaurant man, had been arrested because he had failed to register as a spy—or something—but she did know that he was a spy and that all of the men of the town were gathering down at the jail. Father, Harvey, and I left the house on the run without bothering to take our coats because the jail was not far. We passed Judge Faix on the way who was already worn out but the new groceryman kept up with us all the way. A big crowd had gathered in front of the jail. Hardly any of the men had coats. There were no

words of welcome to anyone because they were too busy mumbling over something. Father sensed it too because he kept Harvey and me on the edge of the crowd. The first thing I noticed was that greasy rope hanging from the porch with a slip knot in it. Harvey just kept staring at it all the time we were there. Mr. Hines, Mr. Peterson, Mr. O'Neil—why I guess just about all the big men in town were there. I even saw my history teacher close to the jail porch. I sure did hope he saw me but I don't think he did. That's when Charlie Synder, the mechanic over at Miller's garage who is drunk most of the time, jumped upon the porch and began to talk. Oh, how he talked ! He said things just like Father had always warned us not to say. But he had such an art to it. The wind was blowing his hair or else it was messed up from the night before. He never wore a tie anyway so he looked perfectly natural except something seemed very unreal about him. It was his voice which I finally decided was different. From that moment on I never questioned but what he said was true that the yellow son-of-a-bitch within the jail should be strung up. I wished that my father would quit yelling so that I could hear Charlie talk a little better, although Charlie was doing very well against the whole mob. I was really surprised to hear the awful things that Charlie knew about Kato. Who would have thought that Kato had killed the Halen boy? They would sure think different about Charlie around here from now on I bet. Mr. Kellin, my teacher, started pounding on the door of the jail just as they pushed old man Halen up on the porch. He was shaking his head and tears were rolling down his cheeks.

Why don't he say something and tell us to hang the Jap? I had never seen a man hung before. What was he thinking? Didn't he know that Kato had killed Bill? Now the men were on the porch demanding that Sheriff Mason bring out Kato. Sirens started blowing from everywhere as three

cars of state troopers pulled up. Sheriff Mason had probably called the Evansville post for help. With Father leading the way, we ducked behind the new feed store building and ran home. I was really cold when I got home.

THE MAD RUSSIAN

GEORGE FULLEN

The Russian composer bravely sings
Mad melodies on ranting strings,
Inspires us to the passionate stage,
And leaves us while we turn the page

With tongue in cheek, he makes a jest
By turning east when we go west,
His forte measures prophesy
The end is near, but by and by,

He thinks of something else to say;
So then, the listener must stay
To hear him make a witty pun
Which adds to nothing but his fun.

Mad Russian, do relearn your scales
To tell us some sincere tales.
But Russian, do not get us wrong
And go away to stay too long.