

# Something Special

JOHN Q. A. ELLIOTT

Today was to be special. It had to be. The sun through the windows of the bright reading room was a harbinger. The sun gold-edged the emerald leaves of the lilac bush. It danced across the back yard, painting small platinum flecks between the lacelike ebony shadows of the giant maples. The breeze wafted through the open windows pushing the curtains lazily inward and carrying the sweet dew damp scent of the garden into the room.

Leona turned from the window inhaling deeply and smiling. Yes today — today would be the special one. The hint was everywhere—in that breeze, in the sun-flooded room—everywhere! It was a wonderful day. She faced breakfast with an alacrity that was uncommon to her. She faced every moment with renewed vigor. It was funny the way the day had this effect on her. There had been other days almost like this, days entertaining the same elements, days on which the sun had shown in the same manner and on which the light of it had sifted its way through the trees and the lilac bush, gilding the edges and lying on the ground in the same crazy quilt pattern, but on those days there had not been this feeling inside her. In all her fifty years of life there had never been exactly this feeling. It was unique. It belonged to today.

Margaret, her maid of all work, was just inside the kitchen door. She looked disappointed. "I was just fixin' to bring your breakfast up to you, Miss Leona."

Leona looked closely at the maid, but there was nothing in Margaret's eyes to convey the idea that she too felt it was a special day. There was rarely anything in her eyes. They were quite blank, in perfect

keeping with her bland, expressionless face. Oh well, it was of no consequence. Margaret never felt anything. The cogs of her senses were worn smooth from constant rubbing against the world in the wrong direction.

But Leona was not to be discouraged. She sat down to breakfast. It was a good meal, seasoned properly. Today it was unusually good. When she had finished, she returned to the reading room and settled to the morning paper. There was nothing in it to hold her interest. She felt almost girlish today. It was a silly feeling but she enjoyed it. She enjoyed everything. She left the house and stepped into the back yard.

The meter-reader from the water company came whistling up the back walk. She smiled cordially and he nodded and read the meter and nodded again, also smiling, and went whistling back down the walk. Perfect! Everything so perfect! She pattered around in the yard the rest of the morning, helping the roses in their effort to climb the white picket fence and planning which flowers were to be planted the next year.

Lunch time came and went and the long, hot afternoon set in. She took a pitcher of iced tea and a magazine and went to the front porch. She settled down in a glow of contentment. About four o'clock Mrs. Vandivier phoned and they talked for a good half hour, but this was not the wonderful thing that was to happen. This was not special . . .

She went back to the porch, and at five o'clock Margaret came to the door and said that supper was ready. Leona ate in meditative silence. The sun glimmered

through the window, a deep orange-gold. She could look through the small dining room and see into the kitchen. The light was reflected in the porcelain of the sink, tinting it a weak orange color. The day still looked special—perhaps it still could be. After supper she went back to the reading room and picked up a copy of Oscar Wilde's works. She found the book too weird for her mood.

Evening was nearly gone. Afterglow had settled over the garden, and the birds called throbbingly to one another through the half dusk. She put the book down and walked to the window listening to the varying whispers of the night. It was a sweet, caressing warmth of sound and the breeze whispered too—of good things.

She would not give up hope—not yet. Perhaps there was still time. She left the window and the room, standing long mom-

ents in the doorway before she switched off the light. She did not turn on the light in her bedroom, but undressed slowly by the window. She kept glancing out across the yard—peering even at times.

Reluctantly at last she drew on her night dress. More reluctantly still she slipped into bed. A long time she lay quite still, wanting to cry, but she did not. This had happened before. There had been other days which seemed special and had turned out this same way. Perhaps some day that seemed like today would be special. Yes, that was right. And besides, if today had been special then tomorrow could not be. And it was better this way—thinking that because today had not been special perhaps tomorrow would be. Her face, almost unlined, rested in the silver opalescence of a patch of moonlight. She was smiling . . .

## On Reading Shakespeare

D. R. BARNES

I've often heard this item said,  
Mouthed in intonation dead,  
"Heap fiery ashes on his head,"  
Deliver me from Shakespeare!

Too much forsooth . . . and by my hand,  
I just can't seem to understand,  
I guess I have a faulty gland.  
Deliver me from Shakespeare!

The complex verse . . . the noun misplaced,  
The hero-villain is disgraced,  
The plot shot forth and then retraced,  
Deliver me from Shakespeare!

The foolish sage . . . the learned clown,  
The loud oration, smirk or frown,  
I might as well read upside down.  
Deliver me from Shakespeare!

Distorted plot to unschooled minds,  
Meaning sought like "Fleece of Hinds,"  
The tortuous way the knowledge finds,  
If you will but read Shakespeare.

The pulpy rag the fool reads  
Doth only augment all his needs.  
A greater joy that far exceeds  
Is yours if you read Shakespeare.