

A Quarrel

David Dawson

THE ONLY sounds I could hear were the loud voices. They were angry and banged against my ears in the darkness of the room. I opened my eyes, but it was like I was still asleep. When I closed my eyes, it was dark. When I opened my eyes, it was still black. But the voices were still there with my eyes open or shut. They would not go away. Mother and Daddy were shouting at one another. I could not understand what they were saying, but their voices sounded angry as if they were trying to hurt each other.

I closed my eyes again. But I could not go back to sleep. I still heard their voices. And I wanted to sleep, but I could not. I pulled the pillow over my head and tried to shut out the sounds. It was as if they were talking inside a big barrel far, far away. But the pillow did not make any difference; I could still hear them. I could also hear the sound of my own breath as I let it out through my nose. It sounded rough and wheezy against the pillow. I could hear my heart beat loud and clear there in the night. It bumped and pounded loudly in my ears. I wondered how I could hear my heart when it was so far down inside of me. The sheets began to feel cold, then, all at once, they got hot, damp, and sticky. I was wet all over, and my pajamas stuck to my legs and arms. They felt all twisted around me.

I climbed out of bed slowly and carefully, and the floor was damp and hard against my bare feet. I walked very slowly so I would not make any noise. I went through the living room. Everything was dark as I touched the cold wood of tables, the stiff brush of cloth on chairs, and the hard, rough plaster of walls. And I went close to the kitchen. The voices became louder and clearer as I went. They seemed to grow more angry. The yellow light fell through the open doorway on the dull grey of the floor. I slipped around the edge of the door to see.

Mother and Daddy stood at the far end of the room back of the white wooden table and chairs. The light on the ceiling made the white on the table very bright to my eyes. Daddy was standing behind a chair, holding on to it. His face was all drawn and white looking, and his black brows were drawn down in a knot. Mother was beside him, her face in angry wrinkles. It was strange to see my mother standing next to Daddy. For when he talked, she usually sat in a chair and listened to him. This time she was facing him in anger and had her fists clenched so tight that the knuckles looked white.

They did not see me at first. Then Daddy turned on her. He saw me in the doorway. He was quiet at first. Then his face went tender and soft, and his eyes filled with tears. He said something sharp to Mother, and she sat down in the chair with her face in her

hands. Her whole body shook and trembled. Father came over to me. I asked him what was wrong. I told him that they had woke me. I asked him what was making them shout. He only tenderly placed his hands on my shoulders, looked back at Mother, and leaned down to me. He smelled of shaving lotion and tobacco. His face was rough with whiskers like sandpaper when he kissed me. He whispered softly in my ear about go to bed and everything will be all right in the morning.

I went to bed. I went through the dark in the living room again all by myself. The lights went off in the kitchen as I pulled the covers up to my neck. Everything was quiet except for the little crickets outside. Crickets make a strange noise with their hind legs, especially in the dark. I lay a long time looking at the blackness and listening to the crickets outside. I even pulled the cover over my head. It was hot and stuffy inside my little cave, but I lay that way. I was scared; and even though the sheets got sticky and damp, I lay there until I fell asleep.

Frau Plon

Margaret Hiles

WHAT could be wrong? Every morning at exactly five o'clock Hans awakened his master, the Herr Professor, by knocking on his door and announcing that the tea was prepared. Every morning his master answered immediately by saying he would have a cup in exactly three minutes. This morning Hans knocked, announced, but no answer. Hans knocked again, announced again, again no answer. He opened the door a crack and peeked in. There was the Herr Professor, nightcap in place on his head, sleeping like a baby.

Hans walked toward the bed and touched the Herr Professor on the shoulder. The Herr Professor jumped, opened his eyes and bounded out of bed.

"This is horrible, oh, this is terrible."

"Whatever is it, Herr Professor?"

"That I should sleep past my hour of arising. What a shame! What a scandal!"

"But why, Herr Professor? I'll tell no one."

"Promise me, Hans, oh, I beg of you."

"Certainly, sir, but tell me, are you well?"

"Poor me, Hans. What a night I've had. It must have been something I ate."

"What did you eat, sir?"

"Nothing unusual, that is except the strawberries and cream."

"And what did you have for dinner, sir?"

"Delicious! I went to that restaurant right off Lime Tree Avenue. I had pickled pigs feet and sauerkraut with beer."