

Jessica suddenly realized how long she had been sitting in front of the window. It was nearly 6:00 P.M. At 6:30 the girls were supposed to return to the theatre to hear the results of the audition.

Why should I go back, she thought to herself. When my number was called, I froze. I know everyone was laughing at me. After seeing my "wooden soldier" exhibition I'll bet they thought that I'd never had a lesson in my life. My teacher told me that some people just couldn't take this kind of life, but I never thought I'd be one of the quitters. What else can I do? I've been here one year and where am I? I give up; I'm going home.

At 6:45 a hush fell as Donald Gardener strutted into the lobby. After hurriedly arranging papers he began reading names:

"Jessica Winters . . . is Miss Winters here?" Silence.

That evening at dinner Donald Gardener sat toying with his food. A puzzled, disappointed look had captured his youthful features.

"Hey, Don, you haven't heard one word I've said," his friend exclaimed impatiently. "What's the matter with you tonight?"

"I'm sorry, Trav. I keep thinking about that audition today. This real talented kid didn't show up for the results. I had a special number in the third act in mind for her. Isn't it strange? Some talented people who really could get somewhere just don't seem to care."

"Soul Power" and "Sun Blood"

Colleen Wiggs

I

" . . . and are responsible for eighty-five per cent of the crime committed in Indianapolis. Of course, these people are the very ones who have a complete mental list of their rights as citizens; they understand the law better than most of us do, and they take advantage of every rule and loophole ever instituted. If by any quirk of fate they should be sentenced to jail, they are 'punished' by a roof over their heads and square meals each day! When I think of my tax money being used for those. . . ."

At a loss for an appropriate word, the inspector clenched a beefy fist and wearily closed his eyes. Two hundred and twenty-five pounds of bones and flesh sank back heavily into the armchair. Opening dark eyes that swam heavily in their colorless fluid, he continued.

"These guys don't usually try much of anything until they're drunk. After all, it takes courage and the right kind of spirits to get these fellas to beat up a woman, snatch a purse, or maybe steal

a car. Anyway, they get their liquor in that tavern I mentioned earlier. We've got proof that about twenty-five per cent of the crime gets its initial push right there; citizens have sent in petitions to have the place closed, but somebody is getting his big fat palm crossed with silver. Nothing will ever come of that hole in the wall except more crimes and more silver-lined pockets. . . ."

Half an hour later the policeman was gone. Having risen ponderously to his feet, he was of impressive size—six feet at least—and lumbering gait. But something in his stature betrayed him, and in his eyes there was a brooding emptiness. His carriage was not befitting the broad frame and long body. His shoulders sagged; two great arms hung listlessly from them, and one could not be certain that, if the inspector were slapped heartily on the back, he would remain upright.

II

The young seedling was five inches tall, and its first true leaves had appeared. Like star-shaped webs they caught the early morning sunbeams in their green mesh. But the mother tree of twenty-two feet in height was also thirsty for "sun-blood," and it cast its mantle of shadow upon its offspring early each day.

Water was another thing. As the young plant struggled, its roots intertwined with those of its parent; it was dry that year, and the smaller plant was weaker. Within two weeks the seedling lay shriveled and lifeless, and the mother tree hovered ignorantly over its dead child.

III

To sustain life a plant needs food. It makes food from several basic materials, and, if it is denied any of these material, such as sun or water, the plant dies. A man also needs food to sustain life, and I speak of a man's inner life. Like the seedling a man is influenced by his environment. When one must daily be in surroundings wherein he sees men at their worst, as the inspector does, he may lose what sensitivity and zest he has for the refined aspects of life. A portion of his nature is starved by a lack of contact with beauty; his spirit's aesthetic sense is unstimulated, and thus a quality separating man from animal is lost. Unlike the plant, a man will often survive in this semi-deprived state and will become the most terrifying of corpses, for he continues to exist even though his "soul power" is lost, and he has died a spiritual death. "If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it dies; and so a man."