to say, and then looked furtively at Minnie as if in fear that this would offend her. But the good dame only sniffed. She was tired from the exertion. As Steve reached the gate, the two were still standing there, Minnie with her back to the room, frying the chops, and Jed looking sorrowfully after Steve, as if with Steve his last bit of independence departed.

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The Usual Procedure

Harriette Perkins

One warm summer day a stately carriage came to a standstill in a quiet little lane that jutted off from the highway about three miles from the village of Campden. The driver jumped down from his seat, and opened the door, and a gentleman dismounted slowly—a tall, stooped man, with a broad-brimmed hat set rather jauntily upon his head. This he immediately took off and slung back into the carriage. He ran his hands through his hair, smoothing it; then brushed the sleeves of his white coat briefly, picked up a gold-headed cane from the floor of the carriage, and set forth up the lane. His hair was gray, but his face was young, and his walk was vigorous; he was not an old man, and did not need a cane—he cut the weeds that leaned out across the lane, or made circles with it in the air, as he walked. The driver stood leaning against the carriage, flicking the dust with his whip, and looking after the departing figure. Then he sighed deeply, climbed back upon his seat, and slouched down into a comfortable, mid-summer attitude, and closed his eyes. Soon his head dropped to one side, and he slept. This was all a part of the usual procedure.

So was the way in which the gentleman took long strides up the lane, and down the broad highway to a great iron gate on either side of which stretched thick double hedges of lilac and dwarf spruce, and behind which rose tall trees. At this gate he paused and looked through the grating with wistful eyes.

Finally he unlocked the gates, pushed them open, and walked through. The house he approached as he walked up the broad driveway was of stone, substantial and well built. It had wide porches at the front and side; and tall windows and doors. However, the windows and doors were boarded up, and vines had grown over them in pieces.

The tall gentleman walked around the house several times, stopping every now and then to lean on his cane, and stare into space with a thoughtful, faraway look in his eyes.

At last he strolled into small grape arbor that extended along the side lawn and ended in a little gate in the front hedge. The grapes were ripening on the vines; red and blue and white, they hung in heavy clusters. Soon they could be taken and pressed into wine. What beautiful wine! It would have this warm sunshine in it, and the cool leaf-green of this quiet arbor. Wine to be sipped on cold winter evenings to bring the summer gladness back into the heart again. He stood now regarding the fruit solemnly, looking as though his eyes could drink their wine—.

As he stood thus, he heard the sound of horses coming at a rapid trot along the highway. He hurried to the end of the arbor and peeked out through the vines to watch the approaching carriage; a very fine carriage it was, gayly trimmed, but not gaudy; and the black horses pranced along as though they were proud to be the bearers of it. The driver was handsomely dressed in a red jacket and cap; and he, too, seemed proud of his position, for he sat up very straight, and held the
reins with supreme dignity. But the horses didn’t need to be guided—they had made the journey often. They knew the procedure. The lady to whom the black horses, and the proud driver, and the handsome carriage belonged, sat in back holding a white silk parasol over her head: the fringe around its edge bobbed and twirled about with the swift movement of the carriage. Nearer the horses carried it; swiftly they came. And the gentleman peering forth from the arbor could now see the lady quite plainly; for it was at her that he was gazing—and not at the black horses or the proud driver or the handsome carriage. He watched, and his face became grim, and his mouth formed a thin line; then he smiled softly; and then again resumed his sternness. As he watched, he clutched a grape leaf, gripped it tightly, twisted it off its stem, and then closed his hand upon it, crushing it, breaking it with his fingers—letting it fall bit by bit to the ground.

She was not an old lady, and yet she wasn’t young either. Her dark hair was done up in rather a matronly style, and yet a few curls stole out from under the little lace cap, and hinted at coquetry. And her dark blue dress with its wide spread skirt, was quiet in color, and simple in style, to be sure, but there was a row of pert white ruffles about her throat; and two exquisitely embroidered slippers were crossed quite boldly and in plain view upon a velvet cushion on the carriage floor.

As they came to the beginning of the hedge, the horses slowed down—without the driver pulling on the reins in the least—into a slow walk, lifting each heavy hoof deliberately, and setting it down again with slow precision. By the big gate they came almost to a standstill and the huge black creature nearest it, caught at the leaves of the trees that leaned there, and the other one shook his glossy mane, and eyed the shrubbery aloofly. The driver sat as erectly as ever, his eyes fixed upon the road ahead: an expression of boredom revealing itself under the stoical mask which was a part of his uniform. The body sat as grandly as ever under her silk parasol—only her head inclined a bit to one side, and she looked at the open gate wistfully. Her pretty little mouth trembled a bit, and tears filled her dark eyes. The next instant a frown darkened her face; her eyes became cold. And in that very instant the horses, without bidding, set off again down the road. The lady gave a little cry. The parasol dropped from her hand upside down upon the carriage seat at her side, and twirled about. She leaned forward, stretched out her silk-gloved hand toward the driver, but could not quite reach that tall red shoulder; and she made no further effort. Her hand dropped back into her lap; she leaned back in the carriage. The horses trotted faster and faster now, and the gentleman watched the carriage disappear; at last saw it only dimly outlined behind the rolling dust. He stood quite still, staring before him with a thoughtful, faraway look in his eyes. Then, suddenly, he drew himself up, turned and walked slowly to the gate again, closed it with a resolute bang, and made his way without hesitation back along the highway and down the little lane. The driver was asleep, so he didn’t see him approach. The gentleman shook the carriage and shouted at him.

“Oh, yes—yes—yes—” mumbled the driver, coming to, rubbing his heavy eyes with one hand, and picking up the reins with the other.

“—uh—did you say something, sir?” he asked in his most dignified manner and voice, being fully awake now.

The gentleman threw himself into the back seat, put on his broad brimmed hat again, and pulled it far down over his forehead, muttering.
something to the effect that Puck had been correct in his estimate of us mortals; and then, perceiving the driver staring back inquiringly at him, he shouted:

“I said—drive me home!”

It was all a part of the usual procedure.

The Bored Young Man

Arleen Wilson

The bored young man lit another cigarette and lazily watched a woman stagger down the aisle of the jerking street car. She fell into the seat before him, the last vacant seat in the car. After the next stop, the women would begin to look at him, some wistfully, others confidently. For there were only two types of women, the bored young man had decided. And both wanted men to offer their seats.

The bored young man never offered his.

He would see women at the movies this afternoon, probably as many as were on the street car. Still, to see them would be better than to endure Jeanne; that was why he had not stayed at school this afternoon. Jeanne smoked cigarettes by the package, painted her lips and fingernails a very bright red, and looked at him obliquely through her long eyelashes, all because she fancied he liked daring women. He had liked them once; he remembered; he had once thought himself in love with Jeanne. He smiled slightly as he remembered how intensely he had believed in love. The bored young man often smiled; he never laughed.

He supposed he ought to get rid of Jeanne somehow, but the process would be tedious. If he tried simply to drop her, she would continue to follow him around at school and call him up at home. And if he told her plainly that she no longer interested him, she would make a scene. He would tell her, however. It would be very boring at the time, but less troublesome altogether. He would tell her—tomorrow.

A little boy across the aisle was perched on the edge of his chair, eagerly reading the comic strips over an old man’s shoulder. Kids were funny. They got so enthusiastic about such trivial things—dogs and circuses and funny papers.

College profs were about the same. They became enthusiastic about Keats, Shakespeare, or the pronunciation of French. They were always talking about “the proper relations of things” and “fundamental truths.” The bored young man had once assumed that these expressions meant something, though he had never listened to the professors long enough to discover just what. He knew now that they really meant nothing.

College professors were supposed to be intelligent, but he found them stupid. They were so easily outwitted. He had made a “C” once in a course for which he had not spent an hour’s study, by copying from a crib prepared by the girl who sat next to him. He was rather proud of this; it was a record.

The car stopped to pick up passengers, and as the bored young man had expected, a woman staggered down the aisle and looked at him. She was young, and definitely of the wistful type. She looked familiar; she must be in one of his classes. Now she stood just before him, and was undecided as to whether he recognized her. She knew his name, he was certain. She was the kind who would carefully read the gossip column of the school paper, always hop-