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Sarah learned about it on the evening news.

They showed a photograph of John Huston as he looked ten years ago, with white hair and wearing a black pullover. After he visited her in San Francisco, coughing and gasping for oxygen, he had directed seven more films, three of them adaptations of literary classics that she thought comparable to the dark paintings of Goya. He had been sick for the last twenty years, like an emphysemic elephant who kept on trumpeting as he went down. His last adaptation, *The Dead*, he directed from a wheelchair with tubes up his nose. Then he stopped breathing. As Sarah thought about him, his heroic stamina inspired her. The passion to teach combined with her need to orient herself to the current state of higher education in order to help prepare Burke and Kim.

She did some research in the old brick public library near her apartment and wrote letters requesting course schedules from all the colleges and universities in the region. She was surprised by some of the new courses. On the first class day of a new term, she looked into her tall bedroom mirror and adjusted her hair and her dark blue dress suit. Her mother as a schoolteacher and then as a farm wife had always worn her dark hair short with kinky waves on the sides that turned gray. Of the three daughters, Sarah resembled her the most. Her thin rim glasses made her face with its squarish features look very like her mother, the more as she had gotten older, except that she wore her hair longer in full waves with gray streaks on top like what they called frosting, and she also

wore lipstick and mascara, whereas her mother never believed in cosmetics, associating makeup with prostitutes and actresses. It amused her to think what her mother would say about the way some women these days used makeup to look like heroin addicts or aliens in a sci-fi movie, while others wore none for political reasons. Sarah tried to look professional.

For the next three months she visited a number of campuses in the region, talking to students and asking permission of instructors before sitting in on their classes.

One course was listed as covering a period of American literature, but turned out to be limited to narratives by white women about being held in captivity by wild Indians. The young white woman teaching the course began by stressing that the correct term was Native Americans, who should not be described as wild. The captured women writers disagreed with her. Students told Sarah that course titles and authors were often disregarded now and served as fronts for radical professors. A darkskinned man sitting in front of her complained aside to the younger man next to him that most Indians around the country were like him and wanted to be called Indians. That name had a glorious history. Native American was a term used by whites to deprive Indians of their heritage. During this class the spotlight remained on the professor as she related to the captive women as victims like herself, with emphasis on sexual harassment and rape, though she kept repeating that she did not blame the Native Americans. White males slouched in their seats and rolled their eyes as if being held in captivity by white women.

Sarah thought about the class that evening, sitting by her window sipping coffee, looking down through the tall elm trees at some children playing on the jungle gym in the park. She marveled at how much the course about captive women resembled an old-fashioned romance. And the new terminology perplexed her. She thought everyone born here was a native American. And she wondered why the instructor never mentioned that until the settlers prevailed, some Indian tribes routinely practiced rape, slavery, torture, headhunting, cannibalism and child murder. She wondered why a female instructor who advocated women's independence and advancement would idealize typical Indian societies, which were patriarchal and static. She overcame an

impulse to call Ryan. If he wanted to talk, he would have called her after the news of Huston's death, and she did not want to intrude on his relationship with Amy. She often missed talking to him, with a little heartache that made her nostalgic. She poured herself a drink and called Frank Palaveri.

"You got me, Sarah," said Frank, "I don't get it."

"I thought you might understand it, since you're in sports. It seems to be a small minority."

"Yeah, we have a couple of them at the paper. They want us not to use any names referring to Indians."

"It seems to be another movement."

"Chiefs, Warriors, Indians. Those are honorable names. Why are they insults and not Vikings or Fighting Irish or Patriots or whatever? Even the Redskins. Maybe that used to be a bad name a hundred years ago, but now the meaning has obviously changed for the better. People don't name their teams to insult them. Some teams have real Indians who come to games wearing their headdress and everything and they dance around. They love doing it and the crowds cheer them. They're honoring Indians. How is that insulting? And what about teams named after tribes? Like the Seminoles, the Utes and the Aztecs? Some tribes are making a lot of money selling pennants and other souvenirs to fans. Like to the Atlanta Braves."

"Some of them think it's demeaning to be a mascot. I guess because some mascots are animals."

"They used to name themselves after animals and identify them with their own souls. Now their feelings are hurt?"

"I really don't know what to think. I guess I'll just have to avoid mentioning anything to do with Indians."

"Yeah, just wipe 'em out!"

"Well, I don't mean it *that* way."

"If that's what they want."

After talking to Frank, she hung up and sat for awhile longer by her window, thinking about how the first western movies had expressed the perspective of pioneers like her own ancestors, who represented civilization and progress displacing the savagery of the dominant native tribes.

Indians did not remain villains for long, however. Movie people themselves tended to be so wild that studio executives had

to circle their wagons and defend their industry with a Production Code. Indians were depicted in the movies with increasing sympathy, until they became once again the mythic Noble Savage invented by European aristocrats who saw them as quaint and charming innocents because they never had to defend a wagon train. To the aristocratic Reds in the movie business, Redskins were communists wearing feathers. Their preferred villains were the white capitalists. According to formula in westerns, most of the frontier town is owned by a greedy white banker or rancher who employs a gang of evil gunslingers, wears a vest with a gold watch chain and is photographed in his office with his big safe behind him. By the time the Production Code and the studios collapsed in the sixties, the stock enemy of leftist Hollywood had become capitalist America--with its pieties, hypocrisies, moral constraints and scary free market.

As she visited classes on various campuses, Sarah felt surprised by how much had changed since she was a student. Women were a majority now as students and as teachers in many departments in education, the humanities and the social sciences. Most of her own university teachers had been male. After World War II, many of them were veterans who went through schools on the GI Bill. They were naturally patriotic and respected traditions. They taught out of love for literature. Back then, professors tried to be objective, as a matter of professional competence and personal honor. She did not know the politics of any of her professors back then, except for the Communists in film studies. Now she noticed that nearly all the teachers appeared to feel obligated to express politically correct views in the classroom.

This began to worry her.

As she anticipated becoming a teacher, Sarah felt obliged to pay more attention to politics and performance. The best teachers she observed were not necessarily the best performers, and some of the worst tried to substitute performing or politics for teaching. She disliked pretense and had always felt uncomfortable with actors, yet she had to acknowledge that teaching, and teaching literature in particular, required some degree of performance. As a rule, literature teachers stood or sat before audiences whose responses inevitably were influenced and in many cases wholly determined by how well the teachers performed, how effectively they

conveyed the feelings and ideas expressed in literature, especially when reading from plays, fictions and poems. Many lit teachers were writers themselves, who enjoyed giving readings of their own work, especially the poets. Some professors of drama were actors in community theater or elsewhere.

In the past, some professors evolved so completely into their specialties, into an earlier historical period, into the styles and even the personalities of their favorite writers, they transcended themselves and embodied their subjects, like the best actors. She recalled taking a course in Shakespeare from a scholar who wore his hair long in back, an earring and a mustache and goatee like the traditional portrait of the bard. Her professor of English Romantic poetry wore a cape with a red satin lining and a ruby ring. Another, who specialized in the Edwardian period, wore corduroy jackets with velvet trim and his hair and beard like George Bernard Shaw. One of her most interesting professors dressed like George Eliot and sounded like Jane Austen.

Before the sixties, even her most eccentric professors dressed with some degree of formality. The men nearly always wore ties, often with tweed jackets. By now, nearly all those traditional professors had retired or died. Sarah got the impression that none of the younger faculty had served in the military, let alone a war. They referred to the traditionalists as Good Old Boys, adopting the stereotype being promoted by feminists. A disgruntled male student pointed out to her that, during the sixties, as the Baby Boom generation increased enrollments all over, graduate schools responded to the demand for new faculty by turning into degree factories. According to him and to other students, quality had declined and many departments wound up with voting majorities of barely qualified teachers or worse, those who could only get tenure by climbing aboard the radical bandwagon set in motion during the sixties. The Good Old Boys were tolerant of diversity, but too many had the lust of bureaucrats for bigger budgets, they lowered standards to increase enrollments, offered supermarket curricula, pandered to fashions and hired the intolerant radicals who had now taken over.

Sarah noticed that while other fashions had changed through the years, the radicals still dressed in the styles of the sixties. They did not seem to be transcending themselves like the best actors, but to

be idealizing themselves as forever righteous, as if their heads got stuck like the stage at Woodstock. They who had once said Go with the flow had gone for the dough, the tenure and the pension, but their vision of themselves in history required them to play humble and dress down, costumed forever as their conception of the oppressed working class in faded jeans and flannel plaids, anything informal, like Method actors forever reliving their youth, since in truth they were now well paid professionals living off the capitalist system they professed to disdain. According to students, the radicals affected humility, yet were usually identifiable by an air of importance, women in pants and compliant hairy fellows elected to the faculty senate. They saw themselves as members of the cultural ruling class, who had leading roles in the reformation of the world. The courses they produced and starred in could enjoy runs of thirty years or more. Warmed by the security of tenure, insulated from accountability by the professional autonomy of departments, they did not feel the Big Chill.

Sarah got to talking with three acquaintances in the hallway after a poetry class and they decided to go to the cafeteria for coffee. They sat down with their cups around a table near the big windows. Whitney was a young poet with shadows under her eyes, short dark hair and her ears peeking out, like a faun. The older woman Gwen had startled eyes behind her glasses and blonde hair fanning down to her shoulders like filaments of finely spun glass. She laughed a lot as if good humor had become her refuge from grief, a warmhearted English teacher with traditional standards in shock at the intellectual collapse of the discipline. The third member of the group, Scott had thin orange hair over a bald spot. He had never returned home from the Vietnam War because, he said, he did not live there anymore. Now he wore a droopy orange mustache, faded jeans and an olive Army jacket with the chevron of a private on his sleeve, defying the hostility to the military on campus. Whitney was dropping the poetry class because the instructor used poems to illustrate her own views on the oppression of women, the suppressed anger of women poets and their repressed sexuality. Scott explained to Sarah that the radicals in English departments were replacing the study of literary classics with courses in Cultural Studies.

"That's anthropology," she replied.

"They have no literary values really. It's like high school social studies all over again."

Gwen sighed, "Only more political."

"It's easier," Scott sagged in his chair. "They don't have to be well educated. They don't have to know the classics."

"They can just teach themselves."

"They're duplicating social science," Gwen looked distraught. "Our enrollments have declined by over fifty percent since the radicals started taking control."

"They don't believe in transcendence or beauty or truth!" Whitney waved her still unlit cigarette in mock dismissal of all quality whatsoever. "They don't even believe in excellence!"

"Excellence is a threat to them," Scott declared.

"What *do* they believe in?"

"Their careers."

"Identity politics. Themselves."

"They call it social justice!"

Gwen told her that Scott the private stood up to the radical professors in classes and argued with them, because he did not care about a grade. He had taken, audited and dropped in on courses at schools all around the country and he said that on his recon he had seen more Marxists teaching in American schools than he had seen in the jungles of Vietnam. He called himself Agent Orange defoliating the jargon jungles of academe and he depicted himself swooping into classroom discussions in the rhetorical spirit of an Air Cavalry helicopter descending on a hot landing zone with heavy machine guns blazing at radicals who replaced objective analysis with the subjectivity he called Hippiecrit, Crazycrit and Cliticism. Each had its own stock responses, yet the three were an oxymoronic coalition, a ménage à trois of political intercourse, Scott said, like three people trying to have group sex in the dark to avoid seeing each other.

"A lot of clitics are also hippiecrits," added Gwen.

"I've noticed that."

"They say everybody's equal," Whitney brandished her unlit cigarette. "But some are more equal than others."

"Hippiecrits are easy readers," Gwen explained softly. Light gleamed on the blonde hair fanned out to her shoulders like the

luminous curtain of a mind that never closed. "They read as though everything is subjective."

Scott frisked his orange mustache.

"Yeah, like, meaning is relative, man. Like, anything means anything I want it to. Anything is art and all art is equal. From quilts to Shakespeare, man."

"Art is easy," Whitney sniffed with such disdain that her unlit cigarette flipped into the air and with a lunge she caught it.

"Anybody can teach it!"

"Actually, though," Scott laughed. "Hippiecrits usually prefer writing by their own species. And their own gender, ethnic group, generation, sexual orientation and political outlook."

"So much for our common humanity," Whitney despaired.

"What about the Crazy critics?"

"They say language can't really mean anything."

"To prove it, they misunderstand on purpose!" cried Gwen.

"According to them, all meaning is indeterminate."

"Then how did civilization develop?"

"By illusions of language." Whitney blowtorched the end of her bent cigarette with her lighter. "You see, actually, we're not really communicating here," she blew smoke with contempt. "We're just babbling nonsense. They, of course, speak the truth."

"Which doesn't really exist," said Gwen.

"So why read them?" Sarah asked.

"We're expected to keep up with trends."

"Trashing language and truth," Scott bristled. "That's one of the ways the fascists prepared Germans for Nazism."

At first, Crazy critics made no sense to Sarah. She could not understand how anybody, let alone many professors at the elite universities, could take such perspectives seriously. She knew there was more to their theories than Scott explained, but after he read a few passages of their prose aloud, she felt repelled by their pretentious jargon. They did not want to be understood, in order to demonstrate their theory that language can't really mean anything. According to Scott, Crazycrit entered the country like a virus or enemy agent in the form of nihilistic French critic Jacques Derriere as a visiting star at Yale. Many radical professors in America thought this Derriere looked deep. They responded to Marxist

nihilism like academic lemmings to the lure of a trendy cliff, or in this case, a trendy Derriere.

"Most of the stars in English departments are Crazy."

"But the new orthodoxy is Cliticism." Scott grunted like an ape, "Woman book Good! Man book Bad!"

"Many woman book Bad too," Whitney added.

Scott leaned forward over his coffee.

"Male professors now demonstrate their submission by making negative references to Hemingway." He squinted, taking aim. "Like baboons offering their posteriors to the dominant females." He gestured in disgust, "Now the competent professors are retiring and all over the country the radicals are ignoring the classics they're too dumb to teach."

"How did they do it?"

"They posed as liberals," Scott explained. "They got control of hiring and blacklisted dissenters."

"But most teachers aren't radicals."

"We just want to teach our subjects!" Gwen wailed.

"The revolutionaries who established the Soviet Union," Scott went on. "They were a much smaller percentage of the population than the Communists who almost took over the movie industry in Hollywood during the thirties and forties."

"They *did* take it over essentially," said Sarah.

"Today, a typical American university faculty is what?" Scott calculated. "Maybe five to ten percent radicals?"

"It's highest in the humanities and social sciences," Gwen said. "They dominate those departments."

"It's amazing," Scott marveled. "For years Americans have been funding radicals to attack their country, destroy their culture and alienate their children!"

"They don't know what's going on."

"Can't you just see all the taxpayers out there writing checks," Whitney rocked her head in mockery. "Giving their money to hire more hippiecrits, crazies and clitics?"

To show Sarah a star able to be hip, crazy and clitical all at the same time, Scott got approval in advance and brought her along to a Cultural Studies theory class from Professor Rudy Barcuda, the supernova of his department because he was the only one to have published a book by a prestigious university press, twelve years

ago and a very short book, unoriginal and widely ignored, but still, on an office bookshelf in provincial academe it was the equivalent of an Oscar. His little book had set forth his eccentric Theory and was to be followed by a cutting edge masterwork of practical application, but for some reason his second book, if it ever got written, never got published. Barcuda often referred in class to his research, but when asked about it by students, he would declare it to be over their heads and quickly move on. Scott described Barcuda as an academic hustler who got hired from a pool of over five hundred applicants because he said what the radical women wanted to hear and had a lot of experience applying for grant money, so they figured he could be useful.

Sarah had to visit on a Monday because Barcuda always cancelled all his Friday classes of the term on principle and often missed class on Wednesdays. Scott said the professor did not believe in lecturing and considered analysis of a text beneath him, reducing class sessions mainly to one-sided arguments over his Theory that literary classics had no intrinsic value and were merely a form of social control by those in power. Today, Professor Barcuda kept the class waiting, as people expect of a star, and finally came into the classroom with the brisk stride of a busy man in great demand, wearing a faded red plaid shirt and faded jeans with sandals and white sweatsocks.

Sarah had never seen a man in sandals strut before.

The gasps and mock choking from around the classroom that greeted his entrance Sarah recognized as a response to Barcuda's boast that a review of his little book had called it breathtaking. The radicals had undermined respect for authority, including their own, and she had been a bit shocked to see the way many students behaved now. They came in late or got up and casually walked out, disturbing everyone in the middle of a class. They often talked back to their professors in a disrespectful way, sometimes using obscenities. During class they read newspapers, ate noisily, talked among themselves and even fell asleep.

At the podium facing a group of about thirty students, Barcuda looked to Sarah like a pugfaced plumber in his garage on a day off. He had a palooka jaw covered by ruddy stubble that moved rapidly with conspicuous hinging in the way of insect mandibles and ventriloquist dummies. His projecting chin, dominant brow and

flattened nose gave him a concave profile, a pugnacious face evolved through eons from the first convulsive struggles by worms in the primal slime to a place now among the stars. He spoke very fast and loudly, striving above all to be quick at wit and parry, contemptuous in repartee and firing loud bursts of laughter so authoritative that his hilarity seemed to express unanimous ridicule of all the stupid people in the world by all the brightest people out there with him on the cutting edge of his perspective, his ego bristling with defenses like spines, flippant and wisecracky and overbearing as he deflected most questions from the students, overwhelming any disagreement with a tone of such technical expertise about the latest trends that students sat back in their chairs as if speeding through a hot air tunnel.

Scott raised his hand.

He asked the trendy professor, since it served those in power, should all art be destroyed? Does art not serve the people as well? Should we burn the books like the Nazis? Shall we be even more politically correct and destroy all the paintings and tear down all the great buildings? The vet had to ask these questions repeatedly with increasing volume because Barcuda would not recognize him. Finally the professor responded of course not, but that does not mean we should have to study the alleged classics. Now and then, discretely, a student would shout out an easy question about a classic, such as who is the main character, and the professor would ignore it knowing he was being quizzed as an insult by those who claimed he was a charlatan, kids too stupid to understand the system, that he knew enough about the classics for his own purposes. He told them people were already subjected too much to the propaganda of the classics through movies and television and that therefore universities should instead study texts commonly discriminated against, such as grant applications, ad copy, bubble gum wrappers and pornography.

Leaving the class Sarah saw Whitney, who stuck a finger into her mouth to indicate, *Gag me!* She took Scott to coffee in the cafeteria and told him about Fox studio head Darryl F. Zanuck serving his guests shit canapés. She had not witnessed such audacity since that day long ago when she came out of the market and saw Karen through the rear window of their station wagon, wiggling her bare fanny around.

Moved by the spirit of all the true mothers who ever lived, Sarah felt that she had to do something to protect children. She felt a compulsion that went beyond smacking a bare behind, more on the scale of what she felt going to work in a defense plant after the attack on Pearl Harbor. In the library, consulting the catalogs of universities, she found Cultural Studies defined as a movement "inclined toward left-inflected social change." These were openly political advocacy programs with the goal of destroying objective academic disciplines. They were spreading all over the country, especially in English departments, replacing traditional literature courses. One of the leaders, the Marxist critic Fredric Jameson, chaired the graduate program in literature at Duke University. She consulted books by some of the most prominent Cultural Studies theorists, including Jameson and Slavoj Zizek, and found them influenced mainly by Marxism, by French psychoanalysis and by Hollywood movies.

To be considered as a teacher, Sarah needed three current letters of recommendation from professors. She had conferences with three women faculty who were respected by students, two of them professors of British literature, feminists but not radicals. They were guarded in their conversation, apparently fearing reprisals, but they examined her credentials, agreed to recommend her and promised to write their letters in a way that would not reveal that she was actually a scholar. The third woman she approached was a composition specialist, a traditionalist nearing retirement who lamented the decline in the ability of students to write and blamed the radicals. She said a supporting letter from her would do more harm than good and advised Sarah to get a radical professor to write her a letter, somehow.

Applicants had to get past the radical bloc.

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Hoping for a letter of recommendation from a specialist in her field, Sarah signed up to audit a course on Literature and Film from Dr. Nair Druhl, a visiting professor of Cultural Studies. Before classes began she purchased and read the only text, Druhl's recent book on radicals in the movie industry.

Her heart sank as soon as she saw that he dedicated it to a Communist screenwriter and had it approved for publication by John Weber, the Party censor during its heyday in Hollywood. She recalled the years when reference books and many of her friends denied any Communist influence in Hollywood and called the investigation of it a witch hunt. Decades of revisionism had made the Communist perspective on Hollywood history not merely respectable but orthodox. So much so that now, the schools and the media were changing their version of history according to the Party line, from denial to celebration.

In Druhl's book the Hollywood Left was defined with pride as a powerfully influential underground hidden inside the Los Angeles Communist Party that operated under the cover of liberal or humanist rhetoric. Druhl celebrated every Communist he could name in Hollywood and condemned every loyal friendly witness who had named them to the U.S. House Committee on subversion. He denied that any of the loyal witnesses were motivated by love of country or by a greater allegiance to truth and democracy than to Communism. He said they were only making career moves. Most absurdly, to Sarah, he claimed as allies of the Communists many celebrities who in truth became disillusioned by or bitterly critical of the Left, including John Huston, Orson Welles, Bette Davis, Nathanael West, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Steinbeck, the cowboy Hopalong Cassidy and even the superpatriotic director John Ford. Conservatives such as Ronald Reagan, John Wayne,

Ginger Rogers and Robert Taylor were called dumb and racist. On the first day of class, she arrived early and sat down at the top of a large classroom that sloped down to the rostrum and a pulldown movie screen. The room soon filled with about a hundred noisy students and overflowed into the hallways.

Dr. Nair Druhl arrived early.

He looked much older than the photo on the dust jacket of his book, his hair now turned from dark to gray and combed to the left and forward to screen a subversive baldness with fuzzy ends. Squinting behind glasses with oversized lenses, he smiled without revealing his teeth. He looked as blandly goodnatured as the smiley face decal that signifies Have a nice day. Acting casual, he slipped off his jacket, then rolled up the sleeves of his faded blue working class shirt. He said handing out a syllabus would be too limiting and explained that mostly the class would be watching movies representing leftwing writers and themes. He said that lecturing was oppressive and he wanted discussion, then he began telling them about the brave Communists who founded the Screen Writers Guild, the Marxist study classes and the only screenwriting schools in Hollywood, taught exclusively by Communists with the goal of controlling movie content, which enrolled as many as three hundred students at a time. Sly and proud, Druhl seemed to be living in the thirties and he had the enthusiasm of a recruiter. He snickered at traditional educators in subjects such as literature who were not Marxists.

"Sexually repressed worshipers of dead knowledge," he called them, with a mocking smile and a gesture of dismissal. "The faculty of the Party schools developed scripts for submissions through Hollywood agencies. They helped students to sell their stories, to get agents and to land jobs in studios."

"Weren't those career moves?" a student asked.

"All for the good of the Party."

"So the Party was like a union for Leftists only?"

"For men!" objected a young woman close to the front.

"Oh no, the Party was strongly feminist," Druhl replied quickly with his bland smile. "One of the students was Gerda Lerner, who later helped found the field of Women's Studies."

A cleancut student raised his voice.

"Are you saying that back then, you had to be a Leftist to get ahead as a writer in Hollywood?"

"Not just back then!" an older man shouted.

"It's more true *now!*" complained another.

Druhl smiled as if confessing to a secret pleasure, "You could say that the Left had a hammerlock on the writers colony."

"A hammer and sickle lock!"

"Shut up, Scott!" a student yelled back.

Students turned in their seats to look at him.

"Conservatives accused the Left of imposing thought control," Druhl went on. "Today they call it political correctness."

Another young male student raised his hand.

"In your book you say that nearly all of the screenwriters who became friendly witnesses remained writers of B movies. Did you mean these writers were less talented than the Communist writers? Or were the Communists so powerful they were able to blacklist the friendly witnesses?"

"Oh, I think they were less talented, yes."

A scholarly man with white hair spoke up.

"You argue that Communists could have made better movies if they hadn't been censored by the capitalist studios. Yet you admit that Enterprise Studios had a high percentage of Communists working at every level of production and a lot of creative control. They only lasted a few years. Why do you think they failed?"

"Well, they just didn't inspire audiences I guess."

Scott raised his voice again.

"In your comments on the noir film *Act of Violence* you equate informing people about Communists with collaborating with Nazis. Didn't the Communists themselves collaborate with the *real* Nazis when Stalin signed a pact with Hitler? You said the Hollywood Party gained more members by far and a lot more influence after the Pact."

Druhl smiled benignly, "The Party was always anti-fascist."

"They're just as fascist as *Nazis!*"

"Shut your mouth, Scott!"

"Why don't you ask somebody who was *there?*"

Groans and insults poured down on him from around the room.

"You look a little young," Druhl snapped.

"Not me. I mean Sarah Easley," Scott looked around at her. "She was in the Screen Writers Guild in the forties."

"Oh? I've never heard of her."

"Well you *should* have."

"She's welcome to speak."

"Tell 'em, Sarah."

Sarah felt embarrassed and reluctant to speak, but the students had all turned and were looking at her and she felt she owed it to Scott. She felt compelled to say something.

She rose to her feet.

"Budd Schulberg and Elia Kazan described the Hollywood Communists in *On the Waterfront*." She paused, looked around and made eye contact with students. "The Party was like a corrupt union. It wanted to control everybody. The leaders were like gangsters who ruined people's lives."

"Oh, come now, Ms. Easley--" Druhl grew impatient.

--Mrs. Easley," Sarah insisted.

"They were the first true egalitarians in our history."

Sarah shook her head, "They shouted people down who didn't agree with them. They defamed and blacklisted people who--"

--Students began shouting and Druhl raised his voice.

"They were idealists, good Americans--"

--They were propagandists for Stalin!" she declared over the angry shouts. "They betrayed our country! They supported one of the worst monsters in history! Communists set an example of systematic murder that was followed by the Nazis!"

Moans and boos contended with applause.

"Americans helped defeat the Nazis in about four years," she challenged the young people around her. "We've been fighting the Communists for most of this century! Don't you know how many Americans have *died* for you?"

The answer was laughter in response to Druhl.

He pulled from his briefcase a red baseball cap with a white C on the front that she recognized as the logo of the Cincinnati Reds. Some of the students laughed at his joke, while others including Sarah noticed that he put on the ballcap tipped back on his head at the goofy angle of someone who apparently had never played or followed the game.

He leaned forward on the lectern.

"Lefties are as American as baseball," he smiled widely.

"That's bull durham!" Scott yelled out. "Baseball is a capitalist game! Baseball players are some of the biggest capitalists around! You can't steal baseball!"

Sarah sat down, too upset to say anymore.

After the class, students gathered around her out in the hall. They thanked her for speaking up to Druhl. They said they were sick of political correctness and they asked her if there was any possibility that she might teach a course. They asked her questions about her career in Hollywood and the films she made with John Huston and Orson Welles.

Now, though, Sarah felt distraught.

Somehow she had to get a recommendation from a radical. She wished that she had time to sit in on some courses by the best teachers, recommended by Gwen and Whitney. Instead, she decided to try approaching Professor Constance Barker, an older woman like herself, with gray hair combed back like a wake from her advancing face, her nose a prow, her head an aging starship maintaining a fixed course on the long relentless voyage to Social Justice. Dressed in black, Barker navigated among some papers on her desk, found what she was looking for, then smiled as if delighted, revealing spaces between her teeth. She welcomed Sarah into her popular course in Advanced Critical Theory. Some alternatives in the course schedule included Rape in Chaucer, The Myth of Pedophilia, Queering the Text, Lesbian Literature and Feminist Fairy Tales. It struck Sarah that these academics were as preoccupied with sex as the people in Hollywood.

She arrived on campus an hour before the class and went to the bookstore, then to the cafeteria for a cup of coffee. Near the big windows, she sat down and glanced through the current issue of the student newspaper. A university commission on the Status of Women had been established, a group of conservative students were suing the school for discrimination and a movement was underway to kick military recruiters off campus. A letter signed by more than twenty angry feminists denounced a popular male professor and letters from straight women complained that they were being harassed by the lesbians who dominated the Women's Studies program. The first faculty member to be charged with

sexual harassment under provisions of a rigorous new Code was a straight female Education professor.

The small bare classroom had no windows.

Over twenty women of varying ages and one man sat down with Professor Barker in a circle, including a few behind them in the second row, where Sarah chose to sit. She had time to ask the young woman next to her several questions before the class began. The only requirement in the course was to keep a journal. That was why none of the students looked prepared to take notes. When the classroom door closed, Sarah felt a sense of finality, like it was too late to escape. She wondered why Professor Barker sat in silence with a tolerant smile and her hands folded on her clipboard, rather than starting the class. Then she noticed women staring at the young man in the room, leaning to each other and whispering behind their hands. Sarah felt embarrassed for him. Finally, he stood up. A shy young man in glasses, he glanced around at the women. Then he bowed his head and left the room. When the door closed again, a collective sigh unified the class. Now they were free.

They could be themselves.

The room became their sanctuary, their venting space, their vindication and their inspiration. One woman told how being molested as a child by her mother's lover made her distrust all men. Another was abused by her father. Sarah felt herself pulled by empathy into a union with these women in their suffering. A younger woman gave an account of having a few drinks and being raped at a party. Each story intensified the anger of the class. They breathed the feverish air of outrage and Professor Barker cited studies. The class discussed the tendency of all men to be rapists, which had been proven by studies. Sarah wondered who had done these studies, but felt that it would be offensive to ask. They considered the idea that all heterosexual intercourse is rape and recommended to each other a number of revenge movies. They went on to share recent experiences of near or actual sexual harassment and techniques of discrediting male professors. Volunteers who sat in on the classes of blacklisted faculty reported on their most recent findings. Professor Barker talked about establishing movement courses in all departments and closed by

announcing that workshop credit would be given for participation in the march this Saturday.

After class, Sarah went back to her apartment and mixed herself a strong whiskey and soda. She sat down in her armchair by the window and tried to calm herself. Her hand trembled as she lit a cigarette. She felt terribly for the women who told stories of abuse and humiliation. They were in an awful state. She felt wrung out from empathy, like she had been crying for hours. Her anger, intensified by the bitter outrage of the group, overwhelmed all other aspects of the classroom experience. She realized that the goal of the professor had been to unify and incite them with anger, with frustration and rage and hatred that the professor could direct like the course of a revenge movie.

She thought about the attitudes that governed the class, that made it unnecessary to support any generalization with facts or any argument with evidence. To question anyone's assertions would have been insensitive. It did not matter whether anything asserted was totally factual, or even whether it actually happened at all. Reality was subjective. Truth resided in feelings. The ultimate authority in life was the female Self, the feelings of the individual woman. There was no transcendent principle--not conscience, not society as a whole and certainly not God. The radical feminists were solipsists, angry sisters of Captain Ahab, fixated on revenge against the great white male.

A woman's authenticity was measured by her support of the radical perspective: that the genders are equal yet women are superior, that there are no significant differences between the genders yet women are more nurturing, caring, wise and humane. Men should be punished for telling sexist jokes, whereas women should tell sexist jokes in order to undermine the patriarchy, to promote sisterhood and to prove they have a sense of humor. Women are not violent by nature, yet women can be just as effective as men in combat. Women writers have been silenced, yet they have been more popular and financially successful than male writers. Male teachers should include more women writers in their courses, whereas female teachers should exclude male writers on principle.

In a mild panic, Sarah hoped they would not apply these standards to a course on literature and film. She could include

attention to subjects that interested them, such as the contributions of the many women screenwriters, editors, costume designers and filmmakers. She could include mention of women directors, problems of women in the movie industry and even images of women on the screen, but she could not teach a respectable course on film that excluded men. Since they also considered everything published before the 1970s sexist or unenlightened, except writing by feminist women, she wondered if they would allow study of classic films by either gender. Published job descriptions for teaching positions in the humanities now often used narrow academic specialties as code terms to legally justify hiring only radical applicants who fit into the tribe. As she composed her letter of application, she did her best to use terminology that would make her appear correct. She became skillful at concealing her true feelings while she worked in Hollywood, but she was never an actress and could not express feelings or attitudes she did not have. Thereafter, in subsequent class sessions, she made careful and innocuous contributions to discussion.

After five weeks, she applied to Professor Barker for a letter of recommendation based upon her performance so far, including her resumé. Then she had a conference with Barker by appointment in her office. With some hesitation, she mentioned that she had written the screenplay of *Blithedale*, starring Katharine Hepburn as the feminist leader. Her guess that Barker would be unfamiliar with a classic by a male writer was confirmed when the professor took her political allegiance for granted and promised to write her a strong letter. More hopeful now, Sarah mailed out her job application with her resumé, copies of her syndicated column and copies of reviews that praised her films, offering to teach a course in literature and film without pay. Soon she received a reply from the department chairperson, Mayhew A. Facader, inviting her for an interview. She called the office, chatted a bit, then later had coffee with one of the talkative secretaries.

The night before her interview, thinking about how she might help students the most, Sarah lay awake until long pink streaks of dawn appeared behind the blue silhouette of Mount Hood. She had so much she wanted to pass on before it got too late, she ached with anticipation. The radicals would not be attracted to her course, she felt, it was the majority of students she longed to reach,

especially those with the spiritual hunger that literature and film can satisfy. Barker and the other radical professors opposed all religion except witchcraft, yet they reminded her ironically of the Calvinist ministers in the seventeenth century who preached such a polarizing ideology they dissociated their children from their natural selves, depriving them of aesthetic pleasure, mystical experience and spiritual love. Sarah wanted to show the young people how great literature can heal such psychological splitting through figurative language, how dreams are comparable to literature and film and how these arts can stimulate the imagination to transcend the ego and to empathize with others.

Until she fell asleep.

At the appointed hour, dressed in a formal dark blue pants suit with a white blouse and wearing the myrtlewood necklace and earrings her mother had given her for good luck, she arrived at the office of Mayhew Facader, known around the department as May, a specialist in rhetoric who spent most of his spare time at singing lessons for his reedy tenor voice, preparing for song recitals he gave at a Unitarian church where his wife played the organ. His mound of silver gray hair blow-dried over a bald spot, wearing a fuzzy lavender sweater and faded jeans that hung baggy from his buttocks, Facader slouched with apparent modesty.

"It's a pleasure to meet you," she said.

He gave her a limp handshake.

"Yes, hello. Please sit down."

Facader had a soft looking face and the hesitancy of a man afraid of giving offense, his pale eyes apprehensive, as if she had come to complain about something awful. His smile had a sickly uncertainty about it, revealing a canine surrounded with silver that made it look like a literal eyetooth never blinking in the service of his appetite, always hungry for approval and eager for any particle of it that floated his way, feeding on it with a need unsatisfied ever since he sucked on a pacifier. The secretary told her that a few months ago, Facader's troubled teenage son, wearing jockey shorts, one sock and a black sweatshirt with the white skull logo of a rock group on the front, had hung himself from a beam in the entry hall where his parents returning from church saw him as soon as they opened their front door.

Now the chairperson slouched and cringed about and fussed through the clutter of papers messing his desk, murmuring apologies in hesitant incomplete sentences. It seemed to Sarah a performance in the spotlight of scandal, a display of mortified perplexity as if he felt the world observing him, as if as a star in his own mind Facader simply did not know how such a terrible thing could ever have happened to him. The shock had rocked him like a jellyfish blushing and shifting hue, led around by the slightest current, beaten by any storm and soon deflated by exposure. Eventually he located her manila file. Without glasses at his age, he must have been wearing vanity contacts. He opened her file and peering down he scanned a few pages, then he closed it, rose in a slouch and handed it to her across his desk, informing her with obsequious deference that the interview would be conducted by Professor Ellie Moray.

Looking for the office, Sarah made a wrong turn and had to circle back. She entered the hallway that students called The Gauntlet, and other names. Every office door resembled a power pole with flyers and notices plastered all over it--photos, clippings, political images and slogans like Subvert the Dominant Paradigm, Off Our Backs, Men Are Pigs and A Woman Needs a Man Like a Fish Needs a Bicycle. Sarah wondered whether those who used the last slogan meant to identify themselves with cold fish or if this was another example of insensitivity to language induced by a literal-minded education. She thought the doors quite interesting, each one a unique montage yet all advertising the same movie, though she wondered whether the intent was to attract students or to scare them away. They had the effect on her of the shrill wild chorus that some Arab women made by vibrating their tongues in tremolo to intimidate enemies of the tribe.

At the end of the hall, she found Professor Moray in the faculty office closest to the department head's office, seated in a dim yellow glow from the lamp on her desk. Sarah introduced herself. Moray rose uncomfortably, as if she had a dislocated hip.

Sarah handed her the file.

"Call me Ellie," Moray smiled wanly.

The professor looked in her fifties, an aging member of the generation that led the baby boomers through the revolution in education, heavysset in a dark print dress and wearing no makeup

or jewelry, graying hair pulled back and freckled face sagging, neck wattled and hands liverspotted. She projected an easygoing informality, yet her eyes behind her glasses looked sharp with intention, hooded by a genteel cynicism. Her eyes did not match her mouth, which turned up its corners in a smile with the fixity of a shield. The shade of her lamp was a small pyramid with a hieroglyphic design on each of its yellow glass panels and on top a little bronze bust of a female wearing an Egyptian headdress, crowned by a cobra rearing from her forehead. Sarah's anxiety reminded her that America taught its children absolute optimism, entitlement even, breeding disappointment like ancient Egypt bred slaves to serve the few at the top of the social pyramid, the pharaohs and queens, those who also controlled the underworld. Moray's face had a sinister gray look of something hidden among rocks at the bottom of the situation. She lifted a page in Sarah's file, peering down through her glasses.

"Your credentials are impressive."

"I'll teach without pay."

"This is just informal you understand. We like to get to know people a little, to see how they would fit in."

"Of course. I understand. I'd be glad to demonstrate with a lecture, if you'd like."

"I don't think that will be necessary."

"I included a syllabus with my application."

"How would you describe your approach?"

"Well, I *try* to be objective. In critical terms, that makes me a formalist I guess. But I'm eclectic too. I adapt."

"I see," her inflection fell.

Sarah felt herself losing ground.

"I'd like to analyze classic stories and film adaptations of them in relation to perception and social history."

"Well," Moray sighed. "We already have faculty who want to teach film. And we're concerned about diversity here."

"I use books from different cultures."

"Um hum."

"I don't care about the time it would be offered. My schedule is open now and I love to be around students."

"Are you now, or have you ever been married?"

"Yes, I have. I'm divorced."

"Um hum."

Moray asked a few more questions, then rose up with a sway and extended her liverspotted hand across the desk.

"We'll call you."

Sarah tried to exude a friendly warmth that would fit in.

"Thank you, Eeely."

Her inadvertent mispronunciation did not cause a flicker in the eyes behind the desk.

That night on cable she watched a farfetched yet timely sci-fi that Ryan directed for Universal called *Mansters from Mars* and amused herself by recalling his wry remarks and facial expressions when they read through scripts together.

Later that Spring, she made other applications for teaching at schools in the area and had two more interviews, but she got no calls through the summer. She wondered how well faculty at the various schools networked with each other. She did not have a good feeling about her interview with Professor Moray. She had excluded Hemingway from her syllabus, but on her resumé she did not conceal her adaptation of his stories. She wondered if she had included any other writers who were politically incorrect. Or perhaps an informer, Constance Barker perhaps, had given her away. Perhaps it was Druhl.

One day a card arrived in the mail, announcing the marriage of Ryan Eisley and Amelia Fokes.

She had to sit down.

Gradually her feeling of loss faded into nostalgia as she sat for a long time by her window staring down into the park, holding on to him for awhile longer. She recalled their ranch in the valley and the children's laughter, dancing in the den and all their marriage had meant to her. Finally, noticing the students below her walking through the park to class, she tried to return to herself. To her new life. Distracted by reveries, she opened a letter that finally replied to her application to Facader. The department regretted that her specialty did not meet their needs at this time.

26

For a few days, she sat in front of the television in her bathrobe and slippers and drank too much. Then she got a call from little Kim, wanting to know when she and Burke should come over for a lesson. She could not allow herself to sound depressed. In chatting with her granddaughter, she talked herself back into a sense of her responsibilities. Afterward, gazing out the window, she recalled the way the students crowded around her after she spoke up in class, wanting her to teach.

She placed some ads and posted notices.

To her surprise, over twenty students called in response. They told her that Scott, Gwen and Whitney had been spreading the word around at the local schools. On the date advertised she began to tutor in her apartment, free of charge. She wore formal clothes such as her blue pants suit to show the students that she respected them enough to dress like a professional. She pushed tables together and the first dozen young people to arrive sat around them in the way of a seminar. Teaching brought out her sense of humor, especially about her own foibles as a reader and an adapter. She told them the story of how blind she had been the first time she saw *The Best Years of Our Lives*. She laughed at herself a lot and joked with the students.

After several meetings, so many young people were attending that some had to sit on the floor, like students in a totalitarian country meeting secretly to discuss forbidden writing from beyond the Iron Curtain. Most of them were looking for the basics, traditional instruction in literature and free discussion. They

wanted more than cultural studies. They wanted to understand the vocabulary of literary analysis, to learn how to read objectively, not just literal-minded Socialist Realism but figurative language, the imagery of dreams and classics. Film study came as a bonus. She made extensive comments on every paper turned in.

She felt disturbed by reports that, on the whole, college students now had less cultural knowledge than high school students had in the fifties, the decade the radicals called backward. And worse, that students in the eighties had less than half as large a vocabulary as students had at the same educational level back in the fifties. Vocabulary determines the ability to think. Students today were not reading much, nor well, they would rather watch movies, and many of their teachers would rather show movies than teach. People conditioned to be subjective in their responses to images, rather than taught how to analyze using words, would be more susceptible to prejudice and propaganda.

The public schools had replaced literature with pabulum. None of the literary classics were politically correct, nor was history. Consequently, students had little knowledge of the past, less familiarity with traditions and no sense of irony, indications of very limited intellectual development. It appeared to Sarah that, like a drug overdose, indoctrination had dulled the minds of most students she heard speak in classes. When anyone disagreed with them, they reacted emotionally, because they had never learned how to think--how to be objective, consider alternatives, analyze facts and reason from evidence. Apparently they reflected the limitations of their teachers.

Sarah began her class by setting an example of close objective reading, until students began to participate with confidence, analyzing the parts of a work in relation to each other as a whole. Before watching an adaptation they studied the original text in detail. Otherwise the film would be a powerful visual overlay that could overwhelm the text, displacing the words and rendering them irrelevant to the visual experience. When they were prepared for them, students watched the assigned films in an audio visual department of a nearby university. Then in her apartment they watched each film again on video, making stops and analyzing details, focusing on the union or disjunction between the literature and the film adaptation, between words and moving pictures, the

left brain and the right brain. As a rule, with exceptions, the more faithful the adaptation--the more perfect the union--the greater the synergy, as it becomes an act of love.

She began with the *Hamlet* of Laurence Olivier, the *Othello* of Orson Welles and the *Pride and Prejudice* of Aldous Huxley. Then they studied the recent adaptations of Henry James and E.M. Forster by Ruth Praver Jhabvala and director James Ivory. When they got to their film of *The Bostonians* by James, a satire of radical feminists, the apartment overflowed with excited students who explained to her that this novel was politically incorrect on campuses and therefore popular now as a forbidden classic. Sarah told them about the band of radical women who attacked the portrait of Henry James in the National Portrait Gallery in London, stabbing and ripping it with knives.

"Today, they'd call that critical thinking!" a young man sitting on the floor called out.

Comparing text to film, Sarah demonstrated the objective accuracy of Jhabvala and how her faithfulness enhanced the picture. Jhabvala added one scene she wrote herself, but it fit the narrative perfectly. Sarah cautioned against subjective adaptation of literature, because this method required a very rare genius in film that measured up to the genius of the writer being adapted. Most subjective adaptations disappointed readers because they were not based upon appreciation of the original stories. American adaptations of classics usually displayed the literacy of high school dropouts, far inferior to those by the British.

As a very rare example of subjective adaptation based upon objective appreciation that measures up to the literature being adapted and to what an objective adaptation might have attained, she used John Huston's *The Dead*. For his last testament, John selected the story of Gabriel, a lonely soul in Dublin who discovers that his wife had a great romance before she married him, with a lover who died a romantic death. During the course of a party one evening with friends and relatives, Gabriel transcends his sad isolation and intimations of his own impending death, through a communal spirit of empathy and through love for his wife. Huston displays his detailed understanding of the text by James Joyce while making the story his own as well, as an arranger does with music, changing dialogue and emphases and adding a character

named Grace. Joyce in words is colder toward the characters than Huston is in film, more satirical and distanced, like an observer outside in the snow. Whereas Joyce implies that these Dubliners are already among the dead in spirit, Huston brings them all to life. John even has the gall to add Irish folk music to the sound track, contrasting his warmhearted Irish sentiments to Joyce. His spirit moves the camera and the audience, loving the faces and gestures of the characters, embracing them all with intimate follow shots and choreography. In the end, his film conveys the vision of an angel, evoked by the name Gabriel.

The students were curious about Huston.

"Mrs. Eisley," a young man on the sofa asked her, "did you ever see *White Hunter Black Heart*?"

She sat with about thirty young people taking notes.

"No, I didn't. Perhaps I should have. It's because I know how much I'd dislike it."

They laughed with her.

"I don't think Peter Viertel knew John Huston very well," Sarah adjusted her glasses. "Although they were friends and worked together. I think he was in awe of John." She looked around, making eye contact. "But appalled by him as well. John scared him and hurt his feelings. Peter is the sensitive type. In his novel, and I presume in his screenplay, he gives John a lot of credit--makes him a mythic figure even. Black heart is ambiguous. I think he means to imply that John had the heart of an African like his hunting guide. At the same time, though, he reduces John to a white megalomaniac like Captain Ahab."

"Black and white thinking," said a black girl at the table.

"Yes, exactly. I like Peter," Sarah sighed. "He's always been kind to me. Still, I think he's more an Ahab than John in his thinking. He projects onto John the symbolic burden of racist colonialism in Africa and attributes actions to him that John never committed. John told me he didn't care. Peter's novel may be politically correct, but it's not true."

"That's like all we get to read now."

"The liter-*rot-i*," one boy quipped.

"Almost nothing before the seventies is considered correct," said Laura Peterson, Sarah's best student.

"I think Peter is too conventional," Sarah explained. "Too small to understand artists like Huston and Hemingway. When he refers to their need to prove their manhood," she laughed, "he sounds like a naive woman!"

The students laughed in delight, enjoying statements that would be considered offensive on campuses.

"A lot of biographies are like that now, aren't they," Sarah went on. "Little people belittling great people. They don't like to think they're less important. So it's no surprise that the radicals are ignoring classic writers."

"They're more intolerant than the Victorians."

"Victorians had fantasies," Laura Peterson spoke up. "We have movies. We're more advanced at fooling ourselves."

"By nature," Sarah laughed, "we are not objective creatures."

Each term she varied the literature and films she taught, except that at the end of every term, the students read and she showed her adaptation of *As I Lay Dying* on the tape that Ryan had sent her, or one of their other pictures. She discussed their problems and choices and the students had lots of questions. Students always came up with fresh insights and she learned a lot from them.

"Thank you for the course, Mrs. Eisley!"

All of them rose and applauded.

"Thank *you!*"

Whenever the weather allowed, she liked to ride the elevator up to the roof of her apartment building, where she tended her garden plot, not as large as the other gardens she had tended in her life--with her mother on the farm, behind her little house with Burke Hanson in Los Angeles, on the grounds of the ranch with Ryan in the Valley, and above the bay in San Francisco. This one was about the size of just one flowerbed on the ranch, like the one that Boffo, the family dog, loved to sleep in on hot days.

She tired sooner now and got sore in her back and joints. She spent most of her time up there on the roof sitting in a canvas director's chair looking out across the city to the bluegray foothills eastward, surmounted by Mount Hood. She marked the seasons by the amount of snow on the peak. The mountain became her measure of time and space, a reference point not unlike a mate. She loved it up here, especially the smells of fresh air and plants after a rain. After living so long in drier California, she enjoyed

the distinct seasons of Oregon, the hopeful feeling that all the lush greenery gave her, the fresh damp smells and the drama of frequent changes in the weather, though the drizzly gray winters could be so long and dreary that she grew more susceptible to depression and solitary drinking.

According to the most prominent film critics, the best movie director of the eighties was Martin Scorsese, mainly on the strength of his picture about a boxer. Sarah walked downtown to see his latest, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, which had received the most extensive pre-release publicity in the history of Hollywood. She braced herself, since religion had become a favorite target of the sensation seekers. Scorsese's attack on Christianity had provoked a tremendous outcry in the United States, including boycotts and a demonstration by over twenty-five thousand protesters at the main office building at Universal City, in a groundswell of outrage and disgust. Not so in Europe, especially in France of course.

The Jesus of Scorsese is a lustful voyeur who makes love to Mary Magdalene, watches her have sex with ten other men, assists the Romans in crucifying an innocent Jewish victim, and pulls his own pumping heart from his chest and shows it to his apostles. Mary Magdalene and most other women in the cast are covered with tattoos like Hells Angels. Saint Paul is portrayed as a liar who does not really believe in the Resurrection and Judas is the hero of the story. In some ways, the picture was unintentionally hilarious. Judas is played by Harvey Keitel in an orange fright wig with a Brooklyn accent.

A few honest film critics, such as Michael Medved, told the truth. Most critics, however, as shills for the industry, defended the disgrace as a courageous work of art, while in private, some admitted it was trash. They rode the bomb all the way down like Slim Pickens in *Strangelove*, to what many Americans hoped would be the destruction of Hollywood. Movieland air defense looked worse than the Soviets' in *Fail-Safe*. An entertainment correspondent for the CBS television station in Los Angeles reported that the picture followed Christian doctrine "very closely." As part of Hollywood, the media defended itself by once again attacking a scapegoat, a Senator Joe McCarthy of religion. They selected an obscure fundamentalist minister of a very small

Baptist church in Los Angeles, whose views would make all the protesters and all Christians look like deranged fanatics. They interviewed him hundreds of times on television and in major news magazines, while virtually ignoring more representative and important church leaders. Universal lost millions on the movie, the Blockbuster Video chain refused to stock it, overall attendance throughout the industry continued to decline and Scorsese was nominated for an Oscar as Best Director.

She often woke up early these days, as if anticipating a call for some reason. At the first green stirrings of March, she rose at dawn and sat in her armchair with a cup of coffee, warm in her orange robe with Navajo designs like the sofa blanket she and Ryan had on their ranch in the Valley. Watching the gloomy sky turn lighter, she directed her thoughts away from depressing memories and gradually felt better. The clouds dispersed enough to reveal a sunrise glowing pink behind Mount Hood, still covered with snow. The pink faded while she drank her first cup and the white peak stood out with startling clarity in a blue sky.

After lunch, she put on her old blue cardigan sweater and took the elevator up. The air on the roof smelled fresh and promising, warmed by sun and by wafts of exhaust from the traffic below. Wearing gloves, she knelt in her garden patch, weeding and loosening soil with her spade. Sometimes thoughts of Ryan came into her mind and she grew nostalgic. It no longer hurt to think about him and to remember moments in their life together, though she tried not to dwell on the past. She had forgiven him everything long ago and now she only hoped that he was happy. More than ever now, she enjoyed thinking of people she loved being happy. She lost herself in weeding. She dug and dug until she noticed movement this way in the glare of sunlight.

Two figures were approaching her.

Kneeling there, she raised a gloved hand to shade her eyes. Her knees had weakened and she got up stiffly. With the sun behind them, the figures blanked into shapes dissolved by dazzle. Davin and Val. Her knees felt too weak to support her. As soon as Davin pulled off his fedora, just from the way they were looking at her, she *knew!*

The world dropped out from under her feet and she stopped breathing. She turned her back on them. Feeling suspended in the

air, she looked away at the white peak, so peaceful now, majestic and larger by far than any pyramid.

She turned and faced them.

"Mom," Davin reached and took her elbow.

"Sarah, let us help."

Val grabbed her from sagging to the ground.

Sarah loved them so much she began to cry as they helped her to the elevator. During the descent to her floor and along the hall to her room, they did not speak. Davin used his key. They sat her down in her armchair and she lay back and Val laid a cool damp cloth across her forehead.

"I'll make some tea," she tried to rise.

Davin held her back gently.

"Later, Mom."

"I'll do it," Val got up.

"Did he suffer?"

Davin took her hand, "Not badly, Mom."

He looked after her now. His hair and mustache were turning gray and the sliced top of his left ear glowed red.

She felt terribly lost.

"I didn't know, I would have gone."

"Amy called me yesterday. We didn't want you to worry."

"Are you sure he didn't suffer?"

"He had cancer of the prostate," Davin said gently. "At his age, it was a natural cause. Pneumonia took him. They had him on morphine and he seemed very peaceful."

"I should have been there," she began to tremble.

"It would have made it harder for him, Mom. He felt so badly about hurting you, he cried."

"He did?"

"God, he had a strong heart! And he kept his sense of humor too. One of the last things he said to me was, he said, 'Something like this can ruin your whole day'."

Sarah laughed for Ryan through her tears. Davin laughed too and Val. Ry could always get a laugh.

"He said he loves you, Mom."

"Oh, Ry!"

Val gave her a hanky.

"Mom, listen," Davin leaned close to her. "Mom, listen to this. At the end, first he said, 'I love you all'."

"He always did!" Sarah covered her face.

"His eyes," Davin choked up and then went on. "Mom, his eyes on the morphine were like seeing beyond this world. And the last thing he said, his head came up from the pillow even though he hurt so much. His eyes were staring and he flickered a smile and called out, '*Retake!*'"

Davin gave her a pill to swallow.

They helped her into her darkened room and she lay down with a damp cloth over her eyes. She had not been able to be with him. She had always wanted so much to be with him.

She could smell his cigars and aftershave.

After awhile, as she lay there sinking into the pain and deeper into a black hole of everlasting grief beyond all but oblivion, here he came, a small figure at first, illuminated from within and not projected through celluloid, growing larger as he came toward her smiling in his tan checked sports jacket and his tan and white perforated wingtip shoes, dancing to her, coming for her with that old soft shoe and his graceful way because the man could dance, his feet could fly, his smile and forehead gleamed forever in the light as he pulled her into his arms and away they went, forever round and round into the dark together.

27

Native Americans sat in the shade under the tall elm trees in the Park Blocks, chanting and beating drums.

Home schooling gave young Burke Eisley an advantage when he entered college. His dad offered to help him financially if he wanted to apply to elite universities, but what Burke had learned about current politics diminished his academic ambition to the modest goal of majoring in English and becoming a teacher. His grandmother helped him to research instructors and select courses at schools in the region. He moved into an apartment downtown about a mile walk from her and often came over to her place for lunch or dinner. She had to quit tutoring after her stroke when Grandpa Eisley died and sometimes it slowed down her reactions. At least she had been able to teach for awhile.

Burke crossed the campus, hearing the drums.

He soon learned that his greatest challenge in college would be to resist the temptations to engage his instructors or other students in debate. He was at an age when many young males, having learned a few facts, think they are experts and feel compelled to argue, for hours. His dad and especially Val encouraged him to argue about issues and to consider different angles, to direct his mind like a viewfinder. Val liked to trick him into agreeing with an argument and then jump to the opposite side, rollicking with laughter. His parents were always discussing issues and they made him back up his contributions with facts. When he started taking college courses, he often felt a strong urge to disagree with the instructor, or to ask a pointed question, but his grandmother had persuaded him that it would be wise to keep his mouth shut for awhile and just listen. At the local Catholic university, nobody expected all the students to agree with all the dogmas of the institution, and everyone was considered a sinner. At the public

and the Protestant schools, however, political correctness was required and many instructors attributed guilt according to race, gender, class and sexual preference.

The drums multiplied with counter-pointing rhythms.

"Don't let them bother you," his grandmother told him.

They were sitting at her small table, having lunch.

"At least the Catholics make redemption possible," he chewed a bite of his beef sandwich. "To the radicals, I'm guilty forever."

"Play the game, but don't believe in it."

"That's from *Invisible Man* and he's black. In classes, I usually wish I *was* invisible!"

"It's still good advice."

"I'm trying!"

"You know, we have to play the hand we're dealt."

"I'm sorry, Grandma."

"That's all right, dear. Now finish your soup."

He could hear the drums from here.

In gratitude for all she did for him, he invited her to accompany him to a movie downtown called *Guilty by Suspicion*. He wanted to do a paper on it for a course. She thanked him, but declined, saying that she would rather not watch propaganda. She had read that the original story was about experiences of the Communist screenwriter Abe Polansky, a geeky bald guy in thick glasses. Polansky is played by the handsome Robert DeNiro and the movie turns him from a Communist into an innocent liberal.

That evening he walked downtown to the theater.

Afterward, in his paper, he replied to a review by the most prominent movie critic on television, the pudgy and pink-faced Roger Ebert, who called it one of the best pictures he had ever seen. Ebert's book of reviews was an ongoing bestseller. Burke pointed out that, contrary to Ebert, liberals were not blacklisted, nobody was blacklisted for attending a few meetings of anything, Dalton Trumbo was a screenwriter not a director, the star Gary Cooper testified *against* Communists not for them, the Blacklist ended in the fifties not the seventies, Senator Joe McCarthy *did* in fact identify Communist spies in sensitive government jobs, and Communists were not asked to name other Communists for legal reasons, as Ebert supposes, but simply in order to prove their loyalty to the United States.

Ebert claims that the hearings "did not really further the campaign against subversion." In rebuttal, Burke quoted Edward Dymytrk, the 20th Century Fox director and former Communist, who testified that the hearings stopped the Reds from taking over all the unions in the motion picture industry, which would have given control of content to our enemy the Soviet Union. Ebert sides with the totalitarians and declares that history has vindicated the Communists who refused to cooperate with the United States. He did not notice the execution of the Rosenbergs, nor the fall of the Berlin Wall, nor the end of the Soviet Union, nor the jubilation expressed by the millions of people liberated from Communist tyranny, nor the translation of secret Soviet cables in the Venona Project that vindicated both the House Committee and Senator McCarthy. As a propagandist for Red Hollywood, so faithful to the Great Blowfish that he had grown to resemble it, Ebert says the House Committee was "opposed to what this nation stands for." He does not even capitalize the word *Communist*, reducing it to a harmless general belief, rather than acknowledging that it is the most destructive ideology in history, responsible for almost a century of untold human suffering.

The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, representing forty-six countries, eventually recognized over a hundred million dead victims and strongly condemned totalitarian Communist regimes for "massive human rights violations" during the twentieth century, including assassinations, executions, concentration camp deaths, deportation, starvation, torture, slave labor "and other forms of mass physical terror." The resolution was proposed by a Swede, passed by a margin of over two to one and was fiercely opposed by the Communist parties and other leftists in France of course, as well as in Belgium, Spain, Greece and Russia, where half the population still admired Stalin. Opponents called the resolution "McCarthyism."

Roger Ebert did not get to vote.

After the class when Burke turned in his paper on *Guilty by Suspicion*, he got to talking with another student, a slender fellow with a thin blond mustache, better manners and more formal clothes than most students, Raleigh Kirk, originally from the South. They hung around for awhile in the classroom, talking and getting to know each other. They were both English majors, but

Raleigh had given up the idea of becoming a professor, whereas by now, Burke felt compelled to enter the profession and fight the radical professors who were attacking and eliminating the literary heritage of his country. The clock on the wall showed the wrong time. Raleigh pulled an old gold watch on a chain from his vest pocket, glanced at it and snapped it shut.

They shook hands.

After the next class they talked again and then it became a routine. One day another male student joined them. Then another. Soon they had a male discussion group that varied in size from half a dozen to fifteen or more, depending on circumstances. They met in that same empty classroom at four o'clock twice a week. Some in the group had attended other schools around the country and several, like Raleigh, had given up on becoming a teacher. They all had been raised and taught to be egalitarian, to transcend race and gender and sexual orientation. By now, however, they were telling anecdotes of their encounters with radical feminists and sharing advice on how to respond to their sexist jokes and insults. On occasion they ventured comments on the most taboo subjects of the day, such as gender differences, abortion, the fifty percent drop in male sperm count, the declining birth rate of whites and the ways that Communism coincided with radical Islam. Mostly they talked about the great classic writers, especially the Americans, who had been disparaged and purged from the curriculum for being dead, white and male. They compared themselves to monks during the Dark Ages, preserving knowledge that might someday inform a Renaissance.

They mocked hypocrisy.

The radicals professed opposition to segregation in society, yet they segregated literature and other subjects by race, gender and sexual orientation. They honored Martin Luther King, Jr., yet they practiced the opposite of what he preached with such inspirational passion in his legendary *I Have a Dream* speech, that people should be judged as individuals, by the content of their characters, not by their race or other grouping. The radicals claimed to be egalitarian, yet they overturned the melting pot, discouraged ethnic assimilation, denied our commonality as Americans, replaced our pluralistic democratic culture with dictatorial multiculturalism,

gave the highest priority to aggressive pursuit of self-interest by select groups and set one group against another.

Every group that beat the drums of protest loudly enough was given an academic program that certified their purity and oppression. All professed equality while competing for status in the hierarchy of victimhood. At this school, the gender and ethnic *majority* came out on top! The radicals not only made bigotry popular again, they institutionalized it. They claimed to give the highest educational priority to advocating for people they deemed to be oppressed, yet they were exploiting untenured faculty and graduate teaching assistants as low wage slaves to teach composition and perform other functions that tenured faculty wanted to avoid. They claimed to be seeking justice, yet they taught that objectivity, the foundation of justice, was a lie, even a form of oppression. They claimed to be seeking diversity, yet political conformity was a hiring requirement.

In the Spring of his freshman year, Burke was so surprised by an unsatisfactory grade on a term paper, he read the instructor's comments to the guys in his afternoon discussion group, then had his grandmother read the paper. His subject was D.W. Griffith, the founding father of cinema as an art form. Griffith was by now considered the single most important figure in the history of American motion pictures, the creator of film grammar revered by Sergei Eisenstein, Charlie Chaplin and Orson Welles. His name was given to the major award for directors in Hollywood. Griffith was the first filmmaker to hire union labor and the first to depict the Ku Klux Klan in a negative light. In his films he championed the rights of Native Americans, denounced white racism toward the Chinese and attacked the repression of women. His epic film *Intolerance* opposes war, capital punishment, Prohibition and rapacious capitalism. Despite his record as an artist and liberal humanitarian, after his death Griffith became the scapegoat of leftwing Hollywood, found guilty of a sin committed in one among his more than four hundred pictures. In one film, he depicted a politically incorrect perspective.

His punishment was infamy.

In *The Birth of a Nation*, the first and still the most famous epic film, northern and southern families are caught up in the Civil War and Griffith includes the perspective of the Old South, its

devastation and suffering, with some black villains and some heroic Klansmen. Over the years, many attempts to ban the film succeeded. The biography of Griffith by screenwriter Homer Croy smeared him by inventing a nasty confrontation with a black maid who did not exist. Later a group of radicals from Berkeley stormed into a revival showing of the picture in San Francisco, where they vandalized the theater, destroyed projection equipment and burned that print of the film. Burke pointed out in his paper that over the years Hollywood had produced movies dramatizing the perspectives of brutal Nazis, Communists, fiendish madmen, serial killers and even Satan himself, yet now it was condemning Griffith for including the perspective of the American South during Reconstruction. His name was removed from the directors award. Burke's paper listed stereotypes common in Hollywood movies throughout the century, racist and otherwise, the collective sins for which the reputation of Griffith had been crucified on a cross burning with hypocritical indignation.

Burke had gone over the paper with his professor in her office. She explained her low grade by saying that, like Griffith, he had fostered negative stereotypes and made statements that could be hurtful to the feelings of others. Now he slumped before his grandmother with a face distorted by frustration. He ran his fingers back through his dark wavy hair, clenched his lips and sighed. He no longer knew what was expected of him. The rolled sleeves of his blue workshirt revealed long scratches on his wrists and the backs of his hands from a cat he had taken down after it got stuck on top of a power pole.

His grandmother studied his paper, then read aloud some of the comments the professor scrawled in the margins.

"Do you have to take this?"

"It's in a category required for a degree."

"Surely there must be someone you can talk to."

"I talked to a few of the professors with clean doors. You know, without slogans. But the friendly women teachers are shunned by the radicals and have no power and the men aren't allowed to express any dissenting views. They're all afraid of the radical women."

"You said there was one."

"He's gone. He resisted them for twenty years. But finally they started harassing students for taking his courses."

"Then you must transfer to a better school."

"Grandma, I've done some research like you suggested. I don't think it would be much different now almost anyplace."

She encouraged him not to give up.

Just a few weeks later, he noticed a movie downtown that he thought might interest her. This time she accepted his invitation because it was the latest film by director Robert Altman, based on a novel by Michael Tolkin. They left early so that her slower pace did not make them late. Altman had done several excellent films back in the seventies, but then he got shut out of Hollywood in the eighties by marketing executives. This picture was his revenge. According to the better reviewers, it represented much of the corporate world at large, in particular the greedy competition among top executives in Hollywood.

The Player is set in Los Angeles and is full of cameos, stars playing themselves in restaurants and other real life situations, giving authenticity to the story. The actor cast as the Player is convincing in the role because he is not a star, he has a vacuous venality about him and looks like a boy in a business suit. More than ever now in the nineties, movies were being pitched to teenagers. Studio executives sit around a conference table and wish that, in the production process, they could eliminate the need for a writer. The Player has no morality whatsoever and even murders a writer. All he knows is how to play the game.

On the walk back to her apartment, they talked about it.

"Altman is a player too," she said.

"Yeah, he admits that."

"Play the game, but don't believe in it," she advised again.

"I don't know if I can, Grandma."

"Don't give up yet. Things are changing, I can feel it."

He helped her down off the curb.

By his sophomore year the renegade male discussion group had grown even more alienated from higher education and its politics. Some guys dropped out of school and other guys appeared and the group usually numbered about a dozen. There were complaints and horror stories about the feminist Sexual Harassment Code and anecdotes about encounters with feminists. There was no way to

tell if a female was covertly hostile or not, so most of the guys did not attend any university social events and would never approach anybody on campus for a date. They would no longer enroll in an unrequired course with a female instructor unless she was recommended by somebody they knew.

For several meetings, they marveled at the most destructive myths of the twentieth century and how history might have been different if so many journalists and educators had not been so eager to believe in them. If Walter Duranty, the famous leftwing correspondent for *The New York Times* during the thirties, had reported the truth about Stalin instead of glorifying him and covering up his atrocities, there would have been less support for him in the United States, liberals might have been less inclined to give his spies high level jobs in the government, there might have been no need for a Joe McCarthy and perhaps no arms race. Likewise, how different history might have been if the leftwing journalist Edgar Snow had reported the truth about Mao Tse-tung rather than allow himself to be used for propaganda that created the myth of a benevolent Chairman Mao whose agrarian reforms were an economic success, falsehoods influential among radical youth in China and also widely believed by leftists in the United States, especially by gullible professors.

Yet the most extensive speculations among the alienated males were generated by the myth of Margaret Mead. Radical feminism was based on a belief in cultural determinism inspired by Mead, that boys could be turned into girls.

Raleigh sat jogging one leg over his knee.

"English departments are replacing the classics with cultural studies and political myths."

"The feminists are utopians," Burke agreed.

"Only about women. Their view of men is Calvinist." Raleigh chuckled, "We're all innately depraved and deserve castration and eternal damnation!"

They laughed a little.

"Our only hope of salvation is a sex change."

Raleigh and some of the other guys had been required to read Mead's book *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Throughout the century, liberals and revolutionaries had been inspired by the theory of cultural determinism because it facilitated their political agendas.

Communists, feminists, behaviorists and free love advocates in particular looked to anthropologists for scientific confirmation of their faith that genes were irrelevant, that human nature could be changed by their social engineering. Franz Boas of Columbia University sent his young protege Margaret Mead to Samoa on a fellowship to prove the theory: "I simply did as I was told," she wrote, "according to the training which I had received."

Promiscuity had been reported in Polynesia.

Based on her interviews with two young Samoan girls, Mead published *Coming of Age in Samoa* in 1928, concluding that love was free for promiscuous young Samoans. There was no curb on sexual activity. The small book resembled a romantic novel. The cover displayed a Samoan girl with naked breasts leading her lover to a tryst under the palm trees by the light of a full moon. Mead reported that she had discovered Paradise. She provided what appeared to be scientific validation for the tropical wet dreams of sailors for centuries. She was celebrated in *The New York Times*, embraced by the elite intelligentsia and adored by the public. They made her an icon, the most publicized scientist in America. Her little book became a standard text, a bible of liberals, an ongoing bestseller throughout the world and the most famous work of anthropology ever written.

Like blind shoe clerks, anthropologists thought the social model of a few small undeveloped tropical islands with a homogeneous population would fit the huge diverse industrialized population of the United States. The theory was a perfect fit in Hollywood, of course, where they manufactured illusions by projecting a small image onto a big screen. Mead provided a scientific argument for the sexual revolution of the sixties, encouraging spontaneity, acting on impulse and indulging desire. She also informed the theory of permissive child rearing advocated by the hugely popular Dr. Spock. Over the years anthropologists began referring to Mead as the Mother Goddess and astronomers named an impact crater after her on the planet Venus.

The beating drums evoked the bliss of Samoa.

Meanwhile, in New Zealand the young anthropologist Derek Freeman began his studies as an admirer of Mead. He became fluent in the Samoan language, was adopted into a Samoan family and spent three and a half years teaching school in Samoa. During

that time he discovered that Mead was mistaken, that the two Samoan girls she interviewed for her book had hoaxed her as a prank. Because she chose to live among Americans instead of a native family, during her short visit Mead did not learn to recognize the Samoan sense of humor. Samoan society was actually quite different than she had reported. For generations before her arrival, the Samoans had been a Christian people with strict customs to preserve the virginity of girls until marriage. When Derek Freeman published his findings in 1983, American anthropologists exploded in fury. They reacted like a school of blowfish. At the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, about two hundred leaders in the field gathered in Chicago and passed a formal motion denouncing Freeman! Thereafter, in a backlash of books, support for Mead became stronger than ever.

The drumbeat intensified.

One of the girls interviewed by Mead, by then an elderly woman, came forward in 1987 and swore under oath that she and her young girlfriend had fooled Mead by making up stories. Nevertheless, anthropologists went on ignoring research in evolutionary biology, neurophysiology and the primate nature programmed in the limbic system of the human brain, all of which refuted Mead. All the scientific evidence now supported the replacement of cultural determinism with a balanced view that included the influences of both nature and nurture. Studies of identical twins raised separately even suggested that nature is slightly more determinative than nurture.

At the first meeting of the alienated males after their discussion of Mead, two came in wearing black wigs and Polynesian skirts. Raleigh wore a reddish wig in the short pageboy style of Mead's hair in the twenties. They sat down in front of the class.

A guy sat down near the door with a bongo drum.

"Now girls," Mead began.

"Yes, Miss Mead?" they replied in unison.

All three raised their pitch to sound like young females. The Samoan girls leaned close to each other and tittered behind their hands. They called their visitor Miss because Margaret Mead concealed the fact that she was married in order to enjoy being

honored in a number of Samoan villages as a ceremonial virgin. The drum rolled, then stopped with a *pop!*

"As you know, I am an ethnographer," Miss Mead addressed the girls with an educated smile. "I do cultural studies."

The drum began to beat again.

"Yes, Miss Mead."

"I need to ask you a few questions about sex."

The drum beat faster!

The Samoan girls leaned close to each other, hunching their shoulders and stifling bursts of nervous laughter.

"I see you *like* sex."

The girls hunched together, covering their mouths until one of them managed to control herself.

"Yes, Miss Mead."

"How often do you have sex?"

"Oh," the two shrank with embarrassment, glancing at each other. Then one of them straightened her face. "Every night."

The drumbeat grew increasingly excited.

"Every night?"

"And during the day."

"With the same boy?" Mead's voice pitched higher.

"All the boys. We have many boyfriends."

"You have *free love*?" and higher.

"Yes, Miss Mead."

The bongo went bonkers!

"Do *all* Samoan girls behave this way?"

"Oh yes," they tried to hold their faces straight.

Mead scribbled on her notepad with an eager rapidity. While she looked down at her pad, the girls bumped each other, giggling.

"And no one punishes you for this?"

"No, Miss Mead."

"So it's your *custom!*" cried Mead near a squeal.

The drum hushed.

"Yes, Miss Mead."

Mead jumped out of her chair!

The drum went ecstatic as she whirled toward the door, waving her notebook in the air in such a state of elation that she appeared to lose her head when her wig fell off.

"Oh, Franz! I *proved* it! We've *done* it, Franz!"

Her mentor set down his drum and jumped up.

"Margaret!" he shouted. "Goddess damn it, Margaret! You are the greatest scientist who ever lived after me!"

They ran to each other.

Embracing, they whooped and laughed together and bounced up and down around the room in giddy delirium, celebrating the triumph of cultural determinism.

Burke decided to change his major.

He soon learned, however, that too many professors now in authority throughout the humanities and social sciences thought like the radicals dominating English departments. Raleigh said it was like this all over the country because each department was governed by its own national professional organization that conditioned members to conform. Politically correct subjectivity was now the rule, as in Hollywood. Many historians, for example, blamed America for all evil and compared good people like his pioneer ancestors to Nazis. Art historians used to be among the most appreciated teachers, but now most leaders in that field, like those in English, had no aesthetic sensibility and were both overly abstract and wallowing in sexual fantasies, projecting the most preposterous interpretations onto paintings that anyone could imagine, to the disgust of their most talented students. Film studies appealed to him, but it was perhaps the most political field of all. In the united nations of cinema, bound together in a global network of film schools and festivals and co-productions and awards, cosmopolitanism transcended nationalism. Loyalty to the United States was commonly seen as provincial and reactionary, especially in France of course.

He dreaded telling his grandmother that he had given up on becoming a professor of American literature. She had her heart set on it. Ever since he was a little boy and got interested in reading, she had been encouraging him. She was looking forward to his life as a teacher, but he had to be practical. Finally he could put it off no longer. He walked across the Park Blocks to her apartment building, rode the elevator up and knocked on her door.

He embraced her warmly and kissed her cheek.

"Are you hungry?" she asked.

"No thanks. I'm fine, Grandma. I need to talk to you about something. I've been putting it off because--"

"--Come in and sit down."

They sat down in her small living room.

Before telling her, he tried to explain his reasons. He pulled some papers from his briefcase.

"This study by a professor at the Wharton School concluded that to get published by the academic press, you cannot pick an important problem." He sat forward with a sigh. "You cannot challenge existing beliefs. You cannot obtain surprising results. You cannot use simple methods and cannot write clearly."

"Well, I haven't read any criticism lately."

"Neither has anybody else. This other study found that in the field of American literature, less than one percent of all articles published are ever cited by anyone within five years. Nobody is reading all that radical crap."

"I guess if they already feel correct about everything, they don't need to do any studying."

"It's a lot worse than you thought, Grandma."

"Who do they want you to cite?"

"One of the biggest stars is Paul de Man. He wrote articles during World War II supporting the Nazis. Another big star is Michel Foucault. He kept on frequenting gay bathhouses even after he knew he had a deadly contagious disease. They reduce all of life and literature to acquiring power. Like Stalin and Hitler. I'm sorry, Grandma. But to enter the profession these days, I'd have to become a fascist."

"Oh dear, I hope you're exaggerating."

"Am I?" he stood up and started to pace.

"Please, dear. Sit down."

"You know the American Association of University Professors? Well, a few years ago, there was a coup. The radicals prohibited any criticism of feminism or Women's Studies. Yeah, really. They actually abolished free speech, except for themselves. Now it's like German universities back in the thirties. That's why some guys are calling them Feminazis."

"Oh dear."

He walked over to the window, stuck his hands into the pockets of his jeans and stood for a moment looking out over the elm treetops at the sharp white peak of Mount Hood.

"Burke, honey. Are you all right?"

He turned back around.

"During the sixties and seventies," he spoke quietly, "French intellectuals made Mao Tse-tung a hero. Sartre, Foucault, Barthes, Lacan, Althusser, Derrida. And the radical feminists Simone de Beauvoir and Julia Kristeva. Most of them wrote for *Tel Quel*, a Communist journal that deified Mao. They were invited to teach at Yale and other American universities. French and British theories, Grandma. They reshaped higher education. Our radical professors imported their cultural studies, their decadent postmodernism and their hostility to democratic capitalism."

"But they aren't Communists here."

"We call them Redicals."

"Are they really that bad?"

"They call themselves leftists, socialists and Marxists. But they use the same old Stalinist methods. They reduce art to a weapon and they have the same destructive agenda. They're imitating Mao's Cultural Revolution. Led by Madame Mao, the Red Queen. They're teaching that our culture is the source of all oppression in the world. They're like the Red Guard in China except that they're the cultural elite here, not the People."

She looked down in sorrow.

"I'm really sorry, Grandma."

"Ohhhh, don't worry about that, honey. You have to find your own way. I'll be happy whatever you choose."

"You taught me how to do that, Grandma. How to choose. You taught me how to read. Myself and the world."

"I didn't have as much time with your Grandpa Burke."

"Why did you break up anyway?"

"Oh, we were just too young. Then the war came along."

"Your generation was the best of this century, I think. You overcame the Depression. You stopped the Nazis, the Imperial Japanese and the Communists. Then you built the strongest economy in the world. You improved civil rights, landed on the moon and won the Cold War. Instead of appreciating all that, your selfish pampered children turned against you. They blamed you for things you didn't do."

"Well, I'm grateful *my* children don't blame me."

He sat down beside her on the sofa, took her hand and held on to it. "There aren't any women like you anymore."

Her eyes filled with tears.

"You'll find someone, honey."

He decided to try the School of Education.

After he scored in the top one percent on written admission examinations, his grandmother was elated that he was going to become a teacher after all. Later, though, he had to come over and apologize for disappointing her again. He failed the interview. He said he was told the panel felt that because he displayed an independent mind and characteristics of leadership, he would not fit in as well as other candidates.

He considered transferring down to the University of Oregon in Eugene, until Raleigh pointed out that a national news magazine had ranked it second in the nation in radicalism and 123rd in academics. It used to be a great university. Raleigh said faculty there were no longer hired on merit, obviously. Now all students and current faculty were going to be required to pass a course taught by radicals. Faculty could be fired if they did not conform. Oregon was the first public university in the country to commit itself openly to fascism. Administrators there broke the hearts of alumni who loved the school by allowing radicals to drag it down. Burke would not consider the University of Washington up in Seattle because radical students there had refused to allow a statue to be erected on campus honoring one of the school's most famous graduates, the greatest Marine Corps pilot of World War II. By dishonoring an American war hero, the students in effect sided with our enemies, the Japanese fascists and the Nazis.

That Fall, he left without taking a degree and transferred down to the state School of Forestry. Many young men were skipping college now, entering technical fields and educating themselves via the Internet. Miss Mead and one of the Samoan girls went to law school. When his grandma worried about whether he would ever get married and have a family, Burke told her that most of the girls he met now were preoccupied with their careers or were emotionally screwed up and did not really know what they wanted. She said that she felt sorry for young people today, they had to overcome so many inhibitions in order to get together, not like back in the Victorian Age, or in the fifties. She worried even more after he graduated and took a job as forester on three large private tracts of timberland about fifty miles west of Portland, where he

lived in a cabin in the forest with his books and his two dogs and did a lot of trout fishing. He had a girlfriend, a waitress in Wheeler over on the coast, but it was not serious. His college experiences had made him so distrustful, he told his grandma that trees are more tolerant and reliable than people. At least you know where they really stand.

Every couple of weeks, he drove into Portland and visited his grandma. For her eightieth birthday he gave her a book of Italian Renaissance paintings. He still felt sorry about disappointing her by not becoming a teacher. He had regrets, yet he thought he would be happier with the life he had. When he came across some information on the Internet that confirmed his attitude, he brought it along to show her on his next visit.

It was a brisk October day.

He went striding through the Park Blocks over layers of damp leaves accumulating under the tall elm trees, where he passed a group of Native Americans beating their drums.

Crossing the street, he wove through a crowd of students on their way to classes. He thought about how since the eighties when his grandmother tried to get a teaching job, university faculties throughout the United States had undergone a massive political shift to the Left, even in engineering and the sciences. Overall, liberals now had a large enough majority to marginalize other viewpoints. He wanted to show his grandma a number of recent studies by individual scholars and by organizations such as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which reported similar results. He thought she might feel better after seeing what she was up against. When Stanley Rothman and associates asked professors nationwide to identify their own political ideology, they found left/right ratios of forty to one in political science, sixteen to one in philosophy and eight to one in history. Arts faculties were almost fifty percent "strongly left," but combined with "moderately left," English was the most leftwing academic field, at almost ninety percent. The North American Academic Study Survey found zero percent Republicans in sociology, five percent or fewer Republicans in English, history, linguistics and performing arts. Similarly in political science, philosophy and religious studies, no more than five percent were conservative. Anthropology had a ratio of thirty conformists to

every heretic. Being a conservative was found to confer a disadvantage greater than being gay or black.

At a time when voters were roughly split between the two parties, a study by Klein and Stern, based on voter registration and surveys, estimated a ratio of Democrats to Republicans on humanities and social science faculties nationwide of at least eight to one. They concluded that selection mechanisms worked in ways that eliminated Republicans and that younger faculty are the least tolerant, indicating that the one-party system will become even more extreme in the future. Behind a front of advocating diversity, most professors today were totalitarian. Collectively suppressing intellectual diversity and independent thought, they could no longer claim as a group to be scholars, nor even good teachers. The politicizing of universities had reduced the credibility of all professors, even those in the hard sciences, who were now commonly presumed to be too conformist to be trusted, like the rest of the faculty. Academic scientists now appeared to be advancing theories based on whatever would be most likely to attract the most federal grant money.

According to *The New York Times* columnist David Brooks, the most conformist academics were librarians, by a ratio of over two hundred to one. Burke passed the new library here, named for the university president who refused to serve his country during World War II. The university alumni magazine of this school repeatedly paid tribute to former administrators and faculty who went on enjoying their lives while others suffered and died protecting them. Pious freeloaders were the heroes here.

Crossing the campus, once again he felt a pang of regret that he would never be a teacher. Most elementary and secondary schools had become feminist matriarchies, with their administrators and faculties averaging eighty-four percent female. The council that accredited schools of teacher education had encouraged and in some cases required schools to administer "disposition tests" to applicants that would enable the schools to exclude from the teaching profession all religious people, all conservatives, and independent males like himself, for having incorrect beliefs and values. Teachers, editors and librarians had become the thought police, not the FBI.

American students were learning intolerance from teachers, especially their radical professors. On the exceptional occasions when conservatives were invited to speak at universities, they required bodyguards to protect them from physical assault. Unable to beat them up and incapable of argument, radicals threw food at speakers. In his current study, David Horowitz estimated the number of "dangerous" radical professors nationwide, including terrorists and other enemies of the United States, to be about 25,000-30,000. Legislative funding of higher education in some states was declining toward zero. In response, universities were raising tuition so high they were pricing out the poor.

The radical professors at this university reached orgasm when a feminist President took over and dumbed down the definition of scholarship. The longtime head of the Women's Studies program, a Marxist lesbian who taught that nuclear families should be abolished, became the most honored member of the faculty. Throughout her career, by encouraging women to avoid long term relationships with men, in effect she and the rest of her radical faculty likewise encouraged men to abandon their families and responsibilities to children, a trend that became a catastrophe especially for the black population.

The radical feminist President covered up misconduct, alienated the business community and insulted the State Board of Higher Education. Under her regime, administrators and radical faculty disregarded constitutional rights and their own rules to such an extent they provoked lawsuits and the Board had to replace the Red Queen with the head of a law school. The new President happened to be black. The radical faculty, dominated by feminists, wanted to replace a disgraced white feminist with another white feminist. At the public meeting when the new President was introduced to the university by the Board, at least a dozen white faculty members demonstrated their outrage. They had such an inflated sense of entitlement that at the moment of introduction, they stood up, turned their backs and walked out on him. The man had not selected himself from among the finalists, he had merely applied for the job.

In response to the feminist sense of entitlement, the university had dedicated an entire block of the campus to a display of female chauvinism they called The Heroine's Walk. You could buy a

piece of it for two hundred bucks. Apparently the heroism of each female would be proportional to the amount of the financial contribution made in her name. Now you could buy immortality for your favorite femme. Now every special interest group could make the case that they too should be given a block of the campus to promote themselves and attract recruits. He doubted, however, that any other group around here had comparable power, wealth or narcissism. They wanted a walk with stars. Burke amused himself by considering whether to mail them a check with the bio of Flora Bucher, the madam of a waterfront brothel in frontier Portland. She sold girls into the white slave trade, drugged clients and sold them to ship captains who shanghaied them. When she died, the authorities exhumed her three husbands, all poisoned and buried in the basement of her hotel.

After visiting his grandmother, he walked back to his pickup through fallen red leaves in the Park Blocks, where the Native Americans sat chanting and pounding their drums. They had their own building on campus, but they had not yet turned it into a casino. Burke had no official ethnic privilege because he was a melting pot American, with main ingredients of Scot, Norwegian, English, Irish and Cherokee. By discouraging assimilation and waging a war against our common democratic culture, the radical professors were multiplying conditions here that fostered Islamic separatism in Europe. The radicals perverted education, just as the terrorists perverted religion.

As he strolled through the campus with the collar of his jacket turned up against the chill, Burke thought of the faculties as an alliance of tribes, each department sitting around beating their drums, still drunk on Mead.