

GAZELLE BOY

a play in 3 acts by Ronald Tavel

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The Creative Artists Public Service Program (CAPS) and
The National Endowment on the Arts.

Characters:

DELARAI EDELSTON, a catechist and missionary at The Mission of St. George in British Columbia, Canada.

FIONA GROVNER, her co-missionary at The Mission of St. George.

MICHAEL NORTHSHIELD, a Sechelt Indian.

DORCAS (TIMOTHY INGSLEY), a boy.

MARGARET MALAROY, an assistant to the secretarial director of The Channel of Agamemnon Hospital at Earls Cove.

ARCHDEACON, THE VENERABLE LENNART PROWITT MILJAN, the Archdeacon of the diocese.

(Extras: as the Congregation of The Mission of St. George and as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.)

Time:

The autumn of 1946 and early the following summer.

Place:

The Anglican Mission of St. George on the mainland coast and the Residency of the Archdeacon on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada.

ACT I.

Scene I: The Mission of St. George. September, 1946.

ACT II.

Scene I: The Archdeacon's Residency. October.

Scene II: The loft of the Mission. October.

Scene III: The Mission. The third Sunday in November.

ACT III.

Scene I: The Mission. Late that afternoon.

Scene II: The Mission. June, 1947.

G A Z E L L E B O Y

ACT I.

SCENE: The Anglican Mission of Saint George,
on the outskirts of a small coastal town in the
wilderness north of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Set: The mission's interior. Here and there, suggesting a Ch'ing dynasty Chinese temple imposed upon an impoverished country church. Down right an antique table with two chairs. Far left a potbelly stove, upstage of it a tall Chinese chest serving as a cupboard. Down left a staircase to a loft over the cupboard and stove. In the loft a straw mattress, Oriental screen, nighttable, books; on the wall a deerhead and a window with Portuguese louvers. Upstage center, the sanctuary:- atop three steps, carved of wood in classic Chinese style, a larger than life-size, wildly restless, aggressive and baroque, painted statue of a helmeted, adolescent St. George on a rearing white steed, both hands raised high overhead holding a sword, about to slay the adversary. Although the knight's broken lance is piercing its center and pinning it to the ground, the adversary is not the traditional dragon, but something that eludes definition: a large, unidentifiable, brutish entity, abstract, nervous and, somehow, incomplete. To the right of the statue one or two wide church windows and several low backless pews piled with books, magazines, religious tomes, etc. To the statue's left a high double churchdoor. Outside the door (when open) a garden and vegetable patch on either side a walk running into the rain forest beyond. Through the windows and wherever the mission walls are merely indicated we see the surrounding, towering forest. The set is massive, open, and clean, giving a feeling of the "spaciousness and majesty" of British Columbia and the actors' diminutiveness within it.

A fine September morning in 1946. DELARAI EDELSTON, a missionary in her mid-fifties, holding a book under arm, is stoking the stove. Trim and angular in her drab black dress and dark sweater, the agile workings of her bony but strong hands and fingers continually rivet our attention. She puts up a kettle of water, goes to the cupboard, opens it wide, and stares blankly into it. Then she places the book aside, yawns, and stares again.

DELARAI: What am I looking for?

(long pause; putting her hands to her head)
 -God, what am I looking for?! -Oh, yes, the tea.
 Of course: tea: what else?
 (opening several tins with Chinese motifs)
 And, of course, there isn't any. Old Mother
 Hubbard went to the cupboard and naturally the
 cupboard was bare. What else is new this morning?
 (going to the table)
 A crust of bread. That's not new. Was here
 yesterday. Only yesterday it was bigger. The
 bread of sorrow and
 (looking toward the stove)
 the water of contrition. The bread of sorrow
 shrinketh and the water of contrition boils away.
 Oh well, praise the Lord for bounty or for blight!
 (sitting; pause)
 Funny how many more times you have to praise Him
 for blight than for bounty.

FIONA: (O.S., from the garden) Delarai! Delarai
 Edelston! Open up the pearly gates!

DELARAI: (yelling) The lock's off: open them yourself.
 Did you lose the use of your hands?

FIONA: (yelling) I didn't lose the use of my tongue!
 Open up, Delarai, my hands are loaded down!

(DELARAI shuffles to the double door and pushes it open.
 FIONA GROVNER, her co-missionary, is standing on the walk,
 her face flashing in the squeeze between two huge shopping
 bags. Also middle-aged, she wears a reversible raincoat
 over a bright yellow blouse and maroon skirt.)

DELARAI: My God! Fiona, what did you do, buy out Vancouver?

FIONA: (taking several steps toward the door, singing:)
 "Hail, hail, the gang's all here!
 What the hell do we care!
 What the hell do -----" Eeeeeeeeeekk!!
 (screaming, staring down at the walk)
 I did it! I did it again!

DELARAI: What?

FIONA: Stepped on a slug! Suffering Saints! Ech! I
 loathe it! It's the worst sensation in the
 Anglican Kingdom! Of all the monsters He ever
 created, this slimy, squirming, cellulose ---

DELARAI: Wipe it off before you come in. We don't need
 slugs' guts all over the mission floor.

FIONA: Wait a minute, doll, wait a minute. Pull the
 top package out of this bag here.

DELARAI: Come in first.

FIONA: No, now, Delarai. Right this minute. Go on.

DELARAI: (stepping onto the path, gingerly; pulling out the topmost package) Yes? now what?

FIONA: Unwrap it. Go ahead, don't stand on ceremony.

DELARAI: Don't stand on slugs.
(unwrapping the package and, amazed, holding up a 1 x 1½ ft box reading in red letters: DEATH TO SNAILS AND SLUGS; between the words are pictured a huge grey snail and a worm-like green slug)
"Death to Snails and Slugs"? -- the large, economy size?

FIONA: Don't come larger, unless you're doing barracks for the whole Canadian army. Have we a snail problem, too, or do the frogs take care of that?

DELARAI: What frogs?

FIONA: (winking) "Frogs" - you know.

DELARAI: No, I don't. What's "frogs-you-know"?

FIONA: Frenchmen who are here.

DELARAI: And what are they if they're not here?

FIONA: Oh, then they're just Frenchmen. Nice Frenchmen.

DELARAI: Fiona Grovner! I'm ashamed of you.

FIONA: Don't be. I'm not. Spill some of that poison on the path and let's head in.

DELARAI: (pouring a generous amount of the poison powder out onto the path) Shoes clean?

FIONA: (scraping her heels) Just about.

DELARAI: (as both enter the mission) What else did you buy? Some tea, I hope.

FIONA: (putting the bags on the table) Cereal, and all the tea in China. Murchie's best blends.
(reading each tin as she pulls it out)
English Afternoon - Russian Caravan - Japan Green - Formosa Oolong - Select Gunpowder - dear Queen Victoria - ech!, Spider Leg. Enough tea here now for a giant freighter full of illegal Chinkoes.

DELARAI: And just what are illegal Chinkoes?

FIONA: (all sugar and innocence) Oh, that's Chinese ---

DELARAI: I know, who are here. Fiona, how does a bigot

like you get appointed to an Anglican mission?

FIONA: By being an Anglican bigot. Why, you need other qualifications? Button your lip, woman. Here, take a look at what else I picked up.

DELARAI: (pulling them out; startled) Men's undies??

FIONA: Sure:- for the Sechelt Indians.

DELARAI: How do you know their sizes?

FIONA: I'm ashamed of you - prying into unmentionables!

DELARAI: (pulling them out) More men's undies??

FIONA: Those are for the Cowihans. -And don't ask about their sizes. With them I'm only guessing.

DELARAI: (removing a large, soft bundle) What's in here?

FIONA: Ah! That's a man's labor of love! Open it.

(DELARAI strips the wrapping and unfolds a floor-length, dark blue velvet cloak. On it is chalked, in Taoist cloud script style, a vigorously detailed leaping gazelle against a red cross background. She moves the cloak along her lap.)

DELARAI: (reproving) The fabric is extravagant, Fiona!

FIONA: Do you like the design?

DELARAI: Antique silk-velvet? -What did this cost you?

FIONA: All the cash you pitched in. The fair Archdeacon would expect you to put up no less. So I put it up for you. But don't you just adore the design?

DELARAI: I don't know. What is it?

FIONA: A Dorcas gazelle. Wong Soun crayoned the beast expressly for us. Took him all summer.

DELARAI: A Dorcas gazelle?

FIONA: Can you think of anything more suitable to give an Archdeacon coming to perform Holy Communion and bless the founding of the first Dorcas Good Works Society on the Sunshine Coast?

DELARAI: A Dorcas gazelle?

FIONA: Soun - I mean, Mr. Wong - researched it. The Dorcas is the wild gazelle of the Bible. It has a white streak along its side and lyre-shaped horns, see? They measure two feet at the shoulder and can run up to 50 miles an hour a

week after birth. So - a Dorcas gazelle to stand for our Dorcas Society. You call that symbolism. Artists know a lot about it.

DELARAI: But it's so complex. There's months of sewing here. I don't know if I can, I'm not an artist.

FIONA: And who is the niftiest stitcher since Victoria, currently north of Vancouver and south of Earls Cove? Huh? -You'll sew it!

DELARAI: And the funds? Cost a king's ransom to do this right. It needs stones, gold thread, and jewels.

FIONA: We'll take up a collection. I'll start with the savages - I mean, Indians. They'll think that cloak is the Christian equivalent of carving a totem pole. They'll love it.

DELARAI: Really, Fiona.

FIONA: Well, it has an animal motif, doesn't it?

DELARAI: You're impossible.

FIONA: But loveable, no?

DELARAI: Loveable? Tricking the indigent out of their savings for a personal gift to a clergyman? I'm sorry, it's not for me. No, ma'am. And that's final. You'll have to take the cloak back.

FIONA: Oh, wait, wait, I forgot! The best thing yet! Oh, yes! Hang on: it's in the bottom of the bag.

DELARAI: What?

FIONA: What's your favorite magazine? -Come on: say it.

DELARAI: (thinking) Life, I guess. Shallow though it is.

FIONA: (removing the magazine) O.K., I got you this week's issue. September 9th, 1946.

DELARAI: All right, then, thank you. This, I will accept: as a modest and warm exchange between us two.

FIONA: Warm, nothing - it's downright hot.

DELARAI: (taking it) How do you mean?

FIONA: Open to page 50. Think I've little better to do than pick up picture magazines for girl friends?

DELARAI: (opening Life Magazine; pause; shocked; jerking back and slamming it on the table: the piles of underwear fall off) Oh, my eyes! He's NAKED!!

FIONA: Wait ---

DELARAI: Fiona, how could you? In the house of God! You sex-minded wom---

FIONA: (picking up the underwear) Now hold your horses, Miss Prim and Proper. You take care whom you slander. To the pure, all things are pure.

DELARAI: So?

FIONA: This is not only pure, it's pertinent.

DELARAI: How can it be pure? you can see his dingle!

FIONA: Caught that, did you?

DELARAI: I'm not blind!

FIONA: You're sure not! A split-second glance, and you caught that. When it's all but hid in the shadow. Your first peek, and that's what you saw. And that's about all you saw.

DELARAI: What's there to see after that? for a woman who's respectable, I mean: which, clearly, you can't be.

FIONA: My, my, aren't we proud today! Pride walketh before a fall, Miss Chastity. So sit your self-assurance right down, open to page 50 again and take a good look at the photo and the article.

DELARAI: I will not!

FIONA: You will, too.

DELARAI: What for?

FIONA: So you can see why I bought it. I may fall short in many ways, but smut peddling's not one of them. So stop stomping on me as I did on the slug:- Sit! (as DELARAI obeys)
Imagine talking to your co-worker and buddy like she was a Portuguese fishwife over on the Island. Portuguese! -Dagoes! Krauts! Ruskies! Chinkoes! Japs and Injins! I tell you British Columbia is nothing if not the continent's most cosmopolitan wilderness! -O.K.:- now you read me the story that goes with the refreshingly frank photo.

DELARAI: (shaking her head; reading:) "GAZELLE BOY -- In the Syrian steppes last month, a group of native hunters found a boy running wild with a herd of gazelles. Apparently he had been abandoned as a baby, had grown to be about 14, living with the animals like the children of idyllic storybooks, sharing their diet of grass and stream water,

uttering only animal sounds. His discoverers, in the way of hunters with wild things, bound him hand and foot as shown here, carted him off to an insane asylum. There, an object of great curiosity, he still lives like an animal without an animal's happy freedom."

(long thoughtful pause; then, looking up)

Well, it's certainly a morning full of gazelles.

FIONA: That's why I got that magazine. Printed right while Mr. Wong was completing his gazelle design. Things fit together. The Lord wills all things to fit together in order that they make sense.

DELARAI: I still maintain they didn't have to take the poor lad's picture so you could see everything.

FIONA: The "poor lad" is in the state Our Lord created him. His state of nature. Except for the ropes on his wrists and ankles. There's the smut.

DELARAI: And he could use a haircut.

FIONA: Is that the best that you can say?

DELARAI: Well... he's quite beautiful. He is a very beautiful boy.

FIONA: (suddenly, her frustration exploding) Any woman would be proud to have a son like that!

DELARAI: (taken somewhat aback) I suppose she would.

FIONA: You're damned right she would! Prick and all!!

DELARAI: -Shall I put up tea or put up with more of you?

FIONA: If you'd be so good, some tea please. -English Breakfast. Nothing like prim English Breakfast to make you feel clean again after your closest associate's called you Mary Magdalene.

DELARAI: (crossing toward the stove) Saints save us! As if guilt, poverty, and penitence weren't enough.

FIONA: My guilty temper and this bankrupt mission are our penitence. Penitence for total failure as missionaries. Do you realize neither one of us has made a single, solid convert since the da---

(As DELARAI moves past the open door, MICHAEL NORTHSHIELD is seen standing there: a tall and broad shouldered, very good looking Sechelt Indian, 30, in plaid coat and jeans.)

DELARAI: Michael! I didn't even hear you ---

MICHAEL: (his expression grave) How are you, ma'am?

FIONA: Well, they just go anywhere these days, don't they!

DELARAI: Ignore her, Michael. She's off her head right now.

MICHAEL: I came for the clothes.

FIONA: You can wait outside till we're good and ready to give them to you.

DELARAI: He doesn't have to wait out---

FIONA: I mean what I say, Delarai, if that Indian comes in here I'm leaving.

DELARAI: He is coming in here.

FIONA: And I am leaving!
(tearing wildly off into the garden)

DELARAI: If you pass the post office, Miss Magdalene, there's a parcel of canned goods to be signed for. It's marked, "Sechelt Reservation"....
-She must still have her monthlies. Want tea?

MICHAEL: I came to pick up the clothing. If that pile is it, I'll get them now and be out of your way.

DELARAI: Please, don't be foolish. Find a chair.

MICHAEL: No.

DELARAI: Look, I hate to fight before my cup of tea in the morning. And I already did with Fiona. You don't take milk, do you? -Will you sit down or must ---
(pulling MICHAEL into a chair)
The bigger you guys are, the more mule-headed you make yourselves out to be. Because she acts retarded, doesn't mean you have to. How's Mom?

MICHAEL: (producing a salmon-emblazoned wooden bowl) Well.

DELARAI: (filling a teapot) And the little ones?

MICHAEL: (fingering the cloak left on a chair) In school.

DELARAI: Doing us proud, I hope. Getting good grades?

MICHAEL: Not exactly. -Here: I made this for you.

DELARAI: (ignoring his gift; pause) I wish Fiona wouldn't see us as one another's punishment. She's not a prejudiced woman - missioned 24 years in China she did:- her racial slurs are intended as stabs at me. And she stabs me to wound herself. It's a shame. She and I haven't anyone in the world except each other. So strange, how people invent their own suffering. Makes them even forget it was English

Afternoon, not Breakfast, that she bought....
Michael, the deerhead upstairs is coming loose.

MICHAEL: Let me look at it now.
(rising, turning toward the stairs; then, all of a sudden, tensing, becoming alert and still)

DELARAI: I hate to ask you for so many favors. But there is just so much two women can do for themselves in the middle of a wilderness. And carpentry is simply not my forte although it was Our Lord's, bless His humble occupation. -What's the matter?

MICHAEL: Silence!

DELARAI: Michael, what is it?

MICHAEL: (lowering his voice) Some thing in the garden.

DELARAI: Calling her a "thing" is overdoing it. Stumbling back to apologize, is she? Wonder if she drinks?

MICHAEL: I said, be quiet now!

DELARAI: (shivering) Michael, why are you scaring me?

MICHAEL: Quiet!

(MICHAEL goes silently to the door and peers into the garden. A rustling sound deep in the patches. Presently, the blue, spike-flowered lupines sway and bend along a row. Then the sound of vegetables being uprooted and torn. He stares.)

MICHAEL: (finally, whispering) Give me that blue mantle.

DELARAI: (biting her nails, whispering) But that's for the Archdeacon. It's very dear - antique velvet!

MICHAEL: Quickly, throw it here.

DELARAI: (doing so) Be careful, I have to embellish that with complicated needlework. Don't tear it.

(MICHAEL ducks out the door with the cloak. The ripping of plants continues for a while. Then a loud struggle, weird animal howling, and beating of the bushes and camas leaves. DELARAI, in fear, backs into the statue of St. George, her hand unconsciously clutching the garter on the knight's thigh armor. All at once, MICHAEL reappears in the doorway wrestling fiercely with a terrified adolescent BOY. Though far stronger, he can not easily subdue the BOY because he wants to keep the cloak, which he has thrown around him, up about the young thief's otherwise naked body. The BOY's filthy matted hair obscures his dark, scratched face; he emits a mute's hollow screeches and his thrashing limbs lack true coordination. Getting behind him, MICHAEL finally forces his fingers over the BOY's shoulders where he snaps

the cloak's neck-clasp in place, and then clamps the thin captive's hands together in his own. His scarred feet continuing to kick wildly, the BOY hangs onto a mass of flowers and vegetable leaves. He gasps and gags.)

DELARAI: My carmine sumacs! Ruined!

MICHAEL: The boy is hungry.

DELARAI: And Archdeacon Miljan's cloak! Michael, look what you're doing to it!

MICHAEL: Would you rather I dropped it? He's naked.

DELARAI: Naked?! The brute! Why is he naked!

MICHAEL: You tell me. I don't run this Anglican Mission of Saint George the Dragon-Slayer.

DELARAI: And I don't run it for naked urchins or, for that matter, naked devils! Listen to him:- he not only looks a devil, he sounds like one! What is this mud lark doing here besides mangling my c---

MICHAEL: Stealing food. See his peeled mouth? And - here -- his gums are green. He's starving.

DELARAI: (striding over to the BOY) He may not consume my sum-acs and camas lilies I don't care how green with starving he is!
(pulling away the plants and throwing them on the floor; the BOY yanks free, drops to all fours, and greedily eats up every last leaf)
What a healthy appetite. I'm glad I mopped the floor yesterday. The table training of those inland tribes is singular.

MICHAEL: (closing, bolting the door) He is not an Indian.

DELARAI: Not an Indian?
(long pause; the BOY cowers by the statue)
Who are you, young man? ...Where do you live?
(animal groans in response; he sniffs the statue, trembling violently; taking him by the chin)
Look at his eyes. Isn't this odd?:- one eye is blue and the other is orange. I've never seen that before. In a person.

MICHAEL: (bending to examine the BOY) Animals sometimes have different color eyes. Cats do. And I've noticed that a lot with the bucks in Alberni.

DELARAI: Yes, but not human beings.

MICHAEL: Do you think he's blind?

DELARAI: Why?

MICHAEL: He doesn't seem to see us.

DELARAI: (passing her palm in front of the BOY's face: his head rolls about pathetically and he rocks back and forth, flailing his arms to no effect) His eyes have no focus. Just a second:- (making as if to strike him; again, no reaction: the face remains unguarded, the body paddles)

MICHAEL: He is blind. This is unheard of, even in Sechelt myths. A blind boy left in the forest, who fends for himself! I wonder how long he's been lost?

DELARAI: How come you know he's blind?

MICHAEL: He did not flinch, let alone duck your fist!

DELARAI: Let me try something.
(going to the table, taking the bread crust and placing it on the floor; the BOY, on all fours, scampers to it and eats it; contemplating him in silence, her long fingernails dug in her temples)

MICHAEL: (sustained pause) Do you think he smelled it?

DELARAI: From this distance? It's stale. And hard as a brick. Stale bread has no smell. He saw it.

MICHAEL: How could he see a tiny crust of bread across the room and not a hand two inches away about to hit him in the face?

DELARAI: Because punishment means nothing to him. He can't remember people. This child never learned to imitate our behavior or to be afraid if he didn't. But his survival depends on his skill at noticing edible refuse, no matter the distance. Thus, he sees the bread crust and not my fist. In the same way, you and I, Mike, both detect a mere fraction of the sound, sights, and feeling circling all around this room right now because more than that fraction was given no meaning for us. -Truthfully I say to you, we see only what we are taught to.

MICHAEL: But ---

DELARAI: And not an Indian? Oh, my.... -Watch again: (pouring tea into the bowl MICHAEL gave her and setting it on the floor; the BOY laps at it) There:- he's never been seated for 4 o'clock tea. -So, the Lord does make things to fit together!

MICHAEL: You mean you think you know who he is?

DELARAI: I know what he is. As sure as Life was put on sale and delivered to me, God issued this life to deliver to me a feral child. The genuine article!

MICHAEL: "Feral" child?

DELARAI: A wild boy. A thing once blessed with the morals of the church, that returned to the woods, thus losing its chance at salvation. Hence, I praise the Lord for blight: since its purpose is religious insight! -Come, pray with me in the sanctuary.

MICHAEL: (holding her back) But what will you do?

DELARAI: Sew some clothes for him. He can't crawl all over the floor in a clergyman's cloak. It costs too ---

MICHAEL: (bewildered by her perfunctory tone, her religious insulation) Oughtn't we notify the authorities?

DELARAI: We "oughtn't" pass up breakfast. I can't notify, much less operate, on an empty stomach. Cereal?

MICHAEL: (astonished) But he will try to escape!

DELARAI: (pouring cereal) Miss a real breakfast if he does.

MICHAEL: -Isn't this strange to you? - a forest boy?

DELARAI: Oh, not at all. I received an epistle saying he was coming. I just didn't read it right. The Messiah always sends Word, even if it's only in a magazine. -There's the magazine. God means me to take this wild thing in and remake it in His pure Image. Here, start digging, it's Red River oats.

MICHAEL: You will remake him in God's pure Image?

DELARAI: What the pure remake is pure.
(opening his coat and smoothing back the lapels)
At least undo your buttons, you'll get overheat---

MICHAEL: -Who is your God, woman?

DELARAI: (appalled; slowly lifting her face to MICHAEL and staring hypnotically at him; then, placing her hands on his shoulders, forcing him to his knees; finally, striking him hard on the forehead with two fingers, implanting them there, and, with her eyes shut tight:) Jesus! I apologize for the unintended trespass and sacrilege of this Sechelt red man. Forgive him as I do, I pray, for he is still heathen and uncome to Thy love. We trust Thee to this and to Thee entrust his soul. Amen.

MICHAEL: (suddenly, the pagan in him surfacing:) -I want to hold the two fingers you hold on me!!
(crushing her fingers and pulling her down to him)
I asked you who is your God? Is He the statue over there that I made for you? Is He here in your hand? -Is He? What is the magic in your

hands? Are you a witch? -So now you are silent!
 (her look is unreadable; then, pressing her very
 gently against his chest and speaking softly)
 Your Lord does not talk to me. I hear your heart
 instead. ...And it invites me into your home.

(Suddenly the door is yanked violently, then pounded till it rattles. The BOY, curled in a corner, springs to his feet.)

FIONA: (O.S.) Delarai, you dummy! Unbolt the door!

(FIONA's continued pounding frightens the BOY into lightning darts back and forth that end in his leaping through the open window. Releasing DELARAI, MICHAEL starts after him.)

DELARAI: (unnerved) Please - Mike! - get the door for her!

MICHAEL: But the child ---

DELARAI: (standing) Don't worry, he'll be back. Feed a stray once and you never get rid of it. I mean - no - I didn't mean y--- please, the door!

(MICHAEL glares at her, stranded in his three directions. Finally, hissing in his teeth, he unbolts the door. FIONA, flushed with rage, enters screaming, dragging a carton.)

FIONA: I've calmed down completely! Grab those filthy skivvies, and Hi-Yo Silver to the reservation!!

DELARAI: You realize that Mr. Northshield here thinks ---

FIONA: I don't give a hoot in hell what Tonto thinks! I picked up the canned goods at the post office. You want to carry them, Tonto, or you want me to lug everything myself? Won't be the first time!

DELARAI: It may be the last, unless you stop your stupid kittlecattle. Human beings don't accept gifts given in this spirit.

FIONA: Who says they're human beings? And redskins accept anything given in any spirit, including spirits. You bleeding heart liberals don't seem to get the spirit of Anglicanism: it was founded to delineate and maintain the natural differences among peoples. You may as well hire out to Seventh-day Adventists or Pentecostal wetbacks, the blind way you see nature!

DELARAI: You're not responsible for your words if you have to scream at me. And Michael realizes that because Mike Northshield's a being every bit as good as or better than an Anglican. ---Don't, Michael, for me, go with her now, she's not safe in the woods frenzied like this. She'll twist her ankle and topple down an embankment, or worse.

MICHAEL: (furious) I wish she would!

FIONA: Scared of white woman, Chief Rain-in-Face, Chief Egg-on-Your-Face! scared you won't be able to hold your horny red hands off her milk-white ---

DELARAI: That's it! That's all!
(slapping her right hand squarely over FIONA's face, pressing down on her brow and cheek bones, while her left hand clamps the back of FIONA's head and holds her still for what seems almost an eternity of pain; then, at last:)
Hands, let her go whole!

FIONA: (released, sinking quietly into a chair; long, humiliated pause; finally, her voice hoarse:)
I'm sorry, Del, sorry, Mike. I don't know what comes over me. Maybe it's these antique Chinese pieces I brought back, thinking they'd make such marvelous souvenirs. They don't, they only extend forever, wherever I turn, the whole horrible washout of twenty-four years in China. -And then to get assigned here and be confronted with this statue, a St. George - of all things, in flagrant Chinese style - the coincidence is torture.... I keep thinking it's intentional: the revenge of the godless Orient, never to let me forget. Converts, Del! they asked us to make converts - we had to put food in those people's mouths and roofs over their heads, there was no place, no time, to make them Christians, they suffered so, no reason for Jesus to be their God. No reason at all.... Last night I dreamt I was back in the Jap internment camp. Four hundred men and me, for five years. I survived, I survived, Del, like those people survive, and I doubt Jesus has much to do with it. Religion is just a peacetime luxury, I feel like such a hypocrite here. But I've got a right to let the church pay me back for five years of nightmare and nineteen of nothing.

DELARAI: It's O.K., we know, don't talk. You'll feel different in a bit, then you'll want to take back what you're saying now.

FIONA: (staring ahead) Maybe I won't. Sometimes I wonder whose side I'm really on.... Weak as he is, Mao does more for them - he does something, but we, did we? When I was picking up the cloak yesterday, they broke into Wong Seun's shop shouting "Commy Chink! Commy Chink!" they broke his windows with rocks, and beat him up, and burned down the shop. I saw it, I was right there. A commy? He's Chinese. And me? A commy? Maybe. I'm Canadian.

MICHAEL: (pause) May I ask you for your pardon, Fiona?

FIONA: (standing, drying her eyes) Let's get these to your reservation on the double. I've got to go upcoast today, practically to the Charlotte Islands, and the scuttle shoves off 1:00 sharp.

MICHAEL: (shouldering the loads; to DELARAI) I'll check back with you as soon as this is delivered.

DELARAI: But I'm fine, quite fine.

MICHAEL: I will check back with you. That way you will continue to be fine.

DELARAI: (kissing FIONA) No arguing with men, is there? -Calm seas! I'll keep the home fire burning.

FIONA: If you don't, we can start one under George when I'm back and warm his behind for him. So long.

DELARAI: (at the door, waving to them) Be good, you two! (closing the door and leaning against it) Still battle-buggy. What if I called in a doctor? Someone's got to point her weather vane straight.

(DELARAI finds a shirt, trousers, needle and thread, and sits by the table. The BOY's face appears in the window, watching her sew. She doesn't turn around but, presently, pours some oats into the dish on the floor behind her. The BOY climbs through the window and eats it. Whenever DELARAI isn't facing him directly, the BOY's behavior becomes suspiciously normal.)

DELARAI: Lot more comfortable sitting at the table. Even chimpanzees do that. The one in Tarzan movies does. The one that's Boy's friend. Boy talks to him. Bet you also talk to animals, don't you? You remind me a lot of Boy, Johnny Sheffield. Johnny Sheffield's his real name, they call him Boy in films. What shall we call you? Can't be Boy like him. What suits you? Oh! but of course, naturally! I've got it:- "Dorcas!" The Gazelle Boy! Dorcas of the Dorcas Gazelles! -Wonder what the derivation of "Dorcas" is? Oh, don't get so scared, I want to look it up. O.K., pick another spot. Plenty of room if all you need's the floor. (searching among the clutter of books on the pews) Books, books, piles of books, but where's a plain old dictionary? Augustine, Erasmus, Barrett, Karl Barth, two dozen Midrashim -- half the Talmud, in fact: I've been through more tomes than most monks. Might be dean of a top-notch Divinity school today, except I'm female. Blamed, if I didn't dream as a kid of becoming a minister and interdenominational theologian. Till I learned they exclude girls from those eminencies, and settled for missionary work and healing. But deep down inside, my soul's

calling is still Scriptural scholarship. -There's the dictionary. Dorcas, Dorcas - hmmm - ah: it means gazelle in Greek and Latin. So a Dorcas gazelle is... a gazelle-gazelle. Bit redundant. At any rate, the essence of gazelle, since you can't get more gazelle than gazelle-gazelle. So, Dorcas the Gazelle Boy. You like that? --Your affable cast has a bemused expression.... Guess feral children never speak. Out of societal reach during the crucial period toddlers learn to talk by imitating elders. Maria Montessori discovered that, didn't she? Makes no difference, enough chatter around here anyhow. Now, there's a nip in the air, but you can't wear that. How do these strike you? Hand-stitched. Oh, don't run off, I feel insulted. I made them myself. Here, let me put the shirt on for you.

(DORCAS scampers under the statue's horse)

It's pretty dusty under the Saint. Never figured folks'd squeeze in there so I tend to neglect it. Still, it's sweet of you to seek the Red Cross Saint's protection, I've recourse to it myself all too often. Anyone ever tell you the real story of St. George and the dragon? They say he couldn't defeat the monster, so finally the dragon cut off its own head, severed it cleanly and without blood and gave it to the knight. So George was really in a state of Grace. And the meaning of that tale is that we never accomplish anything ourselves, but that the world is given the accomplishments merely through us. Anyhow, that allegory has what you call symbolism. Artists know a lot about it.

(DORCAS crawls out from under the statue)

You did make the cloak dirty. Now, I'll not get crotchety and shout or hit you, but you are going to dress in a shirt and trousers this instant, and with no mute equivalents for ifs, ands, or buts!

(DORCAS resists, rolling about the floor)

My patience is infinite, Dorcas, so let me know when you tire. I've all morning, all afternoon, and in fact the remainder of... my life....

(ignored, DORCAS finally squats on the saint's adversary and snaps the clasp: the cloak falls to his waist; going to him and pulling on the shirt)

Here's the trousers, I believe they're your fit.

-No, you put them on yourself.

(DORCAS refuses, scowling, and trying to bite her)

Look, if I have to help you with that, Dorcas, what will you be after me doing next? Now, you're a big boy, so ---- my God!!!

(DORCAS throws the cloak completely off; screaming)

King David's SIN! -you're exposed! Have you no shame in front of women? Pull the pants on under the cloak! Then I'll take it if you don't mind!

(throwing the cloak back over him; growling at her, he begrudgingly pulls the pants up under it)

Good. Thank you. That was modestly executed(!)

(DORCAS refuses to surrender the cloak; a tug of war ensues, interrupted by knocking at the door) Will you let me have this, or must I smack --- now who is that?! This has to be the busiest mission in British Columbia, more traffic through here than an off-limits to armed forces bordello! (leaning out the window; DORCAS hastens to her and pokes out also through the angle under her arm) Prima donna of some sort. High fashion, with the high heels to match. Hope those spikes didn't stab a nest of well-fed slugs.

(DORCAS dashes back under the statue while DELARAI flings open the door: there in a tailored suit is stocky MARGARET MALAROY, 40. Her blond upsweep and mimic riding-habit hat are sculpted together bizarrely as a single entity.)

MARGARET: (breathing heavily) Morning, hon. The name's Margaret Malaroy, you one of the new missionaries?

DELARAI: Delarai Edelston, what can I do for you?

MARGARET: You can let me enter and catch my breath. I've been up and down the dales since dawn.

DELARAI: Ought to dress for hiking then. Heels'll kill your feet on this turf. Love your hat. Tea?

MARGARET: (spying the messy table) Oh - a, no thanks. I'm daff for klatches but business presses. Gosh, the place looks worse than the last time I saw it.

DELARAI: Thanks.

MARGARET: No offense, you haven't had time to decorate.

DELARAI: I have. But man proposes, God disposes.

MARGARET: So true. Edelston, I am the assistant to the secretarial director of The Channel of Agamemnon Hospital of the Province of British Columbia's Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

DELARAI: Guess you stay around them long enough and you begin to look ---

MARGARET: What?

DELARAI: I say what can I do for you?

MARGARET: To get right to the point, a boy escaped from my hospital last spring and reports have it he's been here, between the inlet and coast, the past week.

DELARAI: Name, age, height, weight, scars, birth marks, distinguishing peculiarities, his clothes when last seen, and any other details that may be of

aid in identifying him:- Well?

MARGARET: (startled) Well! He's fourteen, perhaps fifteen, 5-6, 133 pounds, long curly black hair, one blue eye and one orange, oval face, trim form, a wicked smile, the Devil's speed - a lad of what you might call - an altogether "prepossessing" appearance.

DELARAI: Sounds like a pip. -One eye blue and one orange?

MARGARET: Unlikely as that seems.

DELARAI: I understand. Name?

MARGARET: Timothy Ingsley, or so we think. We're not cer---

DELARAI: And his dress as of the last time he was seen?

MARGARET: Nothing.

DELARAI: (pause; flatly:) Nothing.

MARGARET: He was nude.

DELARAI: (sitting) Look, Miss Malaroy, I don't know who you think I am or what kind of wag you hold folks to be in the habit of retailing at this backwater, but if you've nothing better to do than cook one up about a kid who's fourteen or maybe sixteen or maybe twelve, has different color eyes and no use for clothes and sounds like something that stepped out of a poem by Blake or Coleridge who may be named so-and-so and may not, why don't you head for the center of town, the tavern will probably open for business just in time to take yours.

MARGARET: (humbler) Oh my. This calamity distracts me so, it makes you think I'm as queer as my quarry.

DELARAI: Your quarry, eh?

MARGARET: Well, yes, he shears the barbed wire around the Mental Home and runs and runs just like a hunted animal for months at a stretch before he's trapped.

DELARAI: Dozens of young runaways fend in the forest for seasons if not years without being heard of, and do very well for themselves with the fish they catch, the berries and roots they pick, and tree huts they sometimes build. They are, to my way of thinking, quite happy and healthy, or at least as happy and healthy as their less venturesome cousins appear to be in Vancouver and Victoria.

MARGARET: And they reach adulthood without the least notion of their duties to society, to say nothing of their morals and moral obligations vis-a-vis Christians!

DELARAI: Let us not judge what's Christian. God does that.

MARGARET: But isn't your office about the cure of souls? And isn't it a sin against the Church of Canada to let one of God's souls go unsaved like a ---

DELARAI: -Dorcas gazelle in the Garden of Eden?

MARGARET: People can't enter Heaven if they lived their lives like a mere - what is it? -"Dorcas gazelle"?

DELARAI: As head of our new Dorcas Society, I find nothing "mere" about a Dorcas gazelle.

MARGARET: You talk and you look as crazy as Timothy does!

DELARAI: That makes us even then, doesn't it, dear?

MARGARET: -Dear, where's your cat?

DELARAI: Don't have one.

MARGARET: Dog?

DELARAI: Ditto.

MARGARET: Then what's that dish of mush doing on the floor?

DELARAI: What dish? -Oh, that. It's to be laced with poison. Slugs:- those slimy lizard-green things?

MARGARET: Yes? Tim loves to eat out of dishes on the floor.

DELARAI: Like a cat, dog, or wolf child? A feral child?

MARGARET: Feral child? Tim may have fantasies of being a feral child - he's read Kipling as which of us hasn't? - but Tim is not a feral child, my poor deluded woman, feral children don't exist. Timmy is mad, quite mad, he was in my unit and he can be every bit as lame and limited at times as he is quick and ingenious at others. He's what you call a split or multiple personality. And his flight is not only a scandal to the institution and danger to the Province, but more than sufficient reason for me to be fired!

DELARAI: Try the unemployment office in Sechelt: been a crush there of returning young veterans, but they are certain to have a position for a matron of your experience that younger folks can't manage.

MARGARET: I never! Good day, Delarai Edelston! but not ---

DELARAI: And you may find it easier to handle: won't have nudes running out on you every few mon---

MARGARET: -but not goodbye: if nothing else, the Buddhist fixtures adorning the decay you've let this mission slip to require reporting to the Island Rectory, and, I should think, immediate action!

DELARAI: You'll be more immediate in your action if you invest in a pair of camping boots. Break your neck tattletaling up the Strait on spikes.

(MARGARET exits in a fury. DELARAI, herself furious, leans under the statue and pulls out DORCAS by the ear.)

DELARAI: All right, young man, you've got some explaining to do. And you can can the can of worms, because I want to know right now if keeping you here is breaking any dominion bylaws. Start talking.

(Clutching the cloak tightly under arm, DORCAS walks on a lateral, one leg slightly dragged, his gaze downward, his head held at an angle, twitching. He chokes the gutters familiar to retards and his heavily stuttered speech comes with great difficulty and is difficult to understand.)

DORCAS: F-F-Fat old M-Malaroy lays on cat o' nine tail.

DELARAI: What? Straighten up. Stop walking like that.

DORCAS: She w-whip me. The w-w-woman whipsss me.

DELARAI: So will I if you don't stop play-acting. We may be in serious trouble. -Who are your parents?

DORCAS: I l-live in the dell. ...M-M-Mary and Joseph.

DELARAI: Try another one. Meantime, give me the cloak.

DORCAS: (moving away, apparently frightened) No. No.

DELARAI: It is not yours, young man, give it to me.

DORCAS: Young man. Cloak young man's. Indian give him.

DELARAI: No, he didn't. He only ---

DORCAS: (pointing straight at her) I know - know you!

DELARAI: Yes? ...Go on:

DORCAS: You are the lady w-who cures w-w-with her hands. I hear w-what everybody in town say.

DELARAI: And did the Neanderthals in town also say that I have vegetables to be poached by vagabonds?

DORCAS: They say you are insane and have a hundred lovers.

DELARAI: (as if stabbed; very long silence; crossing to the

stair and sitting, bewildered, her knuckles in her mouth; DORCAS drags in slow circles; then:) But now that you have met me, what do you think?

DORCAS: That you are insane. And that you have a hundred and a hundred more lovers. And that you love me.

DELARAI: (going to him and viciously tearing at the cloak: a half-yard piece rips off) Who - who are you?

DORCAS: (victoriously) I...! I am...! ...Dorcas!

(MICHAEL, out of breath, leaps over the path into the room.)

MICHAEL: I have learned about this boy! You can't keep him here. A woman from the Earls Cove mental home stopped at the reservation earlier, looking for him. The Sechelt know her: she will get the Mounted Police out in force by ---

DELARAI: (absorbed in her previous thought) Mike, do you ever come here secretly? Come and not tell me?

MICHAEL: No. Never. Why do you ask me that? Listen ---

DELARAI: Have you seen anyone else near the mission? Like men, one or more, who snoop or fuss or act somehow so as to make people be suspicious and chatter?

MICHAEL: Suspicious of what? Why? -This boy will, now. That woman is remembered on the reservation.

DELARAI: Sure! You'd see her hat in all your nightmares.

MICHAEL: Her heart is not good. If you turn the mission into a harbor for the mad, the law is on her side.

DELARAI: What makes you think young Dorcas here is mad?

MICHAEL: The youngsters at the Agamemnon Hospital are mad!

DELARAI: And Indians are sloths, drunks, and cannibals!

DORCAS: (smiling, stroking the cloak) This m-mine. W-We m-make something else for - for 'deacon.
(while DELARAI argues with MICHAEL, removing the statue's detachable helmet, lance, and sword)

MICHAEL: You have other work. How can you help him?

DELARAI: By giving him the fear of God, purging his mind of its dirty thoughts, and, above all, treating him like a normal and healthy human being.

MICHAEL: But he is not a normal and healthy human being. If you treat him so, he will live in a world that never makes sense to him.

DELARAI: You are harsh.

MICHAEL: I'm not harsh. I'm realistic. Because being realistic is the kindest way to behave. Deal with him as he really is. This boy is like an animal - a fox or a scavenger. We have had ones like him in my village. And when you expect too much you torture them, because they will reach out with pain towards what they can't ever touch.

DELARAI: You're wrong. Like all of us, this boy lives in his surroundings. But he magnifies them more than we, that's all. When he's in the woods he acts like an animal. That is our nature in the woods, animals among animals. And he has just now seen his nurse, that woman from the mental home, so now he's performing like a retard. He's stuttering and walking abnormally like the other children in the mental home. They'd beat him there and take away his food if he tried the unexpected. And being normal is the unexpected there. But Dorcas can be different, he will be truly human if I can be a human model for him.

MICHAEL: But you, before any, must not break the law! For you are a special woman. And the special are always the first target of the ordinary.

DELARAI: (suddenly, very strong) -Michael, help me! I want him to stay here.
(a hard, tense silence; MICHAEL stares bitterly at her as each reads the other's mind)
...Michael, I know what you don't about this ---

MICHAEL: I know what you don't: his nurse is coming along the path. I hear her steps.

DELARAI: Then, quickly, take him upstairs - hide him!

(MICHAEL grabs DORCAS, who punches wildly, and his recent acquisitions and carries them up the stairs into the dark loft. MARGARET enters holding a shoe with a broken heel.)

MARGARET: You were right, hon, my heel broke! Might I trouble you for a pair of combat boots or snow shoes which I shall return at my earliest convenience and also that bowl of mush that I should like fingerprinted right now at the Police Station?

DELARAI: Certainly not!

MARGARET: (hearing DORCAS scream) What's that?!

DELARAI: The mission saint: his bodily form is down here, but his ghost, like the Holy Ghost, is up there!

MARGARET: Timothy! -I knew it the moment I set eyes on you!

DELARAI: (blocking the stair) Leave this place at once!

MARGARET: (pushing DELARAI aside) Out of my way ---

DELARAI: You can't see, it's dark upstairs. And George is armed! He's the saint with the sword and lance!

MARGARET: Then I'll take this lamp! -if you don't mind, Del Edelston, and I've a lighter, I smoke, people like you drive me to it.
 (snatching a hurricane lamp by the stair, lighting it, and bounding up the steps on one heel)
 Tim! Timothy Ingsley! I know you're here: I just heard you. You had better stop gaming or, as God is my witness, your little escapade with that missionary lady will be your last if I have to cripple you, joint by joint! ---Oh, my!
 (the lamp illuminates the deerhead)
 So this moth-eaten trophy is your St. George's ghost! Armed, eh? What did it do, stumble in and drop dead of old age?
 (the deerhead lurches toward her)
 Eeeeeeeek! It's alive!

DELARAI: Yep, that's the saint, going to get you but good!

MARGARET: (fleeing toward the stairs with the deerhead in hot pursuit) Heaven help me! Mama! Ma! Ma!
 (stopping suddenly, turning about)
 Wait a -- just whom do you think you're scaring? Tim! this is your last stunt, you vicious idiot!
 (yanking the horns and, as the trophy falls into her hands, dropping her shoe and the lamp and nearly toppling downstairs; MICHAEL is revealed behind the trophy, now hunched forward glowering and growling, his long black hair over his face)
 A savage! A Kwakiutl savage! She keeps Cowihans or Kwakiutls in her attic!
 (as MICHAEL grabs for her, screaming and dashing downstairs with the deerhead; on the main floor, stopping, standing tall, and announcing quite emphatically and with ridiculous indignation:)
 Delarai Edelston! - you have more than a skeleton in your closet, you have a Cowihan in your attic!

DELARAI: And don't you wish you were in my shoes. Er - that is what you asked for, isn't it - my shoes?

MARGARET: I'm through asking - I'm telling you - telling you this: no one who breaks the state and God's law in the ways you and the kid have lives to enjoy it - not in Gibsons, not in Sechelt, not in Lund, not in Egmont or Earls Cove or anywhere else in British British Columbia so long as I am assistant to the secretarial director of the ---

(smashing the deerhead in two on the table; then viciously cracking its horns with her hands)
There's your mission saint -- how do you like him now? You're licked, Edelston! Licked, do you hear me? Completely finished!!

(MARGARET limps out the door on one shoe and slams it after her. DORCAS appears at the stairhead dressed in the cloak and helmet, carrying the sword and lance. As though to all the world, he cries out with perfectly normal enunciation:)

DORCAS: She's wrong! Here's your mission saint -- how do you like me! Look at me, everybody, I am St. George! I have saved the Princess Delarai and vanquished Margaret the dragon, here, look, here is her bloodless head!
(holding up MARGARET's shoe with its broken heel and shrieking insanely:)
This mission is mine!!

End of ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I. October. Rain. Vancouver Island: a receiving room in the residency of ARCHDEACON, The Venerable Lennart Prowitt Miljan. The ARCHDEACON's huge armchair and a smaller armless chair for guests. Obscured by the dark upstage a statue of St. George, indistinguishable from the one in the mission. In the smaller chair sits MARGARET MALAROY, dressed up for her interview, a fedora-style hat with a pearl handle pin and black mesh veil, fixed over her face. The ARCHDEACON, carrying letters, enters from the dark, stage right, slightly out of breath. He is 34, tall, thin and nervous, a delicate, very fine featured man with steel rimmed glasses and a preoccupied look: a rugose expression that suggests his mind is always somewhere else.

ARCHD.: Sorry to keep you waiting, Miss Malaroy, but church councils can be so chaotic these days. I called a meeting to study the positions our delegates plan to take in next month's ecumenical synod, and debating ran way into recess.

MARGARET: Mr. Archdeacon! I'm only too happy to wait. But you do have time for me now?

ARCHD.: (laughing) About ten minutes! Have you ferried here, all the way from the Channel of Agamemnon, in this inclement weather?

MARGARET: I felt my errand could not be delayed until the rains stopped. Every hour counts, unfortunately.

ARCHD.: If every hour counts, delay would be folly, since the rains begin, they do not stop, in our current month of October. And so had you had patience, I should have been deprived of the pleasure of your appearance until late next June! Please, how may I be of help?

MARGARET: Since time is of the essence for both of us, my errand pertains, as I indicated in my letter, to this woman, Miss Delarai Edelston, the catechist at the mission of St. George.

ARCHD.: A mission, in name at least, close to my heart.

MARGARET: I know that, Mr. Archdeacon, and that doubles my concern, for I doubt you'd recognize the mission if you were to see what it looks like today.

Miss Edelston's not only reduced it to a shamble no self-respecting dark person would enter, but cluttered the warping interior with what amounts to a curator's collection of Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist scrolls, screens, paintings, figurines, relics, reliquaries, icons, idols and iconography!

ARCHD.: (now, involved) Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist?

MARGARET: Exactly. Yet while the St. George building is ruined now, that's minuscule matter compared to Delarai Edelston's ruinous conduct. Because she undertakes community needs which the mundane are paid to dispatch - like local disaster relief and first aid, self-help, cooking, nursing, baby care and budgeting, civil defense, health education, and unaccompanied Single Men's Shelter service visits! Through her our diocese has become a standing joke to the competing denominations i---

ARCHD.: You exaggerate, don't you? -A little? Through her latitudinarian proclivities, all Anglicans are derided? -You understand what I mean?

MARGARET: ...Um, sure, latitudinarians... they're hazy on doctrine. They, um, think the church should try to humanize the effects of industrialization, instead of concentrating on ---

ARCHD.: (sitting) And this holds us up to derision?

MARGARET: Wait, I haven't finished. It's the manner in which she goes about humanizing. That's to say, so far as she's concerned, literally curing limb and soul. -She practices the laying on of hands.

ARCHD.: How strange.... I hadn't heard mention of it.

MARGARET: (smug) Then you're glad I turned up today?

ARCHD.: Nothing that argues a distress in the community or an individual gladdens me. Did you see her curing with hands?

MARGARET: I didn't have to! There's vivid enough accounts from every traveler who's ever had business at Mission Point. They say she strikes you between the eyes with her right index and middle finger and that's it, you're under her spell. You do whatever she wants. Give testimonials, cast away crutches, behold the Holy Ghost and all the rest.

ARCHD.: (his face hid in his hands) What do people think?

MARGARET: What can they think? -that she's got a couple of screws loose. They know that kind of black magic is just hypnotism, nobody really gets cured.

- ARCHD.: What about the persons on whom she's laid hands?
- MARGARET: Listen, there's always a few fanatics around will swear to anything. But the vast majority sees through her - and we, I mean they, don't like it.
- ARCHD.: And the Indians to whose villages she's assigned?
- MARGARET: Well, Indians, what do they know? I'm sure those Indians find some connection between her supposed "powers" and the powers of their medicine men. More's the outrage and reason a quick stop should be put to it.
- ARCHD.: The Anglican Church of Canada does not officially teach the curing by hands, Miss Malaroy. But charismatic healing has a long tradition, it dates from the primitive church, and is based on Christ's own miraculous powers. Still, it is unorthodox - very unorthodox. And I should think, in this area, unprecedented.
- MARGARET: Then, you'll ---
- ARCHD.: Then we'll stop talking about it for now. And in our time remaining address ourselves to one or two other problems I have with that particular outpost on which you may shed light. First: two women are enjoined to St. George's, is that not so? A Miss Fiona Grovner is there as well?
- MARGARET: That is so.
- ARCHD.: I have here with me some suggestions and requests from the ladies, most peculiar. Would you know if either has been party to influences recently?
- MARGARET: (scratching her nose) Influences?
- ARCHD.: I refer to foreign influences. The "itch" of Marxist ideology - seeking ointment on our coast.
- MARGARET: Marxist ideology? On our coast? I'm afraid I don't know.... I don't talk politics as a rule of thumb. However! now that you mention it...
- ARCHD.: Yes?
- MARGARET: -I suppose that where the rubber meets the road, those two women are dyed in the wool Bolsheviks. That would explain their doings - and décor!
- ARCHD.: (suddenly defensive) Oh, I believe their décor might be explained by their natures as deeply ingrained Tractarians. Because it sounds not too far from some quite definite antecedents in the Anglican communion's high church party. Hence,

and especially as an ecumenist, I discount your objections to their furnishings.

MARGARET: Now they're strict Tractarians? - I thought you said they were wishy-washy latitudinarians. That décor is horrid Oriental kitsch! They represent us as much lower than Papists, not the high church party aping Tractarians' questionable taste.

ARCHD.: Miss Malaroy, are not the low the beloved of God, and the lower the more beloved?

MARGARET: Oh yes, the lower the better - a, the more beloved.

ARCHD.: I need not remind you how blessed are the meek of mind, for they shall inherit the earth.

MARGARET: Oh, we most certainly shall, the only trouble is that by the time we do we probably shan't want it anymore.

ARCHD.: (nonplused) How interesting.

MARGARET: Thank you.
(pause; watching the ARCHDEACON go through his letters in silence; then rising and wandering up to the statue on which light is now thrown)

ARCHD.: Ah, here: did you know of Miss Grovner and Miss Edelston's plans to inaugurate a Dorcas Society?

MARGARET: You mean, a Dorcas Sewing Society?

ARCHD.: Among more important things. Can not the coastal Indians sew?

MARGARET: Sure, they just don't have anything to sew.

ARCHD.: I see.

MARGARET: What more important things?

ARCHD.: Evidently, they plan a very general, shall we say leaning left of liberal, Dorcas Welfare Society.

MARGARET: (absorbed in the statue) Edelston mentioned it.

ARCHD.: Anglican Christianity welcomes Women's Auxiliaries. And we've currently many of them. That they'd request the name and the form of groups attached to obvious socialistic fronts, like the Seventh-day Adventists, indicates to me these ladies are hatching disruptive ideas.

MARGARET: Like what?

ARCHD.: I'm asking you.

- MARGARET: I never join women's groups, and I encourage no friendships from the Dorcas Societies of socialistic fronts. Consequently, I can't tell you what subversive ideas they involve. But as an ecumenic, you must know, if I don't, about subversion. The way I heard it, ecumenicalism is just the newest commy plot.
- ARCHD.: And if you hold with that notion, you entertain a deal more nonsense than I have patience for on a busy day. Because, on the contrary, one looks to a united Christianity the better to defeat the international atheistic communist conspiracy. Miss Malaroy... - Miss Malaroy! --Does my statue distract you, Miss Malaroy?
- MARGARET: You know, Mr. Archdeacon, it's the spitting image of the one at the Mission of St. George the Dragon-Slayer. Confucian style, included!
- ARCHD.: There can't be two of them - I carved that myself.
- MARGARET: (hard) I did not come here to lie.
- ARCHD.: Then, I'm the victim of an art forgery. I shall look into it. But, in the meantime, ---
- MARGARET: (pointing to the gartered thigh) What's this?
- ARCHD.: What? Oh. That's the St. George garter. For my interpretation, I had to bring some details of the saint's skin outward, over his armor.
- MARGARET: What for?
- ARCHD.: He'd have been naked, otherwise. He was born with a red cross on his arm, a dragon on his bare chest, and a garter on his leg. So I attached all these symbols to his attire.
- MARGARET: (touching the garter) A garter on his leg?
- ARCHD.: England's Order of the Garter was derived from the birthmark garter of George of Cappadocia.
- MARGARET: Doesn't seem proper. In a church. The garter.
- ARCHD.: Conventionally, it's beneath his left knee.
- MARGARET: Here it's well above it. Well above it! Like a codpiece. But that's not what annoys me the most.
- ARCHD.: (irritated) Then what does?
- MARGARET: The dragon. Like the one at the mission, it's not recognizably a dragon. I'd swear you did both, because it just looks like some animal --

any animal actually, it's not at all exact.

ARCHD.: I didn't mean it to be. In art one takes lib---

MARGARET: In fact, the whole statue irks me. It's so emotional and lewd. And, unequivocally, Roman Catholic! Are even our archdeaconries not safe from this sort of Italian pomp and Papal vanity?

ARCHD.: (rising; wavering) I know. Normally, they are... But that equestrian, as Papal as it is, came to me outdoors one day: I entered a marsh, intending to hunt deer, and had a vision. I saw St. George, in the guise of an Asian, engaging a foe - not the storied dragon, but an indefinite beast, magical and remote, which assaulted our Anglican Church as the dragon in the marsh once assaulted the Lydian Princess Cleodolinda. And strain as I would, I could not discern the identity of that beast. It was some strength as graceful and celestial as it was fatal, a presence... almost lovely. I thought magnetically lovely - which drew me to it - and amassed me deep into its vortex. And there I lost all sensibility. When I awoke, I hurried to the Bishop and begged him to let me sculpt my vision, promising I would place it here, in the residency, out of sight of the worshipers. And he ---

MARGARET: (lifting back her face veil) Archdeacon Lennart Prowitt Miljan! - I really traveled all the way here to tell you something completely other concerning Delarai Edelston. And time is short.

ARCHD.: (as in a dream) Yes? Please, speak your heart.

MARGARET: --She is concealing a youth in the mission!

ARCHD.: (staring out, appearing to address someone else) A youth. Ah. Was it, then, actually a youth? You say? it was a youth? ...Not a deer?

MARGARET: An underage. A minor. A mad minor.

ARCHD.: Sit, I pray, and tell me truly, whom you beheld.

MARGARET: (declining; unpinning her hat and melodramatically tossing it on the chairseat) I can hardly sit while such a dissolute woman stands - unchecked!

ARCHD.: (her theatrics jolting him back to himself) Try.

MARGARET: I do many times over what I'm asked to by the Department of Mental Retardation, yet should I merely turn my back, an inmate of ours, a Timothy Ingsley, miraculously manages to disappear. His speed is astounding, apparently he can easily outdistance our wardens, their dogs, the Earls

Cove police - add the RCMP for good measure--look, he got as far south as the mission. He's holed up there. Delarai flatly refuses to turn him over.

ARCHD.: Perhaps she believes your faculties to be faulty. Now, why should she want a mad lad at the mission?

MARGARET: Why, indeed! You don't know Delarai Edelston -- and you don't know this boy!

ARCHD.: I gather, two things I'm to be grateful for.

MARGARET: Delarai's lived all her life in a world without men her age and Timmy knows a lot about women like that. I know, I've dealt with him extensively, he's in my ward, under my special jurisdiction.

ARCHD.: (holding his ears; pause) You said he is how old?

MARGARET: We can't be exact. A bit past puberty. (sensing the ARCHDEACON's shudder; then, nervous:) He's an orphan. -Actually, a "love-child," if you pardon my precision, he has no birth ---

ARCHD.: (trembling) But knows all about love!

MARGARET: I don't want to persist ---

ARCHD.: But you do mean to insist - that this natural child, this "love-child" as you put it, a bit past puberty, has participated criminally in unmarried, sheltered virgins' permanent damnation!

MARGARET: I'm the last to accuse, but the evidence is so ---

ARCHD.: Is so shaky, Miss Malaroy, as to demand unbiased probe! I'm scheduled to celebrate the Lord's Supper at the mission the third Sunday in November - when I'm also to bless the instituting of their Dorcas Society. I shall obtain the Bishop's authorization by then to investigate for myself what's afoot, and to judge as real facts warrant.

MARGARET: If the facts force you to dismiss Miss Edelston, may I suggest that I, myself, am qualified ---

ARCHD.: Is assistant to the secretarial director of The Agamemnon Hospital not social mobility enough for you, that you must also be catechist at a mission?

MARGARET: The woman's using a child for her carnal gratif---

ARCHD.: Enough! Sufficient unto today is the alcoholism, bigotry, national smugness, indifference, and perennial unemployment that I must deal with near hamstrung, existing as I do, wholly without monies for this, not to have to add to it any further the

as yet unproved iniquity of statutory rape!

MARGARET: I should need no stipend to live at the mission.
I enjoy a private income, my father is the ---

ARCHD.: I've no intention of perpetuating a missionary unit which makes no converts and shows no progress toward self-support, but dwindles instead our limited funds for blatant Marxist... Marxist.... -And now is leaving its door open to rumors which insinuate it a brothel for the most monstrous... enormity against nature and the Church... -Enough!

MARGARET: Then you won't consider me for her post at St. ---

ARCHD.: Certainly not! My plan is to close St. George! What remains are the charges to be l---

MARGARET: But Mr. Arch---

ARCHD.: The interview is over! I should appreciate your presence the morning I'm to be there. I may call upon your acquaintance with that insane asylum's functions on that sad Sunday.
(taking her hat from the chairseat, accidentally pricking his thumb with its pin, drawing blood)
Ah!..... Here is your hat.

SCENE II. The loft of the Mission. Nighttime. Heavy rain. DELARAI, in a white dress, seated on the downstage edge of the mattress, stitching. DORCAS, cross-legged in the center of the mattress, carving a Sechelt-type, painted wooden mask, which fits over the head and protrudes nearly two feet at the face. He wears the statue's helmet at a humorous angle, with its sword and lance hitched up under his belt. DORCAS accidentally cuts his thumb with his whittle knife.

DELARAI: You're not very good at that, are you?

DORCAS: (sucking his thumb) I am, too. Michael taught me, and he's the b-best totem pole carver in Canada.

DELARAI: What's that supposed to be?

DORCAS: A Sechelt deer mask. To replace the old t-trophy head that Margaret broke. See. It's even bigger.

DELARAI: Doesn't look like a deer. Looks more like ---

DORCAS: I know, a gazelle. What're you doing?

DELARAI: The best I can with the small piece of the cloak I tore away from you. Unless you want to return the

rest of it, along with the three dozen needles and spools of thread that've disappeared.

DORCAS: No. I need the cloak to cover myself.

DELARAI: What are all the other clothes I gave you for?
(pause; he stares down and does not answer)
Dorcias, I'm speaking to you.

DORCAS: They're also to cover me up. --Well, you going to let me see what you're making? I showed you.
(she displays a 9" strip of gilt-edged blue velvet suspended from a yard of elastic band with buckle; on the velvet a gold 8-point star pendant; in its center a leaping gazelle against a red cross)
What's that supposed to be?

DELARAI: It's called the Garter. It's the distinguishing blue velvet badge of Great Britain's Order of the Garter. Same as the one on the statue.

DORCAS: (wide-eyed) A garter? It looks like underwear! No fooling, Del, like a man's briefs.

DELARAI: (jarred by his observation) Oh. That's because it's a whole lot less brief than the actual Order of the Garter badge. It's a facsimile of it, but it's not a real one. This is just an ornament, so I made it larger.... Anyhow, it isn't for you.

DORCAS: (sour) I know, it's for the Archdeacon.

DELARAI: Correct. It will be his gift when he visits. And he's not a knight of the Garter. So he mayn't wear the real thing, even if I were to make it.

DORCAS: (eerily) That is exactly like a jockstrap. It's big enough to fit around his waist, not his leg. And that is exactly what you want him to use it for.

DELARAI: (uneasy; feigning indifference) Be strange if I did, but not unheard of. Medieval guilds worshiped the organ of Christ. Back then an athletic supporter was not so unusual a gift to a cleric.

DORCAS: (vicious) The guilds did worship Christ's prick?

DELARAI: Sure. Till the Church put a stop to it. But I think you have to be really irregular to see the similarity between my work and athletic supporters. Because, look, I'm doing even more than the obligatory red cross at the center of its star: a whole Dorcias gazelle is stitched in there. With topaz, turquoise, black and yellow sapphire, and, here, see, even an inlay of abalone.

DORCAS: (sneering cruelly at her and quickly grabbing the

badge) Then it's mine: I am the Dorcas gazelle!

DELARAI: Let go of it! Let go -don't make me raise my hand to you. This isn't the hospital. Here we do as we're told, without someone's having to beat us.

DORCAS: (up on his knees, putting the whittle knife to her larynx) I could cut your throat if I wanted to!

DELARAI: (calmly) No. If Our Lord wanted you to. But I doubt He does. And take off the helmet, sword, and lance: they belong to the mission, not you. (forcing the knife away and, reclining farther back on the mattress, snatching the helmet and weapons; this position allows DORCAS to slip off her shoes) I'd like my shoes as well as these. And also Miss Malaroy's shoe, which you swiped and hid, so I can post it to her. --Well, Dorcas? Do I get them?

DORCAS: No, you don't. I took off your shoes. And I want to take your dress off now. There's milk in me.

DELARAI: (tightening all over; long silence) I didn't know I had opened up my home to an animal. I won't have the talk in here of something that has not yet become human.

DORCAS: (standing above her) You think I'm an animal? You think I am not yet human? --That I'm too young to have orgasms, is that what you mean? You think I can't shoot like all your other lovers?

DELARAI: Who gave you -- where do you get such ideas? What lovers? Whom have you seen lie with me? --Where did - from whom did you hear talk of me like that?

DORCAS: I know grown up women. I know what they do. I have sperm for two years.

DELARAI: (near tears) This is how you repay my taking pity on you. Get out of my sight. And stop frowning at me with that furrowed brow - that brow from whose furrows velvet-covered horns could grow! -- Go out to your brethren in the barn, instead. You fawns love to wet your fur in the torrent, don't you, while you suck from goat dugs like Jupiter?

DORCAS: (going to the window: clutching its boards) True! Humans think we grovel in holes during a downpour!

DELARAI: I don't. The sensible never occurs to you.

DORCAS: That's not sensible. I shower in the storms.

DELARAI: Someone would think you'd be clean then.

DORCAS: There's a lot of mud after a storm.

DELARAI: And swine must wallow in it.

DORCAS: (beginning to hyperventilate) Wh-Why do you say things to h-hurt me?

DELARAI: (pause) ...I don't know. I don't mean to.

DORCAS: (grinding notches in the boards) You don't mean to! What does it matter what people mean?

DELARAI: (getting up and putting her sewing in a drawer of the nighttable; then slipping behind the Oriental screen; silence; then:) Let's not fight anymore, O.K., Dorcas? -Dorcas, have I ever told you, dear, how really obsessed with St. George our Archdeacon is? Well, he is: you'd never guess how much! Was ordained at 24 he was, then whisked right off to the Pacific. Well you know, soldier-priests have a story book aura about them, just like knights of old. So our fair faced soldier boy cleric easily bewitched the entire diocese. Thus, on his return from the war zone, it was all but mandatory that the Bishop promote him to Archdeacon. And Lennart Miljan loves being pictured a warrior of the Church, particularly, a St. George crushing the dragon of the ungodly. You know how I know? He carved a statue of himself as George. I saw it in his residency when he gave me my assignment here - to a mission named, of all things, St. George! Now, what could more suit a mission named St. George than that visionary's statue of St. George? So I asked Michael to make a duplicate for us, I sketched it out, and he did and he took no pay, for it was his gift to the church, his way of worshipping. But what glamour! I saw the enchanted young Miljan's halo myself that afternoon on the Island. The man's nerve to carve the statue in Chinese style - that's panache for you! It's also, of course, the influence of the Orient, he fought -- a, served there for seven years. That is why, I suppose, that dragon looks so peculiar: it's some kind of Chinese one. But you know, to the Chinese dragons are a symbol of great change and good fortune. Makes you think, doesn't it? ...Switches the meaning, actually. The meaning of George. -Dorcas? You listening? What's your opinion?

DORCAS: (engrossed, childlike) Don't have any. The only thing St. George and the dragon ever meant to me was the outside of St. George's Cathedral in Victoria. Way up high on the back wall there's a little lost dragon in the middle of, I think, about a hundred crosses. And this baby dragon's alone, his head's poking all around like a turtle, there's not a soul nearby even to kill him. Nobody cares.

DELARAI: Really? Sounds strange. Anyhow, that's how I know

since you won't let me give him the whole cloak, that a make-believe St. George Garter will please Lennart Miljan just as much. Make-believe things can be better than the real. They have no job to do. But its minute filigree leaves me almost no time for bed. You never see, you sleep all night.

DORCAS: (petulant) So what?

DELARAI: Nothing. I suppose you should. You don't have to worry about the young Archdeacon.

DORCAS: Are you finished about the young Archdeacon now? Did you take off your dress?

DELARAI: Yes.
(shuttering the screen: fantastic lights paint the loft; emerging in a Medieval red gown, her skin iridescent, her fiery hair let to her shoulders) And put on this. Do you like it? It's profligate: but the winter ceremonials are coming up, and ---

DORCAS: (stunned by her apparitional appearance) Del! -- you're - you aren't human yet either! You're like me! Cause - Del! - you're also just a big kid -- y-y-you take all your favorite things from story books and make them come true. That's just what I do! Yes! this wh-whole mission looks like a castle - you're the phantom princess who lives in it. And that's why the big knight's downstairs and the emperor's table and the chest is his treasury full of gold and.... A-And frogs are in the garden waiting to kiss you to turn into handsome mandarins.

DELARAI: That's not one bit true.

DORCAS: It is true! But it's good, I think that's the way to be happy. Don't be ashamed. I'm one of the frogs that you found in the garden. Remember?

DELARAI: (pause) People sometimes play at being a princess when they were never a little girl. Perhaps the Princess Cleodolinda George rescued from the dragon.... Dorcas, my father was a sad man. Life bewildered him. He was confused, and died: he had to go elsewhere and start afresh.... I was left on a farm with eleven brothers and sisters. I'm the oldest. So I raised eleven children, all by myself. -And I knew every one of them. ...Peter looked a lot like you - dark, for an English boy. (snapping away; fixing white petals in her hair) And these blossoms:- I need something emblematic for our Dorcas Society assemblies, that's also native - they seem right, don't they, not too ---

DORCAS: Do you pin those flowers in your hair for me?

- DELARAI: (almost dancing) Don't be silly, I dress for the season, these are dogwood petals, the sign of the cross with Christ's blood, they're in second bloom now, fashions should match the month they're worn.
- DORCAS: You're lying.
- DELARAI: (stopping abruptly) To whom the truth makes little sense, it's not much of a sin to alter a bit.
- DORCAS: (hyperventilating again) You don't appreciate me! Y-Y-You th-think I don't know anything.
- DELARAI: Cause look who's criticizing people's clothes! The façade you've manufactured this past week:- hair goood and slick, your turned up collar, rolled sleeves, pegged cuffs, and a yard long looplink key chain when the only key you need now's the one that locked your cell! Hard, so hard. A Gastown tough.
- DORCAS: (pathetic) D-Don't you like it?
- DELARAI: Think I'm fourteen?
- DORCAS: (almost heroic) H-How would you like to s-see me?
- DELARAI: How? Eager to help though that help would defeat your own ends. Though all goes well with you, sorrowful, because others are in straits. Because you have adequate food, warmth, and shelter that you never earned, compassionate for the indigent, hungry and cold. Selfless, protective, and manly. Impervious to sacrifice. Cheerful for personal loss. And infinitely patient with the many hats that Satan wears - they malignant and they mistaken. But I'd be a fool to want a fraction of these standards met by something that is other than human and has no moral nature, a thing constitutionally incapable of grief and powerless as inanimate matter to imagine it, an existence in every way stranger to the heartache and deprivations that comprise our Christian sufferings.
(he stares at her; then, with three bold strokes, slashes his forehead, and each cheek from the eyelid to the jaw; blood pours all over his face)
Dorcas!! I didn't mean -- JESUS! help me!
- DORCAS: (extending the knife, holding her off) Stay there, don't touch me, you'll make it worse. Don't move!
(tears stream down his cheeks)
I hate you. I hate you so much.
(collapsing; she kneels, using petals for a towel)
You're worse than the kids in the asylum and the police and Malaroy and the doctors and nurses and the guards and all of them, you're worse than any body ever was to me! Worse than them! Than them!!
(convulsing, kicking her violently in the stomach)

DELARAI: (clutching the dripping flowers with horror; then, strangely:) His Blood! He's not put in my hands like the dragon's head, bloodlessly.... This is his blood! There's blood in having him, and so there can be no having of him for Christ!

DORCAS: (pulling himself up) And I don't want your Christ now! I don't need Him. No! No blood for Christ -- my blood for the red gazelle, I am Dorcas, the shaman of the red gazelle men, I will put on the horned mask of my people and drive your selfish god away forever! He will hang himself on trees!

(DORCAS yanks the cloak out from under the mattress and puts it on along with the huge mask he was carving. Then, wielding the knife, he stomps, screams, and dances about DELARAI in ever-tightening circles, working himself up into a Sechelt ceremonial trance. A gazelle face is carved on the underside of the mask as well, so that when DORCAS throws back his head, a second, smaller gazelle is visible. DELARAI drops the wet petals, but remains kneeling centerstage, terrified and lost.)

DELARAI: (rambling as DORCAS chants)
The Reformation! -- has chosen me to revitalize its worship of perfect flesh! -- to gather the Saints Sebastian and George unto Michelangelo's beautiful Young David he caressed from the stone -- to gather every young saint into David and Dorcas -- Dorcas! it requires me to touch his faultless flesh as Queen Victoria did when she bathed her servants' feet before Good Friday, the day before God's death.

DORCAS: (chanting under her prattle)we survive the floggers and the murderers, we are safe, we ... outlive them, look on us and be little, go away in shame and hang yourselves from branches for we defeat you and we are victorious and we curse you and you are dead men! I, Dorcas, dance in the ceremony that makes Christians dead men, their Heaven that we trample flat under the Spirit in the deer and gazelle and stampede into Your Kingdom Come, we have: Immeasurable Liberty ---
(pulling open the mask, which splits down its center, to reveal an inner, smaller, face-fitting mask of Satan; the storm breaks into full fury, a terrific downpour following five thunder claps; downstage perfectly still, his arms straight above him, his cry summoning through an echo delay:)
Come sparrow, come starling, come grouse,
turkey and quail!
Come raven and eagle, cod and snapper, come porpoise and whale!
Cougar, bear, salmon, manta -- and the sharks
that all the oceans expel!
Come Winger, come Swimmer -- come Runner:
Come you hooved, come you horned Gazelle!

Come eaten and eater, come defeated and defeater,
Hare on the tundra, come wolf of the dell,
Come vanquished and victor, come wild Gazelle!

From the woods that home him the hunters repel
The Dorcas Gazelle!

On the Palestine plains their arrows shall fell
The Dorcas Gazelle!

And bolt him to Heavens built out of Hell!
The Dorcas Gazelle!
The Dorcas Gazelle!

(As the stagelights blitz and dim in the storm, DORCAS drops beside DELARAI, discarding the mask and drawing his cape like wings about them both. Holding her head in his hands while pressing his cheeks to hers, he rinses her face with his blood and forces her to the floor, undoing the buttons of her gown and dressing her breasts in his kisses. The torrent exhausts in a harrowing pitch, then dwindles to a drizzle in the dark of the stage and, finally, a muffled dripping as from the eaves of the mission.

SCENE III. The third Sunday in November. A humid morning following a thunderstorm. A transparent drape divides the audience from the stage on which the set of Act I stands in reverse. That is, we look into the mission from the chancel or sanctuary, the audience being where the St. George statue is - although only the drape, not the statue, is physically present now. Farthest downstage and parallel with the apron on the raised chancel is a shrouded body. Atop the steps of the chancel, a yard or so up from the shroud, DELARAI, wearing the red gown, her hair combed about her shoulders, stands before a small rostrum, her back, thus, to the audience. A Bible and a package are on the rostrum. On the low backless pews, facing DELARAI and, hence, the real audience, sit ARCHDEACON MILJAN, MARGARET MALAROY, MICHAEL NORTHSHIELD, FIONA GROVNER, (and Extras). As DELARAI speaks, her vigorous gestures yawn the fullness of her sleeves. But midway along the listeners are attacked by no-seeums, nearly invisible knats that often follow Canadian downpours. They endure the bout with judicious slaps at first, attempting to maintain the decorum of the Sunday morning proceedings.

DELARAI: Dearly beloved Brethren, dear congregation that is witness to the miracles and sacrifice of Almighty Jesus Christ, this Sunday we are most especially privileged to have among us the presence of honored Archdeacon, The Venerable Lennart Prowitt Miljan. He journeyed here across the Strait of Georgia from his faraway Rectory so to celebrate with us the Lord's Supper. And he has also, from the breath of his vision, consented to bless the establishing today of our very own Dorcas Society. Therefore,
it befits I select

from Scripture the story of St. Peter and St. Dorcas, as recounted in Acts 9, verses 36 to 42. (opening the Bible, reading:)

"Now there was at Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which means Dorcas or Gazelle. She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him entreating him, 'Please come to us without delay.' So Peter rose and went with them. And when he had come, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping, and showing coats and garments which Dorcas made when she was with them. But Peter put them all aside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body he said, 'Dorcas, rise.' And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. And he gave her his hand and lifted her up. Then calling the saints and widows he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord."

Now let us ponder what this charism or divine gift or miracle means. Right here, in The Acts of the Apostles, we have a raising from the dead of a certain sewing mistress, one called Dorcas. Dorcas or Gazelle. And why, dearly beloved brethren, is she so specified? --Once again:- why was this charitable person whom Peter raised called Dorcas or Gazelle? Why, but because that Dorcas was a gentile, which are but animals, which her name makes clear, a roe, a gazelle, an animal quite common in Asia Minor; and why, but because, that after her life of good deeds, when she rose up miraculously, but that she rose up in the visible verisimilitude of a gazelle when it rises toward God, that loveliest of leaps, that springing Heavenward, that arc that defines the immaculate precinct of the spirit's most perfect ascension. --Thus, are we to read this raising of the dead Dorcas literally? Or is the meaning in the Bible allegorical, and rather the transforming of an animal body into its human body, that form with so Christian a soul that its pure nature necessarily elevates it into the meadows of Paradise? And I stress that this one charism of the New Testament is particularly relevant to our own province of British Columbia: for here we lack nothing for counting examples of persons fallen to a brutish state, of souls mournfully ignorant of the love of Jesus Christ: it is part of our history, inextricably part of the transformation and annexing of our territory, the incorporating of an atheistic, independent British Columbia into the God-fearing, dependent-on-Heaven Federation of Canada. --Let us look together at the record. Sir James Douglas, who was later appointed first

governor of our heathen Colony, dispatched a missive to Queen Victoria dated 3 September 1853 in which he pleaded with Her Majesty to provide, quote, a proper moral and religious training, unquote, for our children to prevent them from, quote, growing up in ignorance and the utter neglect of all their duties to God and society, unquote. And later that year when he discovered the offspring of the miners at Nanaimo to be, quote, growing up in ignorance of their duties as Christians and as men, unquote, two schools finally were opened near the mines. Note how he herein equated men with Christians:— they are, therefore, ipso facto, one and the same! --So as far back as that, brethren, as far back as our colonial days the tradition of children growing up wild in the woods was with us, our children grew wild at Nanaimo and wild at Comox and wild at Prince Rupert and wild at Fort George. And as far back as that, then, nearly one hundred years, the preoccupation with good works, that is, the work of actually making humans as though through a Dorcas Good Works Society fired the faithful! But did they then elevate the brute, did they then lift up non-human nature into Christianity, that is, into human being? Because what, I ask you to consider, IS human being? What but being Christian, what but a being of whom we may say, This Be a soul inChristed? Since, who exactly were the wild men 'twas incumbent they transform, the homines feri of pre-Aeneas Rome, except terrible, frightful creatures with palsied articulation only in their limbs, indelibly inhuman because immedicably unloved, unfocused, unspoken to, unharnessed, and spiritually inexperiential? And this homo ferus is the very Druid in the uncluttered Keltic cornerstones of the Church of England who, truthfully I say to you, could then and can now know only as he is known -- by whom? why, by the perfect understanding of Almighty Jesus Christ as implanted in a Miracle Healer in whom He is well pleased! And thus, since only a miracle, a charism can accomplish his transformation, feral man must, therefore, in God's behest, now experience a contemporary charism and be awakened from his damned to eternal Breathing Death of the gentile and the beast!

(turning completely around to the audience, her hands as hard as iron, her face afire, her whole presence "possessed" and utterly other-worldly) And we commanded to this place will know today the body of an animal and gentile as true human being when he rises alive under my hand into the love of Anglicanism for I, incarnate as the sewing woman Dorcas, in as I am now St. Dorcas will perpetuate the miracle made of me by Peter to the salvation of this non-human laid here dead and washed to be called henceforth Dorcas after my own nature, which is Christ's - for I am inChristed!--I am inChristed

now! and in my fingers is the Power of the Son of Man even as when He fused It into Peter so that I necessarily do resurrect Dorcas directly before you for the perpetual redemption of us all!!

(DELARAI tears the shroud off DORCAS who is totally hidden in the cloak, its hood pulled over his face. The onlookers gasp. The ARCHDEACON leaps to his feet, outraged.)

ARCHD.: Shame! Shame to God! Miss Edelston! Quit the rostrum at once: this is blasphemy - and on holy ground!

DELARAI: (turning, throwing over the rostrum which crashes down the steps with the Bible and package) That for your rostrum! That for your blasphemy and the swine-spill of people's opinions! Behold, how holy this ground:- The Messiah's work is upon it!

ARCHD.: (slapping a no-seeum) Come away from the chancel, I command you! I am commanding you!

DELARAI: (pushing the ARCHDEACON back with the tremendous force in her right hand and, at a frantic pace:) Stand back, do not approach me now, you don't understand who I am! Know ME! Know ME! When this dead one comes to his knees alive - comes alive now through the miraculous intercession God gives me - and gazes out over the 250 foot pines of our storm-broken promontories to the shelves upon piling white shelves of the sea -- gazes out without spiritous liquors, or exhibit of notorious and gross partiality, acrimony, malice and the least indecorum -- he shall have numinous Way and Direction that your Bishop-decreed direction has not a name to enlist it or an iris to envision it or even hands to hold it, I hold THE WAY and THE LIFE! I hold Them in my hands, I lay on hands, Dorcas, new human, rise! testify!!

ARCHD.: You can't use hands to ---

(DELARAI strikes DORCAS on the forehead: he stirs, sits up, and follows her electric fingers to a kneeling position facing the audience. The hanging hood covers his bowed head, his face is in darkness. Radical shifting and shocked cries from the assembly. DORCAS intones with tortured difficulty, losing his line of thought in midsentence, stuttering like a retard, gasping and choking deeply, a strangled animal:)

DORCAS: Delarai and God, help me to understand things for people see things differently from me and I don't understand them the way others do... And when I don't understand them and others do. I think and all the time I think other people have some human power or insight or hearing. Then I thought talk was catechism I was trying to figure out the

correct conclusion and all the people's parts in it I did that a lot of the time. I had a hundred or thirteen or fourteen different catechisms, depending on how many doctors were in the asylum. But it was never real even so. It would have been if I could have had the right answers to go with my part. So I kept thinking and wondering instead of talking. The best feeling I get at the home is Miss Malaroy is the mother and father of myna birds and gives them all catechisms to repeat in real life I felt powerful and complete in my heart. When I answer the Director or a doctor or Nurse Malaroy I believe what I say and I think everything has a meaning like putting on a saint's hat or leaning your head to one side other than its real purpose such as cutting your forehead when you stutter might stop you from stuttering and 24 hours is terrible to me. So they locked me in the cage and all I needed was a friend like Delarai or God. ...Once I was reading the Book of Common Prayer and Delarai asked, "Are you looking for the catechism?" because she came to the mission to see me and try and solve the double meanings. Sometimes I thought everything had a double meaning all of the time pertaining to me. Like in the cages when boys talk and I had a knife and woodchip and thought it was finally going on. I tried to carve the lines that were mine respectfully but it went too fast but I believe I would have had the correct mask then or else a pretty piece of wood. But then the next day I was out in the mire and a tall thin man dressed in black walked by. He seemed very disturbed. He strolled up to me and asked if it was true that I came there to fight. I thought he was talking about me and with a different meaning, ---

ARCHD.: (suddenly, contorted with anguish) I was!!

FIONA: (as all turn toward the ARCHDEACON) What?

(The ARCHDEACON vaults the steps: he divides DELARAI, who has been praying as well as physically supporting DORCAS, from the boy and spins him about so that DORCAS, still on his knees, is facing him. He yanks off the hood and bends over to force DORCAS to his feet, but abruptly stops, staring into the boy's face; then cries out frightfully and hurls about as one thunderstruck, covering his eyes. DORCAS turns again to the audience and we see that his face is painted to resemble a gazelle - but painted in blood, even to the lyre-horns. The ARCHDEACON staggers backward down the steps, addressing his God like a Job in the wilderness. The congregation, terrified, stands, clearing a circle around him.)

ARCHD.: His eyes! His animal eyes! O my terrible God Who completes my vision in the marsh at last! It was this boy I saw --- it was this very boy that St. George battled on the bog bank of the Agamemnon!

But then I did not know as I am known! So that then I could not even remember how the Midrash on Psalms states so simply that when King David hunted, Satan appeared to him in the form of a gazelle. Satan assuming the appearance of a gazelle! My pride erased that memory, pride that my enemy was apparently no more than a pubescent boy costumed as a passive gazelle, the Dorcas: the smallest, the weakest, the most docile of the gazelles. With the result that Satan exults now in every corner of this diocese, the diocese so unwisely committed to my care!

MARGARET: Mr. Archdeacon, you musn't allow her theatrics to
- gosh! but the no-seeums are out for blood today.

(The assembly is panicked, uncertain of what to do. DORCAS, with red face uplifted, is reaching outward, his hands gloved with cloven hoofs. Then the no-seeums are everywhere, biting everyone but DELARAI and DORCAS: they slap and dodge the knats like the fabled plague of flies. Retreated to a calm world of her own, DELARAI drifts by the ARCHDEACON and, laying hands on him, speaks softly and abstractly as though to a departing parishioner or the infant he might be holding in his arms.)

DELARAI: Peace of the Lord find you. I grant you peace.
You have my blessing.

(The ARCHDEACON at last recovers a semblance of self-control. He looks about, adjusts his suit, clears his throat. Then, staring hard at DELARAI, he puts her hands away from him.)

ARCHD.: We have heard enough blasphemy for one morning. The child is a schizophrenic, no more. Look at him. A tatterdemalion in nankeens but for the coincidence of the Sechelt deer-ceremony costume you've forced him to wear. We've all listened to the confused extremes with which he identifies and coordinates different persons and events and even places. He must be returned to the institution lest you perplex him further, beyond any restoring of his reason. -Do you hear me?

DELARAI: (snapping out of her dream world) A coincidence, is it? I raised him whole after you ruined him, you, not I, and you deny your destruction with the blinders you refix like those on your statue's charger - after your celebrated vision, after your confession here, after you like King David hunted him on the bank and like St. George slew him in the marsh!
(with terrifying energy, tearing down the drape)
--See??

ARCHD.: (as a gigantic, horned shadow falls on him) What?
(looking up and out to the audience at the non-present statue, which his description conjures

for us; the assembly, dismayed, stares with him) St. George! You've duplicated my entire statue - but in place of my abstraction - Oh, God! - this boy here, got up as he is now! As a dor- a dorcas gazelle! Who did this? Who carved this? Speak!

MICHAEL: I. I did. Miss Edelston asked me to, a year ago. She sketched yours for me. But the Sechelt's work is exact, her sketch was not enough. So I canoed the Strait and waited till dark, then slipped through an open window in your rectory and studied your sculpture myself. I studied it all that night.

ARCHD.: (pause) Study it or not, such a faultless duplication is a superhuman feat! Genius, unheard of genius alone could have managed this. And, still, this took more than genius. It took a nearly equally unimaginable motivation....

FIONA: What could Michael's motive have been? -Darn knats!

ARCHD.: Doubtless, the strongest we ever know on earth. A man's feeling for, adulation of
(turning to stare at DELARAI; all turn to face her)
But the boy - the boy! - how did you come by that?

MICHAEL: (pause) Dorcas confided in me. He recognized you in the statue, Asian though you look and a saint.

ARCHD.: And now, tell this congregation why you replaced my abstract dragon with him. Speak. Speak, Indian!

MICHAEL: (pause) It is important that the woman understand what your strange dragon really is. So I carved that this week. Sir, that is the truth.

ARCHD.: Is it? Her understanding was need of refinement? Or her attentions in need of new focus? You lie. And so does the boy. Truth and this mission are as close as his false accusation instigating this grandiose, illustrated, gratuitous carnival act and any forgiveness for it!
(pacing, trembling, grabbing at straws:)
Look here, would it not have been - if you had to do this at all - at least pedagogic to have had instead the traditional dragon under the saint's onslaught? -And the saint's broken lance and sword? Where are they? Don't you need those holy instruments, especially here, to exorcise the Fiend's nature? Because the broken lance like a spent passion should pierce Satan in his sexual sin and pin him in the mire where the disaster of flesh belongs - while the sword severs his intellectual sin, his head with its holocaustic philosophical rebellion. And the Devil's head of denouncing sin is so evident here, so in need of decapitation in this mission! ...But, as for sins of the flesh -

while I demand again that you clarify why you took it upon yourself to sculpt the image of the retard - I must resist, Miss Malaroy, your vile opinion that there can be involved in this fiasco any corruption at all of the morals of a min---

(DORCAS crumbles into a fit, which has been building for several minutes; he screams and writhes on the steps.)

FIONA: (rushing to him) The child! -Help me help him!

MARGARET: See what you did, you three imbeciles, he's madder than ever! See what happens, Edelston, when you try to force a sewer rat to be better than born Anglicans? -with or without blood magic! --Oh, I can't bear these no-seeums, they scourge you after every downpour! -God stamped each creature with its good or evil, its mind or instinct, and its soul or soullessness. And that passes irrevocably from the parent to the child, from the bearer to the offspring - from female rats to their litter!

FIONA: (shocked) Racist! -What we do! You monster!

ARCHD.: I can't believe this! I can't believe this! Stop! Stand aside, my investigation is complete. I shall report to the Bishop immediately, he'll put your plot, if he can control himself, to the Council ---

FIONA: Wait, don't you want to celebrate Holy Communion?

ARCHD.: (astounded) Celebrate Holy Communion here? -You clown! Fiona Grovner:- you are keeping me!

FIONA: But then what about our Dorcas Society - aren't you going to bless the founding of our Dorcas Society?

ARCHD.: I am going to close this mission! And at once, you hear: by tonight it will be shut down forever!

DELARAI: (staggering about) Close the mission? Tonight?... (regressing to her dream world, finding the package and blocking the ARCHDEACON's exit, downright) Sir, your gift, the gift I worked on all autumn, to give you at the inauguration of our Dorcas Society.I thank God you are safely here to receive it.

ARCHD.: Poisons of the Devil will be on any gift with which you graze my hand! As they are all over the statue and this mission. This mission? -- this Kubla Khan castle rather it is, sheltering a woman wailing to her daemon apprentice! -with his dual colored eyes so baldly evincing the Daemon's two-sided sin!

(DELARAI rips apart the package, disclosing the Order of the Garter badge which she shoves in the ARCHDEACON's face. He takes it in hand, holding it up, amazed and perplexed.)

DORCAS: (suddenly) That's mine! I wear it! You made that for me. What are you giving it to him for?

(DORCAS jumps up, runs to the ARCHDEACON, and grabs the badge whose gems reflect the lights. Trapping the stiff ARCHDEACON between himself and DELARAI, he opens the cloak except for the clasp at his neck, and throws it back over his shoulders. He is totally naked beneath the cloak. Then, standing with his legs brazenly set apart, he triumphantly clips the badge around his waist as if it were the atheletic supporter he has insisted it is. Psychosexually stripped, the pale ARCHDEACON stares back and forth from DORCAS to DELARAI and intones very slowly, passing sentence on all three:-)

ARCHD.: And, as for the sins of the flesh, you whore, you as well as I, fornicate with handicapped, half-insane children....

(DELARAI collapses.)

End of ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I. That sundown. Rain. The set is the same as Act I, including the statue. DELARAI, in her white dress, with an open book in hand, stands in the loft staring out the window. FIONA, below, lights the hurricane lamp and holds it up.

FIONA: What are you looking for?

DELARAI: My shoes.

FIONA: Did you hang them out the window?

DELARAI: You know, it began in earnest, I mean I first realized how I felt about him on a rainy afternoon just like this, when I was right here staring at the forest. He was out yon in the middle of the trail, the one lined with dogwood and oak, standing there with his pants peeled down peeing in the rain, he was rivaling, trying to compete with the rain. He made a perfect arc, seven feet at its apex I'd imagine, that ended like a rainbow in the dogwood blooms. I saw him like Rebecca saw Isaac peeing in the field and fell in love with him as Rebecca did, at first sight: of, bless me, that sight.

FIONA: I think your shoes got swept under the sheets like the dirt we've been sweeping under the carpets around this nut house for the last three months.

DELARAI: (lifting a stained bedsheet) Look at the blood!

FIONA: Oh, yeah. These May-December affairs can run up incredible laundry bills. But other than the cost, I doubt they're very challenging. A horny boy is less trouble than a man. They satisfy easy.

DELARAI: (slipping on her shoes) Wrong: a boy is far more challenging. Because if my aging body does not matter to him, then how much purer is his love than an older man's who's conveniently outgrown his lust.

FIONA: Tastes vary. Maybe the brat's lust is for wrinkled complexities as opposed to the characterless, inexperienced skin of some young girl.

DELARAI: That is perverted! You take life so frivolously!

FIONA: Me take life frivolously? Never! I think life is

a very important part of sex.

DELARAI: You can say that to me in a house of religion?!

FIONA: Sure. Because religion is a real God-send. It puts the filth into sex.

DELARAI: Fiona, stop. I've cried every day for weeks. This morning I woke up crying - which means... that means that I was crying in my sleep. Every love is different, not only in degree, but nature.

FIONA: But this one I just can't see. There must be 40 years difference between you two.

DELARAI: (closing her book) He's wise before his time.

FIONA: He's just wise about time. Yours, especially. (DELARAI descends the stairs; then, seriously:) -Del, does he make you feel young?

DELARAI: No. Old. Very old. In his presence I am always up till now, he, somehow, only now. You can't evade a young man's years. They treble yours.

FIONA: And why this one boy in particular? There is no gentleness in him. Exactly what are you getting from the relationship besides brain damage ?

DELARAI: A respite from my mind's merry-go-round. More responsive persons can't dispel separateness like Dorcas does because they share the ineffable in your soul so well that they only perpetuate its solitude.

FIONA: That's just double talk. Or are you saying that I never comfort you? Cause I found very real solace from my own isolation in the year we've shared.

DELARAI: I'm hurting you now. You don't understand.

FIONA: You don't seem to understand - understand what the hell is going on here! You have charges to face: they could lock you up and throw away the key!

DELARAI: (staring ahead) Doesn't matter. I had him....

FIONA: What is him? A boy whose basic nature changes with every shift in the breeze, including his own.

DELARAI: Then you believe he willed his problem on himself?

FIONA: Certainly, and today his creations create him. He nurtured lies, he cultivated the make-believe, he played with his mind. And reaped a patch of lunatic plants! Look, he has as many minds going for him as Chinese dragons have animals composing

them - which are fishes, lizards, goats, and - oh yes! to be sure - deer - or Asiatic gazelles!....
-But speaking of which, how did he come by creating a gazelle costume to play in the bog that day:- that day more than a year before anyone ever seeded his fertile brain with the idea of gazelles?

DELARAI: (dazed; slowly:) We'll wonder about that all our lives, won't we? Or we'll believe in miracles.

(DORCAS appears in the door, dripping wet. DELARAI faces directly away, but FIONA turns around and looks at him.)

FIONA: Well, Mr. Gazelle! So glad you could addend this morning's fetching dishabille.

DORCAS: Fiona, I want to talk to Delarai. Could you go?

FIONA: (slipping on her raincoat and strutting past DORCAS) She's all yours. Send me the pieces. Old Fiona has got a magic wand, too -- oh, the kind that puts folks back together again, I mean.
(exiting)

DORCAS: I want that St. George badge you sewed for me and then I'm leaving. It's worth a lot of money.

DELARAI: It was never for you. It was for the soldier-boy cleric. And I believe he took it with him.

DORCAS: It belongs to me! It is the Garter of St. George, the highest order of knighthood, I said I'm St. George, I gave you the whole idea for it, you made it the way I said and I want it now. You can't use me to get promoted in the church and then just drop me without something to show. That badge took a lot of work and it's loaded with jewels. I could live off it anywhere in the world for three or four years, maybe more. I need it.

DELARAI: Dorcas, you've already taken whatever else had value here. My working equipment, the cloak, the helmet, the lance and the sword, plus every single stitch of clothing intended for the indigent. Heaven only knows where in the woods you hide it all. But I gave those things gladly, because I care for you more than anyone.

DORCAS: The hell you do! You love the Archdeacon. That's why you made the present for him. What did you ever make that was meant just for me? Nothing! Right? --And you don't need me!

DELARAI: Love is never need.

DORCAS: (not hearing her) You needed a Dorcas, any old Dorcas to figure out that design. How long now

that you finished it will you still want me?
There'll be new work for you and a new boy. So
that's why I'm leaving before you kick me out.

DELARAI: You're mixing up events. I would never abandon
you. But because your parents did, you think ---

DORCAS: I love you! You damn well know that and you've
been using me because of it. You do abandon boys!
--And I can't ever have you all for myself! I
can't. When you couldn't look at me without
clothes. I'd been looking at you, I was watching
you for weeks through those windows. Then our
first day. How bad it was! I had to crawl after
you on the floor just to get your attention cause
you were too busy with forest boys. So I acted
like one for you and then you looked at me. Or at
my eyes. At their colors. Oh! that is not me.

DELARAI: (pause) But that is need:- that whatsoever you
call a thing, that surely it will come to be.

DORCAS: No! It comes to be that only for you. Not me.

DELARAI: (pause) Then tell me who you are, really.

DORCAS: Just someone who's satisfied with who he is. When
I'm alone in the wilderness, me just like that.
And I really do like myself. So stop trying to
make out of me what I'm not. Why should I become
what you happen to fancy? I don't want you to be
another person.

DELARAI: No?

DORCAS: No. I was always happy with you exactly like you
are. I love you the way you are. I love you
because of the way you are. And I only know that
I am happy when I'm with you. And never any time
else. That's all. -Del? ...Hey, Del!

DELARAI: Then we'll both go, leave together, if you like.

DORCAS: That's what I wanted to hear!

DELARAI: Michael will see us inland. And far upcountry.
To some remote cove. We'll hide.

DORCAS: Would you do that for me? -And when the milk
thoughts are in me, we'll have a single blanket?

DELARAI: We'll carry only one. Cross my heart.

DORCAS: And put a cross in the gazelle's heart, once and
forever? -No more gazelle boys? Ever, ever?

DELARAI: No more of what never was. We'll walk barefoot

in mud. And drink brandless, half-brewed tea.

DORCAS: Can you find Michael? Let's head out right away.

DELARAI: Pack what you wish. I'll be quick.

DORCAS: Here, take your umbrella.

DELARAI: I don't need it now. It's letting up:- look there, the sun is making amends.

DORCAS: (beaming, holding her back) -Are you happy with me? I have the feeling that you're happy with me.

(DELARAI hugs him and, as the rain ends and the windows and garden go suddenly bright with sun, DORCAS, looking past her shoulder, sees MARGARET MALAROY in the door. When DELARAI turns, MARGARET steps back out of sight: DELARAI hurries out, not seeing her. DORCAS is instantly thrown. Then, on a nervous impulse, he puts up water. MARGARET enters.)

DORCAS: (not looking at her) You're too late to stop me, Malaroy. I'm getting out of here.

MARGARET: (shaking out her umbrella) Timmy boy, you have me all wrong. I wouldn't try to stop you.

DORCAS: No?

MARGARET: Definitely not. I just want to make certain that you aren't forgetting something.

DORCAS: I have everything I need.

MARGARET: (displaying the badge) Really? Then what's this?

DORCAS: -Where'd you get that?

MARGARET: From Delarai. She asked me to sell it down in Vancouver and keep a third of what it draws. It's called embezzling. Not a very honest way to deal with other people's property. Here, tak---

DORCAS: Miljan gave that to you. He hates it, doesn't he?

MARGARET: Why should I lie?

DORCAS: How would I know? Delarai would never sell that.

MARGARET: Look, Tim, I don't have to steal for a living. My family is one of the wealthiest in western Canada.

DORCAS: So? - I've heard all that.

MARGARET: So I want you to have this, I'll purchase it for you myself. Plus lots more nice things. You deserve them. But I can't give you gifts so long

as Delarai's around. You can understand.

DORCAS: You were outside listening to us?

MARGARET: For your own good. Running off with that woman is a serious illegality. I don't want to see you add to your errors. Why should you get deeper ---

DORCAS: Could you move out of my way? I expect the lousy Mounties any minute.

MARGARET: And they'll follow you wherever you go. You're a handsome lad and you're letting an old lady scar up your face like a rutting buck - and entice you into preposterous schemes. Be practical.

DORCAS: Stop talking!

MARGARET: What a pair you two make: a woman who could never look at reality honestly and a boy who will not. You can't go with her, now that the whole diocese knows about you two. Where will you hide?

DORCAS: She can hide us in any Indian camp in the west.

MARGARET: With the Mounties right behind you. Be nothing for them to track her down. How far could she travel?

DORCAS: (filling the teapot) I'll help her. I know bays no white man has ever been. No Indian, in fact.

MARGARET: If you can go there so too can the police. They were in British Columbia before the settlers. Mounties know the land like wolves and bears, the rivers like salmon, the coast better than migrant seal. You'll be back at the institution by week's end. In the cage. You remember which cage, the one that even rodents can't claw their way out of?

DORCAS: So you came back here to have a good laugh at me!

MARGARET: That would be just stupid.

DORCAS: Wh-Why can't you l-let me alone?
(beginning to lose control, breathing heavily)

MARGARET: I want everyone to let you alone. But you have to be clever about it. Calm down.

DORCAS: (twitching, sobbing) Y-you all want to s-see me dea-dea-dead! Miljan and Delarai and y-you an---

MARGARET: Calm down I said or you'll work yourself up into another fit. That won't solve anything. And it doesn't impress me. So stop it, right now. Here:
(giving him the badge: he grabs it and hugs it; then sits, his back to her, relatively still)

Now listen to me. I can end this manhunt. I'll report you stowed away on a cross-Pacific cargo. Since I'm answerable for your welfare and liable to criminal censure for this, the Department will have to accept so extreme a claim on my part.

DORCAS: (pause; pathetic) Y-You want to u-use me? Do you?

MARGARET: I'm a deal younger than Del Edelston. Still, I'd never use you like she. Not against your wish. But we've lived together for ten years now....

DORCAS: (lost) There's no one in the whole wide rotten world who really cares for me...

MARGARET: Tim, that's just what I'm talking about: my caring for you. I own acreage east of Skookumchuck Narrows. You can build a shelter there. It will be your property and I'll get you all the food y---

DORCAS: I can hunt and fish for myself.

MARGARET: Well, during the winter when it's inconvenient. I mean, you'll let me buy a Winchester and charge?

DORCAS: A Winchester. ...I'd prize that! ...I'd be free. (suddenly despairing; then, with great difficulty) But you'll expect me to do the -- to -- to fool with you for this?

MARGARET: I won't expect anything you're not game for and wouldn't do quite naturally on your own. So talk no silliness with me. I'm not Delarai, you can't trick me like you trick her, and you fool with her, as well:- I overheard, don't try lying to me. You see, I know exactly what you are. And you were an irreparable professional at it long before puberty.

DORCAS: (sad) I could have been something better with her.

MARGARET: Natura non facit saltum: "Nature pulls no punches," to translate. So you'll fool with me when you fool with me, just like you used to at the Mental home. That's your nature, it's what you are, curly-head. Rain really makes your hair curl, doesn't it? (playing with his hair; he stares at the floor) No more arguments? -What I so positively enjoy about this is that we're such excitingly balanced opponents! Now we ought both to get going before she bursts back in. Hysteria can be incommodious, you faking it, or hers, the genuine embarrassment.

(DELARAI enters running, followed by MICHAEL and FIONA.)

DELARAI: Dorcas, I'm back! And Michael and Fiona are going to help us! --Dorcas:- where are your things?....
-What? Oh, it's - Miljan decided to drop you, huh?

MARGARET: Good-looking redskin you've got there, Lilith.

MICHAEL: (to MARGARET) Did you forget something?

MARGARET: (reading a tea tin) Only what Tim just brewed me. But Spider Leg's not exactly my dish of tea.

FIONA: So drink piss!

MARGARET: Insolence is the earmark of the ignorant, Fiona. Why make enemies of two possible witnesses for the prosecution who are quite willingly disappearing?

MICHAEL: Who is disappearing?

MARGARET: Timmy and I.

DELARAI: Timmy? --Dorcas, where are you going?
(DORCAS hesitates, he looks about)
Dorcas!

DORCAS: (finally) Don't block the door, Delarai.

DELARAI: Where are you going?

DORCAS: Upcountry.

DELARAI: Alone?

DORCAS: With her.

DELARAI: What?

DORCAS: With her.

MARGARET: We'd wait on the amenities, but a time factor's involved. You've stirred up a bit of a scandal around here and if you're to get out of it through insufficient evidence, we two should hussle along. So would your bodyguards mind stepping asi---

DELARAI: Dorcas!

DORCAS: I said, with her!

MARGARET: Look, hon, arrowing infamy at myself is errant. I've injured no one -- no one not already injured well in advance of my meeting him, that is.

DELARAI: Dorcas, I'll pack your property, the antiques you like, the mask, your dish, whatever you made yours. Dorcas!- where are you - what are you doing to us?

DORCAS: I'm doing this for you -- to keep you out of trouble. You'll never understand that.

DELARAI: Liar! Liar in the presence of everyone. You're

humiliating me in front of everyone!

DORCAS: (as MARGARET elbows him toward the door) You still think of yourself. Y-You stay selfish to the end.

DELARAI: I am selfish? you crippled cub in a rabid litter! you are for sale!! Get out, out of my home, you're free! - make her mop your afterbirth for you!

(DELARAI tears MARGARET's umbrella from her hand and beats her, knocking off her mock-helmet hat. In a flash, MICHAEL wrests the umbrella away, breaks it, and throws it on the floor. DELARAI goes for her own umbrella by the stair rail, but MICHAEL gets to it first and holds it out of reach.)

MICHAEL: (angrily) Think these are swords and lances?

DELARAI: (screaming) I am the much deceived! I am the much deceived! I am the MUCH deceived!!

MICHAEL: When a woman is deceived is it because someone has lied to her, or because she has lied to herself?

DELARAI: (grabbing DORCAS) I won't let you out of here.

DORCAS: (starting at a stutter that accelerates to wildly insane growling) T-Take your hands off me y-you ugly o-old woman, I'm s-sick of you, you're too old and ugly to die, I'm sick of your n-nagging, wrinkled mouth and your battered chest, your damn sk-skinny sh-shriveled up l-l-l-leg ----
(degenerating into an animal; howling and shrieking terrifying incoherencies)

DELARAI: (kicking MICHAEL who comes between them) You freak of nature!! Fiend! fiend! fiend! fiend! fiend!!!

(DORCAS leaps at DELARAI, punching her fiercely and trying to strangle her with the badge. MICHAEL and FIONA pull him away. MARGARET and DORCAS exit. DELARAI runs to the table, takes the teapot and hurls it at the statue, shattering it. She sinks, frenzied, to her knees, crying as she collects the shards. Lights, except for a hold on DELARAI. Fade.

SCENE II. A cold, dreary morning six months later. The same set. DELARAI, tired and pale in her black dress and sweater, is spreading the contents of the box of snail and slug poison around the statue and talking to herself.

DELARAI: These slugs defy confinement! Soon as I lay down powder they take a powder and show up next week when it's lost its effectiveness. Look at that:-
(peering under the statue's adversary)
They've built a regular nest in there. Never saw

so many together. Talk about over-crowding and the housing shortage - can't you go elsewhere to set up your families, must you all squeeze in under the beast where I can't reach you? How am I ever to sweep out your corpses and the used up poison? I can't fit a broom through that space. Better pour the poison in some sort of container. (going to the cupboard and staring blankly in it) What am I looking for? Oh! what am I looking for? Would you believe this - I can not concentrate on an objective. --Oh, yes! the "Dorcas dish." (removing the emblazoned bowl from a shelf) This'll do just fine. Cinch I won't be needing it any more and it's exactly the right size, easy to push under the statue and easy to remove. (pouring poison in the bowl while shuffling back to the statue; then forcing it under the adversary) A snug fit, but a fit n--- something's in the way. (reaching under, removing the bowl and a shoe) What in the world? Why, it's Miss Malaroy's shoe. How well I remember it. Spikes. A must for life in the great outdoors! - that ass! (reaching again, and feeling about) And more stuff. -It feels like.... (removing the crumpled cloak) The cloak! The cloak! About a lifetime too late. (reaching under once again, straining this time) And I feel the tip of the lance, and --- so here's where he hid his loves. Who would have thought -- and yet, it's so obvious, so symbolically befitting.

- FIONA: (O.S.) Delarai Edelston! The pearly gates please!
- DELARAI: (yelling) Did you lose the use of your hands?
- FIONA: (yelling back) I didn't lose the use of my tongue! Open up, Delarai, my hands are loaded down. (as DELARAI throws open the door, singing loudly, her face between two huge shopping bags:) "God save our noble King!
God save our noble King!
God bless the King!"
Here, help me with these burdens, woman.
- DELARAI: I'm busy, Fiona, I've no time to horse around.
- FIONA: (taking the bags to the table) Busy?
- DELARAI: Disinfecting. The pest problem is a menace. That's what we get for neglecting it so long.
- FIONA: You mental or something? We're leaving this afternoon, the workmen are coming to board up.
- DELARAI: That's no reason for the sanctuary to be infested.
- FIONA: It's been infested with refugees from barnyards,

zoos, and circuses all along, so what's a couple of slugs more or less? Come see what I got us.

DELARAI: (forcing the bowl back under) I said I'm busy.

FIONA: (pulling out and opening packages) Traveling clothes! This year's summer wear is yummy. Two identical outfits:- we'll look like sisters.

DELARAI: What kinds of tea did you buy?

FIONA: Why, no tea. You haven't brewed a cup since -- since, um -- some time now. We'll stock up on fresh-cut tea in Victoria. Got every blend you can think of there, and then some. See these: the newfangled shoes are really cunning. Open toes.

DELARAI: Open toes: it's becoming an age of permissiveness.

FIONA: That's true. They permit you at times to be as good as you can.

DELARAI: (suddenly angry) Everything is hilarious to you!

FIONA: Well, heavens, no need to get riled. The trouble with you is that you take nothing with equanimity. I'll prove that, come here. There's an article in The Tacoma Daily Ledger, dated last December 1st. (removing a newspaper from one of the bags) The new young ordinand drew it to my attention. It should pan out as of no small lesson. Read it.

DELARAI: (going to FIONA, clutching the cloak and shoe to her breast; taking the paper; trembling) What? (folding the paper and examining the column to which FIONA points; shook; then staring at FIONA)

FIONA: Go ahead, read it out loud, it won't bite.

DELARAI: (reading) "'GAZELLE BOY' STORY LIKE ANCIENT FABLE. Recent news stories of a 'gazelle boy,' said to have sped over the plains of Syria at 50 miles an hour, adds the latest chapter... to a fable as old as human imagination. It is the fable of boys or girls adopted and reared by wolves, bears, apes, leopards, sheep or pigs and even, in one legend, by seagulls.... The new things in the gazelle boy story are that gazelles were picked, apparently for the first time, as the 'foster parents,' and that the boy was reputed to have a gazelle's speed after living with them.... -speed enough afoot to run 100 yards in about 4 seconds. The world's record is 9.4 seconds. The 'gazelle boy,' captured in Syria and hospitalized, turned out to be just a mentally deficient lad who had wandered away from his Bedouin family and had been found a very short time later by hunters.... rumor quickly invented

four other gazelle boys in Trans-Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon."
 (slowly putting down the paper; staring ahead)
 And British Columbia.

FIONA: (long silence; looking about the place; then, affecting interest in the luggage; finally:) You know, they started that waterdam project. Going to flood this whole area. The demand for electric power's trebled since the war. So we'd have had to leave about now, anyway. Makes no difference what you did, I mean, what - uh - it would all have ended the same. The Lord wills all things to fit together so that they make sense.... -I guess you're wondering what was decided in Victoria.... Well, Archdeacon Miljan defended you -- and in magnificent fashion. He said you had suffered a breakdown due to the division among Anglicans, a division that's the direct result of the Church of England's indecisive nature. And he claimed that the Book of Common Prayer was itself to blame - since Pagan Rome poisons our thoughts through its use of Latin. Those Roman-influenced statues and paintings of the English Renaissance, stressing a worship of the body, a cult of children's nudity, the beauty of adolescent boys.... So he cast his vote for dropping Latin from the Book. Then he testified how you harped that Sunday on the Keltic base of the Anglican Church. He noted the animism of the Kelts and, finally, animalism which he said the Tudor tradition perpetuates, the folk, the bourgeoisie who preserve their Druid-worship through all the centuries of Christianity to suppress that heathen damnation. And which very suppression itself made erupt at last the vision of a male Dorcas, a gazelle-child. At that point, Lennart Miljan declared his ambiguity, and the moment was absolutely electrifying! He broke down and cried and confessed to animism and bestiality, explaining that he had seduced the boy himself while hallucinating that he was conquering Satan, whom he'd imagined the boy to be when he found him alone in the marshland. Then, throwing his sword to ecumenism, which he prophesied would someday resolve the perplexities in all religions, he pleaded the primal Cardinal Sin of pride, saying that he was not humble, but only a public image of humility, for he had ranked himself with the martyr George who could split the Devil in two, whereas he could only penetrate the body of the most innocent of God's creatures, and he resigned his archdeaconry and enjoined the Council to have him indicted at once. No one believes his story, of course, but he's been suspended and placed in the Bishop's recognizance until trial. He blames himself for everything, everything, Del, since he insisted the boy would never have led you astray

had he not corrupted him first. It's a pity, a serious young man with so much pluck for life and progress, and such a promising future, destroyed, completely annihilated. Because, if nothing else, the communist taint of his ecumenical leaning, not to speak of the statue he chiseled honoring Red China, means not a soul in the church stands to defend him.... I was ordered to bring you down to Victoria today. You're to be charged with the same crime he is. Then I'm headed home to Toronto where they've found me a job conditional to my never seeing or communicating with you or any one else in this diocese again. Del, I know it sounds pretty bleak, and final, but the chances are it'll all blow over. And each of us can start anew some other place. Because - look - the alleged victim is missing so far, and without his testimony, the confession just seems like a made-up allegory - an Oriental pipe dream. You hear me? Dorcas hasn't been located. At least, they haven't located him.

DELARAI: (glassy eyed) What?

FIONA: "What?" I don't see that I have to answer people who talk to me from Oriental dreams.

DELARAI: I was thinking.

FIONA: (taking the newspaper) About bogus gazelle boys - what they really turn out to be?

DELARAI: Need they really turn out to be any thing? Like the mask he made so it split down the center to another, a Dorcas can't be tangible for very long. Wolf cub, retard, shaman, thief, saint, Satan and hoodlum, alternately and all at once, no one mentality definite, innumerable different always possible, and countless to come probable.... None necessary, none necessary.

FIONA: I don't know, sounds awfully inconclusive.

DELARAI: So are dragons. But I can't be bothered any more.

FIONA: I wish I could believe you.

DELARAI: -Who cares what you believe?! He was the dazzling embodiment of all human fatalities. And only I know the victory of possessing that. ...After it, I'll be dead long enough. But not soon enough. (swinging her arm toward the statue) Besides that martyr, there was Siegfried and Beowulf and Roger and Perseus and Michael, all battling a dragon. And they all are the same, exact conceit:- the terrible trip into Christian incompleteness. But unlike them, I shan't mount or surmount or survive the compulsively name-giving,

unendable adolescence of Our Lord.

FIONA: (silence; very sad) I have not been your friend.

DELARAI: (quietly) No, you haven't.

FIONA: Will you forgive me? I don't merit forgiveness.

DELARAI: I did. Long ago, Fiona.

FIONA: I thank you.

DELARAI: You're not going to be foolish and cry, are you?

FIONA: And if I am? I'll do it outside, on my own time. Besides, I brought you something else - in the garden. Let me get that about and be on my way. (going out the door: still visible on the path) Go ahead in by yourself. Straighten your tie. Michael is waiting for me. I'm late. --You be careful, will you? And so, then. Bye for now.

(FIONA exits. DORCAS appears in the door, smartly outfitted in a suit and tie, his hair neatly combed. He carries a glass jar, leaves, flowers, and berries. He smiles broadly, bursting with expectation. DELARAI is shocked, paralyzed.)

DORCAS: Del! Del! How are you?
(entering, too excited to evaluate her response)
I couldn't wait to see you! Did you expect me?
How are you? In the middle of work as usual, huh?
Mending clothes for the naked, curing souls for
the Kingdom! -Come on, tell me how you are!

DELARAI: (nearly tongue-tied) ...Timothy... ...Ingsley?

DORCAS: Dorcas! Old Dorcas! It's me, I'm back. You just can't recognize me in a decent suit, can you? You're so used to a baggy ragamuffin. Do you like it? Look, even my nails are clean, how's that?

DELARAI: (staring at his fingers) They're....

DORCAS: I got you a great present. It's the find of a lifetime! Tiny clams in a bottle. Hold it - so. Look. When they were free floating larvae, the clams came across this jar containing a little sand and went in. Once in, they were protected from starfish and all their other enemies. But they can never leave either since now their shells have grown too wide for the jar's narrow neck. (puzzled by DELARAI's fearful look)
-That situation's unique.

DELARAI: Is it? Why?

DORCAS: It's worth an immense sum. Aquariums display

this kind of thing. They pay a fortune for it.

DELARAI: But aren't clams as common as salmon and trout?

DORCAS: Don't you like it? What's the matter with you? I thought you esteemed the unique in nature?

DELARAI: They who esteem are the Devil's game. Sell that to Stanley Park Aquarium for its immense value.

DORCAS: (pulling back) O.K., how much do I owe you?

DELARAI: (quietly) Nothing.

DORCAS: Say five hundred for room and keep for September to November. I have a whole lot of money now, so don't be afraid to ask what I owe. How much?

DELARAI: Nothing: sadly, we profit paying for our mistakes.

DORCAS: You never change, do you? You'll never understand me. I got the money for both of us. We have all we need here. And there's heaps and heaps more, every day, where this comes from.

DELARAI: (looking at the bills) Where does it come from?

DORCAS: Dopey people, what does that matter? It's for us.

DELARAI: People so dopey they imagine they see gazelles?

DORCAS: You want to make me crazy now, don't you? But I won't let you, I won't even listen to you. I'm grown up now and I can support us the same as we were married. That's pretty good, isn't it, for someone my age? You didn't expect I'd become a man so quick and make life turn out perfect and wonderful because you never took the time to know me. But I'm not going to let that bother me one bit. I'm going to care for you for ever and ever and the future will be just like what we enjoyed before. You'll soon see. And you won't say a word. Because then I will own you, every inch of you, all for myself.

(waiting for DELARAI, her eyes moist, to respond)
Don't think about Fiona. I fixed up with her, she knows my plan. She thinks I did just fine in Earls Cove and Vancouver. --Del, I feel so good!

DELARAI: (pause; a tear falls; soft:) Want some Red River?

DORCAS: No cereal, we're celebrating today:- I picked blackberry leaves and berries, and migonette, sumac, stock and hollyhock, just like the morning you caught me. Only this time it's for the two of us, we'll eat it all up together. We'll do everything we do together. Yes! from now on.

(rushing to the cupboard and pulling it open)
 Where's my dish - the "Dorcas Dish" - Del?
 Where is it? Did you hide it?
 (returning to DELARAI)
 You threw it out, huh? You thought I wasn't
 coming back so you got rid of it, you wanted
 to forget about me.

DELARAI: (quietly) I didn't forget about you.

DORCAS: Maybe you did. Sure: I think you did. I never
 forgot you. I dreamt of my Delarai day and night.
 Only her. But she didn't want to see me again.
 Ever. I don't blame her, it looked pretty awful
 when I left but that's because she didn't trust
 me. And I trusted her from the minute we met.
 She's the one person who has to stick by me. On
 account of the police.... -Del! - hold my hands.
 You better hold my hands, Del, you're who's really
 responsible for me. ...How weak yours seem....

DELARAI: The Dorcas Dish is under the dragon.

DORCAS: Under the dragon? Why did you put it there?
 (running to the statue and reaching under)
 It's stuck. I'll break it. -Wait, it's coming.
 Good! My own bowl, the first gift you gave me.
 Remember when I ate from it off the floor? I
 fooled you then, didn't I? But it wasn't fooling.
 (putting the flowers and greens into the bowl)
 Here, let's share it. The herbs can't taste too
 fresh this time of year. But we'll pretend.
 When you pretend, it's the same. Did you put this
 under George's dragon so it would be with my other
 -- George's -- it's his old dragon again! What
 happened to the gazelle boy? Did Michael change
 it back or -- bet you used magic to do it! Gee.
 Sorcery is second nature to you, you're like a
 medicine man. You just cast a spell and turn the
 statue into whatever you like. And the animal boy
 vanished, because you wanted to forget about me?
 No, no, you wouldn't do that. Here, eat some with
 me, I'm so starved. You put the dragon back so no
 one would guess how much you love me. That was
 smart. I learned to be smart, too. From you,
 Del, I learned everything I know from you. Will
 you change other things - like my hut up at the
 Narrows into an estate with a mansion on it? You
 charmed this church into a castle. And you also
 transformed me from a wild gazelle to a medieval
 knight to England's patron saint, and finally a
 wealthy young man, what will you make me next? I
 can't wait. I can't wait, Del! --Will you alter
 yourself, I mean besides into useless Cleodolinda?
 Bet you won't. That would be self-promoting. You
 never use your magic for selfish things, do you,
 people with magic are magic people, they're too

important for that. But even if you won't be someone different, you look much better than I remember you. Do I look better? Del, I want so badly to be very, very handsome for you so that we're both happy with each other. I need that.

(DORCAS continues to eat. Seeming to emanate out of nowhere, MICHAEL is standing by the table, staring hard at DELARAI.)

MICHAEL: I was on the pier. I met Fiona. She told me she brought Dorcas back.

DELARAI: Michael - I didn't hear you.

MICHAEL: He lived in West Vancouver. In an expensive flat given to him by some older man who was not normal.

DELARAI: Well, he's clever. Places are scarce in Vancouver these days. And they usually don't rent persons underage. So some such benefactor was necessary. Innocence is a luxury not everyone can affor---

MICHAEL: (wrenching DELARAI out of her chair) Delarai!

DELARAI: Still, I didn't know landlords screened tenants so carelessly. I thought vacant apartments were to be leased only to veterans, men who risked their lives for decency, perfect morality, and God.

MICHAEL: (wildly urgent) -Delarai, what are doing?

DELARAI: May I ask you that? Or are you going to take your hands off of me?

DORCAS: (eating) Hi, Michael. It's good to see you.

MICHAEL: I came because I knew what you would do.

DELARAI: Did you? I'm not doing anything. Except packing.

MICHAEL: I know you, Delarai.

DELARAI: That's really wonderful. I am completely known! For Fiona knows me, Timothy knows me, Miljan knows me, Michael knows me, and I know me. It's a saved woman who knows herself as wholly known. For only a totality may know, for such is totality, tha---

MICHAEL: Charity, Delarai, charity!

DELARAI: - that to quite completely know, is, by that fact, to be complete. Thus God is Whole and I am saved!

MICHAEL: (looking about desperately) Be charitable!

DELARAI: Praise to the charitable, but more praise to who never earn that praise. Because these learned

that no matter how strengthfully they acquit themselves, they must desert whom they serve as malevolent, self-centered, and bewildered as they discovered them. ...Why don't you go home now, it's going to get colder. You have no jacket.

DORCAS: (rising, unsteadily, and coming downstage center) I'm so happy! I hated Margaret Malaroy, I hate her and all the other people, the young men and the old men and the women I can't even remember how many there were. They were all the same. But you're different, it's holy between us - it's in this church. I love... ..this church....
(collapsing; MICHAEL and DELARAI rush to him; she kneels and raises his head in her lap)
How much better you are for me than Margaret. The Garter. Here it is - I never sold it. I needed it to cover me up. More than the cloak. You knew that. Here, hold it for me. I'm not a shifting weather vane like you thought. ...I'm stationary.

DELARAI: (tender) A stationary weather vane, my baby-boy.

DORCAS: Yes.... I can't fool you, can I? But I realized the ways things are in the cities, I came back. Del, I was stupid. But I came back to you so I didn't lose anything. Six months- what's that?

MICHAEL: (as DORCAS' eyes close) What did you give him?!

DELARAI: His face is so rested. ...Combed hair so soft.

MICHAEL: Delarai - speak! Is it something you gave ---

DELARAI: He made timber of the totems that sustained me. They were no more explicable and far, far less defensible than yours, but he cut them all down.

MICHAEL: (forcing DORCAS' lids open with his fingers) He has a few moments - I may know an antidote!

DORCAS: Someday I'll finally come, Delarai, you know that? to a climax with you. We'll both see my semen.... I ran on the sand by the pier at Mission Point, naked with everyone my own age, boys and girls, all loving me and making a circle around me. We raced so fast, faster than zebras and racehorses and leopards, so fast not a person could see us, but they all paid attention to me, they chattered and laughed all around me. I dashed into the shallows so the spume looked like typhoons of my sperm blistering my belly and I kicked the bubble breakers up to such full peacock fans that they hid me. Made me not naked. Like I'd rubbed myself in my semen so I wasn't naked in front of any people, no matter who, any more, ever.
(smiling at DELARAI)

I have semen, even though you've never seen it. And someday I'll have a real climax with you, won't I, just like I do with other people? I'm on the floor again, Del.

(DORCAS dies. DELARAI lets down his head and places the badge beside him; then stands and wanders to centerstage center where she turns slow circles, looking upward in awe. As she speaks, she draws the cloak, almost unconsciously, around her shoulders and snaps the clasp. It floats, in breathing flutes, about her; she is still holding the shoe.)

DELARAI: Have you ever wondered why an isolated mission in British Columbia, so far from its habitat, should become the shrine for the Miracle of the Dorcas Gazelle? At the slightest alarm, that is to say, our approach, its velvet purse-shaped ears pick up and its black sapphire eyes turn our way to concentrate a baleful stare. Then the entire herd takes to its hooves across the plain, and from amongst it a few soar toward heaven and fracture the sun, fixed forever at the far horizon as if highwayed on the sky like the Holy Dove. To be sure, the Dorcas familys in small herds, just five or ten to a herd, but always a few, one or two, arc through the air in the permanent loveliness of a final fluid leap. Stand here, Michael, where you can note it. Right here, where I am, you can actually feel the energy of the leaping gazelle.

(MICHAEL goes to DELARAI and embraces her. ((Mounted Police appear in the door.)) The set metamorphoses into a cone of majestic forest with cathedral-window filtered sunlight streaming through its tree trunks. And over that entirety, the apparitional soaring of Palestinian gazelles. A fully orchestrated "God Save Our Noble King" closes the play.)

DELARAI: The leap of the Dorcas gazelle is Our Lord caught in the perpetual motion of His departure. While His Kingdom is spreading all over the world. And people everywhere are putting on their shoes.

End of ACT III.

'Gazelle Boy' Story Like Ancient Fable

By ALTON L. BLAKELEE

AP News Features Writer

NEW YORK.—AP—Recent news stories of a "gazelle boy," said to have sped over the plains of Trans-Jordan at 50 miles an hour, adds the latest chapter—with two new twists—to a fable as old as human imagination.

It is the fable of boys or girls adopted and reared by wolves, bears, apes, leopards, sheep or pigs and even, in one legend, by sea-gulls.

The story of the gazelle boy who could outrun the fastest racehorse was quickly punctured. But such stories have popped up recurrently in many different countries from primitive to modern times and are deeply rooted in mythology—like Romulus and Remus and the she-wolf.

The possibility, extremely dim, that it could happen accounts for the popularity and toughness of the fable, says Dr. John Eric Hill, curator of the department of mammalogy, American museum of natural history.

Usually, he explains, the stories have a striking similarity. They follow a general pattern, regardless of the country or time or origin, and none ever has been proved. This common pattern is interesting evidence of the similarity in man's superstitions and imagination in such widely separated areas as Africa, India, Europe and America.

The new things in the gazelle boy story are that gazelles were picked, apparently for the first time, as the "foster parents," and that the boy was reputed to have a gazelle's speed after living with them. He was reported clocked by a pursuing automobile at 50 miles an hour—speed enough afoot to run 100 yards in about four seconds. The world's record is 9.4 seconds.

The "gazelle boy," captured in Trans-Jordan and hospitalized, turned out to be just a mentally deficient lad who had wandered away from his Bedouin family and had been found a very short time later by hunters. Rumor had embroidered the story. And rumor quickly invented four other gazelle boys in Trans-Jordan, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

Dr. Hill recalls that "the nearest thing to a substantiated case of

animals adopting children is that of two "wolf girls" reported found in India in 1930."

An Indian missionary reported finding the girls in a wolf den in an outlying area of India after driving away the mother wolf and her cubs. The missionary, who estimated the girls' ages at eight and one half years, said they made growling sounds, ran on all fours, ate and drank like dogs, never were cold or hot, and that their eyes seemed to "glare" in the dark.

The "wolf girls" were taken to the missionary's orphanage and photographs were made. The younger one died in about a year, the missionary reported, while the older one lived nine years more and learned in that time to stand erect, to wear clothes, to speak some words and to behave like other, but younger, children.

Except for an Indian physician who attended the girls when they became ill, no other scientist examined the girls, and there is no fully satisfactory proof that they actually were "wolf children," Dr. Hill said.

NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

By 1946 the Church of England for more than a century had been tense with clashes between "Low" and "High" Churchmen over the issues of rituals and theology. Simultaneously, Darwin's evolutionary theories and industrialization had further fractionalized the Church. Following WW II these turbulences moved into the cold war conflict. Conservative British Columbia, with its close ties to England, experienced these developments. And with its position on Canada's western coast and traditional terror of the "Yellow Peril," unemployment, and sudden over-crowding, it proved itself fertile ground for the incubating era of McCarthyism.

British Columbia is one of the beautiful places in the world. Its rainfall is the earth's third highest and its vegetation is therefore tropical. Large sections remain uncharted and even unexplored. The Dogwood is its floral emblem. According to legend it was the timber of the cross and its petals are stained with Christ's blood.

For this play I am indebted to more than most, and so should like to give credit to some of the persons and organizations that helped bring it about:

First and foremost to my collaborator, Rev. John Poulos: his erudition is exceeded only by his infinite patience with what must have seemed at times a blockhead playwright.

To the people of British Columbia in general and Michael Morris and his Western Front in particular, without whom this piece should not have found a home, and Archdeacon, The Venerable A.E. Hendy; to The Yale University Divinity School in general and in particular to Prof. David Kelsey, Dean Michael Allen, and Rev. William Bradley, President of The Hazen Foundation; to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation for the funds to research this project in the U.S. and Canada; to Mr. Harvey Tavel, my unhappy research partner on what surely appeared a wild goose chase for half a year, and from whose extemporaneous outbursts, as usual, countless lines were lifted for this play; to the Creative Artists Public Service Program and the National Endowment on the Arts for nearly all my support during its writing period; to the artist Ezekial Daniel Tim Robinson Smolinsky, homo ferus to more New Yorkers than myself, a past collaborator and I hope a future one, the muse for this and so many of my previous works; to Michael K. with the hope that his pain might some day be diminished; to Miss Joanna Shielke, demonologist and aficionado of St. Michael, to whom I dedicate Michael Northshield; to Mrs. Barbara Sandman for information from which I, by gender, necessarily am excluded; to Miss Grayson Hall and Mr. Marc Vahanian whose talents allowed me to conceptualize the situation; and lastly, to that nameless and tragic boy whose seizure on the steppes of Syria and subsequent incarceration, planted the seeds of this play in my mind, thirty long years ago.

July, 1976.

steps had not been enlarged, and thus there would have been no possibility of his slipping? R. Joshua ben Levi explained the verse in this way: The impact of the shield that Ishbi-benob⁹⁷ lifted up, threw David eighteen cubits [into the air]. Yet David did not fall back to the earth, and so the two remained [apart] in fear of each other. Then David praised the Holy One, blessed be He: *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, but my feet have not slipped* (Ps. 18:37). Instantly the Holy One, blessed be He, made Abishai fly to his side, as is said *Abishai the son of Zeruah succored him* (2 Sam. 21:17).

Another version of this comment on *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me*: Of what event did David say this? Of his fight with Ishbi-benob, as is said *Ishbi-benob, who was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear was three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with new armor, thought to have slain David* (2 Sam. 21:16). What is meant by the name Ishbi-benob?⁹⁸ R. Judah in the name of Rab defined it as "the man who was dispatched (*iš šeba*) [against David] because of the set-to at Nob," the city of priests. The Holy One, blessed be He, asked David: "How long shall the misdeed at Nob, the city of priests, go unatoned for by thee? Because of thee, Nob, a city of priests, was put to the sword. Because of thee, Doeg was banished from life in the world-to-come. Because of thee, Saul and his three sons were slain."⁹⁹ Therefore, is it thy choice that [the royal power of] thy descendants be abrogated, or that thou be given into the hands of thine enemy?" David replied: "Master of the universe, it is better to be given into the hands of mine enemy than to have [the royal power of] my descendants abrogated."

[Some time later] when David went out one day with net and falcon to hunt, Satan appeared in the guise of a gazelle. David shot an arrow at him, but did not hit him. All the while Satan drew him on until he brought him into the land of the Philistines. When Ishbi—despatched because of the set-to at Nob—saw David, he said: "This man is he who slew my brother Goliath." He seized David, tied him up, pressed his mouth down

Midrash Tehillim
(Commentary on Psalms)
ed. tr. Wm G. Braude,
Yale U.P., 1959.

From the commentary on
Psalm 18, line 37:
"Thou hast enlarged my
steps under me, and my
feet have not slipped"

(In most Bibles,
Ps. 18, line 36)

upon his knees, and having thus fastened him,¹⁰⁰ placed blocks of wood upon him, and sat on him. But a miracle was wrought for David. The earth under him spread out and gave him room. Hence David said: *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me*.

On that day—it was the eve of the Sabbath toward sunset—as Abishai the son of Zeruah¹⁰¹ was washing his head, the water kept turning to blood. Some say¹⁰² that a dove came and stood beating its wings before him. Abishai said: "The congregation of Israel is likened to a dove in the saying *O! My dove, that art in the clefts of the rock* (Song 2:14). Now does this mean that God's own dove, Israel the undefiled, is in distress, or that David, Israel's king, is in torment?" He went to the house of king David, and not finding him, said: "What shall I do? For the Rabbis say: One may neither ride a king's horse, nor sit on his throne, nor use his scepter."¹⁰³ But he went up to inquire in the house of study where he was told that in a time of danger these things are permitted. Thereupon he mounted David's own mule and rode after him. Now a miracle was also wrought for Abishai, for the earth which grew large under David, grew small under Abishai.

Orpah, Ishbi's mother, was spinning flax when she saw Abishai. As soon as Orpah saw him, she broke the thread of her spindle and threw it to the ground, saying to Abishai: "Young man, young man, hand me my spindle!"¹⁰⁴ Abishai took the spindle and threw it at the top of Orpah's head and slew her.

When Ishbi saw Abishai, he said: "Now that they are two, they will surely slay me." Thereupon with his shield he threw David eighteen cubits into the air above the earth, and drove his spear into the ground. "He is right above it," Ishbi said, "and he is sure to be impaled." Abishai uttered God's Ineffable Name, and so kept David suspended in the air between heaven and earth. Why did not David himself utter God's Ineffable Name and so suspend himself in the air? Because David knew that a prisoner cannot release himself from prison. Abishai asked David: "What dost thou there?" and David replied: "God spoke to me, and thus have I chosen." Thereupon Abi-



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GAZELLE BOY

In the Syrian steppes last month, a group of native hunters found a boy running wild with a herd of gazelles. Apparently he had been abandoned as a baby, had grown to be about 14, living with the animals like the children of idyllic storybooks, sharing their diet of grass and stream water, uttering only animal sounds. His discoverers, in the way of hunters with wild things, bound him hand and foot as shown here, carted him off to an insane asylum. There, an object of great curiosity, he still lives like an animal without an animal's happy freedom.



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