

the table.

After a while Joe emerged from the bedroom, clean and dressed in a white suit, whose purchase had at one time been a bone of contention in the Greenbar household. It had cut a sizeable chunk out of a month's paycheck. But Joe must live up to the Critts.

His mother was standing by the table with her glasses pused up on her forehead. She glanced up from the table, which she was clearing.

"Well, well, you do look nice, son."

"It's a face that only a mother could love," Joe recited. But he didn't believe it.

"Nancy seems to like it."

"Well, good night, Mom, I'm going."

Joe kissed his mother and left the house. As he drove into a filling station he noted that the car next to his had a Texas Aggie sticker on the back. He got out of the car to get a drink of water.

A boy jumped out of the other car and came running over to Joe.

"Well if it isn't old Preacher Greenbar!"

"Chester Endyke, you son of a gun! What are you doing around here?"

"Oh, we're on our way to Jeffersonville."

Another boy came out of the car and slapped Joe on the back.

"Hello, Jack! I haven't seen you since Final Review!"

"How you doing, Joe?"

For a few minutes there was a mixture of talking and laughing until they finally settled down to talking one at a time.

"Say, boys," said Jack, "let's get a bottle of beer."

"Now, Jack," said Chester, "you know Joe here hasn't indulged since he met his Nancy. She's flat got him on the line. Why that's where he got the name 'Preacher'."

"Is that right, Joe?" said Jack.

"We-ell," Joe replied, "Aw, hell, let's go get just one bottle anyway. I'm sure that won't hurt anything."

"Now, you're talking, Joe."

They walked across the street to a small, shoddy place advertising "Beer on Tap." A nickelodeon blared forth with Basin Street Blues.

Just as Joe was entering the beer joint, Sally Holt rode by.

"Why that's Joe Greenbar!" Sally rapturously exclaimed. "Going into that awful place too! I'll bet Nancy would skin him alive! Let's go home, Sue, right now."

Joe, unworried because unknowing, was telling his friends goodbye.

As their car drove off, Joe looked at his watch and whistled. He jumped into his car and in a few moments he was in front of the Critt mansion and had rushed in breathlessly.

"What's the matter, Nancy?" Joe asked, as he started the car.

"Oh, nothing, nothing at all."

"Well, then, why are you mad?"

Joe glanced up at the traffic light and looked back at Nancy.

"I don't see --"

Crash ! ! ! ! !

There was a sound of crunching steel, tinkling glass, then silence.

Joe's mind became a maelstrom. Automatically he climbed out of the car. Bent fenders. Bent radiator. Twisted wheel. There went another month's paycheck! And what would Dad say? What would Nancy say? Joe turned back to the car as he thought, somewhat tardily it must be confessed of Nancy. Nancy was gone.

On September 21, Joe sat in his room morosely. Distantly he heard the noises of old friends greeting one another. Another registration day. "Phooey," said Joe. He gazed out the window on the campus. A very inferior campus, thought Joe. So Nancy wouldn't see him or speak to him. Well, he had shown her a thing or two that last week. He had had dates and gotten drunk too and on the whole he hadn't done so badly at either activity. That was all very well until he had left for school. Now he was thinking of those dates he wouldn't get for the Corps Trip, the Thanksgiving game and above all the Junior Prom, "Well," he thought, "What the hell! What the hell!"

Joe was standing in line a few days later waiting for his physical examination to take advanced military science. His roommate walked up to take his place in line.

"Say, Joe," he said, "A freshman just brought a letter for you, post-marked Middleburg, in one of those blue envelopes!"

"You don't say! Boy, oh boy, just wait till I get through here!"

An hour later Joe dragged his way across the campus. What a life—Color blind! Joe felt like some sort of a cripple. No more drilling, though, anyway. He walked into his room and picked up the letter. "Dear Joe:" His temperature dropped at once.

"If you will just apologize again and tell me truly that you weren't drunk that night, I might consider letting bygones be bygones. If you just hadn't hit that car I might consider your story true about merely

tasting a bottle of beer. You know that you crossed right through a red light though. However I'll still overlook your behavior that night."

Nancy.

Joe read the letter over again. He had written her five times and this was what his literary labors and ardor had produced. Well, he knew now why he had crossed that red light. Color blind. That could be squared now, easily enough, even with Nancy Critt. Yes, he could once again be number one man on Nancy's list. The girl from the most prominent and wealthy family in town would once more be officially Joe's girl.

But Joe grinned. A funny look stole over his face. A sort of light in fact. He took out his pen and began to write.

"Dear Nancy,

Yes, you are right. I don't deserve you. I was drunk that night. Filthy drunk. I am really drunk most of the time, and how I love it! Yesterday, I slapped the Bull and so that's the end of my military career! In fact I'll probably be in jail tomorrow. I can't accept your self-sacrifice. You are too good for me and Mr. Critt is too learned for me and may you both be happy with a better boy friend!

Joe."

Suddenly Joe thought of Mrs. Critt. He realized why she had given him those strange, pitying looks. He picked up his pen and wrote, "P. S. Give my love and sympathy to your Mother; I believe she will understand."

Joe gave the letter to a freshman and stretched out luxuriously on his roommate's bunk, his feet on his roommate's clean pillow.

"Damn good!" said Joe to no one in particular.

#### POOR JAPS

My roommate turned up with this rather salient bit the other morning. It seems that in the freshman class of one of our smaller schools, there were three American boys and one Chinese boy who ate at the same table. The Chinaman, being outnumbered, was hazed quite a bit by the Americans. However, he never complained and the Americans, feeling sorry about their pranks, approached the Chinaman one day. "Wong," they said, "we have decided to quit putting salt in your tea and pepper on your salad." Wong replied, "Very well, then I will quit spitting in your coffee."