

# *Sketch*

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## More Coffee?

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day he'd grow so old that he couldn't chase his own hat. The thought made him want to laugh, but he couldn't laugh. Perhaps it wasn't really funny after all. But if it wasn't funny, if he couldn't think about it without this strange feeling—almost like fear—then he didn't want to think about it any more.

He looked about the yard. Something had gone wrong. Everything looked at him still, but with a new expression. The house which he had known as long as he could remember faced him with a blank, unfamiliar stare. He knew quite suddenly that he was alone.

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It was while he hung from the lowest branch waiting to drop to the ground that he heard the sharp clatter upon the sidewalk. He knew instantly what it was, and twisting in the air as he dropped, he began to run. Major Barr was helpless without his cane, and it had fallen. But even as Alan ran he became afraid of what lay ahead, as if that sharp, ringing clatter had told him everything.

Major Barr's body lay as if tossed there from the trees. At Alan's feet lay the wide-brimmed hat, and as he struggled to breathe he saw how the leather band inside glistened with sweat.

Turning wildly, he began to run.

"Caroline! Caroline!" he screamed.



## More Coffee?

Don Jackson

**W**ANT mustard on yer hamburger?

Pretty cold out, ain't it? The thermometer on our porch said fifteen above this morning. It's on the north side of the house, though. The wind makes it seem colder, too.

Say, you ain't one of these unemployed fellers, are ya? Didn't think so. They all look alike. Clothes wore out, and hungrier'n horses. Always cussin' something. Damn the depression, damn the president, damn this and damn that. Why they have to pick my place to howl is more'n I can see.

Seems like soon as they get some food inside of 'em they perk right up, though. It works every time. And I gotta stand here and listen to 'em holler while they're gloomy and jabber when they get over it.

Cream in yer coffee?

**T**HEM two guys that left when you come in was out of work. They tries to mooch something to eat but I says nix, and they shell out with money for coffee and doughnuts.

Well, they sit there a bit until the food gets to working on 'em, and then one of 'em—kind of a young feller—says, “This'd be a swell day to shuck corn on the farm.”

Then the other guy, a pretty old man, agrees with the kid, and they're started talking about the good old days. Guess they was both farmers once.

“I ain't seen a paper lately,” says the kid, “but I reckon the price of corn's gone down since the crop is so big.”

“This'd be a good time to buy up some steers,” the old man says.

“I'd sure like to be scoopin' corn right now to a bunch of them fat Hereford cattle,” says the young man.

They sits there and talks about farming like it was the only job in the world worth doing.

Yer hamburger okay?

Even without the talk I could guess they hadn't been off the farm long. Broad-shouldered and husky looking. The city bums get pretty weak and skinny.

The old guy says, “If a man's a dumb blockhead he can farm all right, but he's sunk if he knows enough to borrow money.”

**T**HEN he and the kid laughs, and the kid says, “A feller can't be too trustin' of bankers—specially a fat one I can think of.” And they laugh some more.

The old guy remarks, “Rainfall comes in handy, too, in farming,”—and the kid adds, “At least out where we come from, eh?”

Yeah, these poor devils that come in here out of work all get to look the same after a while. You know, them two farmers was so darn much alike they might even have been father and son.

More coffee?