Roommate

Robert Munsen*

*Iowa State College

Copyright ©1936 by the authors. Sketch is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress).
http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/sketch
HANS didn't look up as his roommate came into the room. He had known who was coming. Brad Jensen was the only man who climbed stairs two, one, two, and one at a time. But the echoing footsteps down the length of the bare hall had not had the usual Brad Jensen hurried regularity. Instead they faltered like the senile meandering of an old man. Something was wrong! Hans was afraid that he knew what.

The door closed without enthusiasm. There was quiet, then the small, multiple sound of a tiny metal object dropped on a desk top. Hans swallowed, but waited for Brad to speak first. Presently,

"Hans, Helen and I . . ."

Hans slowly straightened up and looked at his roommate for the first time.

"I know, Brad."

The other was standing with his hat and coat still on, staring at the desk top.

"It was all her fault, of course."

"No, that's the beastly part of it. She couldn't seem to please me tonight. I found fault with everything. Expected too much, I guess. I left raging; she was crying."

"A clever girl," Hans thought. To Brad, "Then there wasn't—uh—someone else?"

"No, she made that quite plain. Anyway she wouldn't have cried if she hadn't cared."

"And a clever actress," mused Hans to himself. "I must remember that and be careful."

"You're lucky not to take the girls seriously. You escape things like this."

"Yes," softly.

December, 1396
“Come on down to Joe’s with me. I need something to brace me up.”

“I’d like to help you out at a time like this, old man, but I absolutely have to have this report in tomorrow. Let’s see if we can’t get Steve to go with you.”

Hans stood alone in the room; quietly he closed his books, and then glanced at his watch. It was eleven-thirty. This was a twelve o’clock night; half an hour yet. Time for a few precious words.

Buddha

By LeRoy B. Morley, ’37

In fragrant whirls
The joss smoke eddies,
Circles, dips,
Rises, blue, to wreath the face
Of a fat jade Buddha
Who rests serenely,
Dreaming dreams.

The scarlet ruby
On his forehead
Twinkles, glints,
Everchanging in the smoke;
And the still, grave face
Of Buddha slips
Into smiles.

In languorous clouds
The joss smoke fades,
Spreads, dies,
Passes softly, gently upward
To the ceiling’s peaceful gloom;
And once again
Buddha sleeps.