Dave

Lily Houseman*
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Abstract

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I saw him just as I turned the corner by the mailbox and looked across involuntarily toward Engineering Hall. Irresistibly the corners of my mouth turned up. My stomach contracted sharply and I could feel a little shiver all over.

I could see him now through the catalpa trees. I knew it was Dave, even at that distance, by the jaunty swing of his walk accented by the way he turned his toes out slightly as if he had been brought up in the military tradition.

I walked a little faster to be sure I’d meet him where the two sidewalks cross by the hospital. Figures met and passed me.

“Hi, Meg,” someone called. “Why the grin?”

Startled, I looked around, but the voice was gone, and now there was only the click of heels against cement, many feet past me.

I tried to straighten my mouth, but the corners eluded me. Then I looked at Dave again and even the thought of trying disappeared. His eyes met mine and he raised his hand in brief salute.

Slim fingers of happiness pulled at my throat and my chest felt much too small. I closed my fists, thumbs inside, and could feel the pulses throbbing against my palms.

I kept my eyes on Dave as we closed the triangle between us. He was smiling too, and a glimpse of white teeth broke the sternness of his squared-off jaw. His dark hair curled in late-afternoon exuberance. My fingers ached to ruffle it more, to feel the hard, slight prick of his cheek.

He stretched out one lean, brown hand and tucked mine into the crook of his arm.

“What are you grinning at?”

And looking into the green-flecked eyes that sparkled with that warm, special look, I knew I didn’t have to answer.

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