

THE LORD SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT

By

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When Josephus Cuthbert suffered his second stroke, his daughter Mary Turnbull finally made the decision to return home. She loathed the place, a tight mean little town in north Alabama. But it was her duty to return, she told her superior at the university press where she worked. She was only asking for a leave of absence and did not expect to be away long. (One had to be practical about death.) Most likely she would bring her mother back to New York to live. Mary Turnbull, thirty-eight and unmarried, was not only practical but she made much of the word duty. "...the sublimest word in the English language." That was her father's favorite quotation. He, too, made much of duty, though no one had ever used the word "sublime" pertaining to his volatile persona.

It rather surprised Mary Turnbull that the co-workers had not got together and given a little farewell lunch or something.

They had done that for others, she knew, and she rather expected something. Of course hers was not a permanent leave-taking as had been the others. She rationalized the difference and accepted the casual handshakes here and there. Without further fanfare she was on the ~~plane~~^{plane} headed South once more.

"Now we're all trying to be pleasant, May Tunbull," said her mother as they drove through the town on their way home. Immediately the flat squat accent struck Mary Turnbull's ears. It was not a good Southern accent. It was the accent of a plain country woman. There was no trace, no hint, of the nobility to which Mary Turnbull had been raised to believe was hers since birth. Each time she returned home it took an hour or so for her ears to accustom to the voice. Her own accent was completely changed. She took care of that on her first trip north.

"Turnbull," she said. "I'm called only Turnbull now."

"What for?" snapped her mother, who was also named Mary Turnbull. They were "big May Tunbull" and "little May Tunbull", though through the years just the opposite had come to be true. Mrs. ~~English~~^{CATHBERT} was a small energetic woman with small bones and quick, no-nonsense motions. Mary Turnbull had got her father's features and physique: tall, large-boned and a tendency toward overweight, though usually she managed to control it. She had also got her father's scowl. Even as a child she scowled up from her bed at the large-boned relatives who grinned down at her with their air of possession. Later when she succeeded in being left out of every boy-girl party given in the town her

mother's admonitions did nothing for the deep furrows pressed there mainly because of seeing the world on her father's terms. It was ~~the~~^{sick}, the world. Her mother saw beauty everywhere.

"Pretty is as pretty does," she tried to educate Mary Turnbull.

"I don't like double names anymore," said Turnbull as she glowered at a big red hole, new since Christmas, left in the downtown section by a razed movie theatre. She felt as if she were looking into someone's mouth, one in which a large tooth had been extracted.

"May Tunbull is your family name--way back," said her mother. "If we don't carry on the old ways, who will? Certainly not what's here now." She frowned darkly at the road ahead. ~~"Everything's falling to pieces. Everything."~~

"Why're you trying to be pleasant?" asked Turnbull.

Mrs. ~~Leyden~~^{Cutbert} had never liked her train of thought to be interrupted. She moved her shoulders and sat straighter behind the wheel. It wasn't going to help anything, she said, Mary Turnbull's trying to be sarcastic. Mary Turnbull had no idea what all they had been through. Her father was not only suffering from the stroke but he had lost his speech as well. "See the church! They've painted it. Does^{it} it look grand? Charles has to see to it now."

The mention of her brother Charles' name caused a slight acceleration of Turnbull's heart. She frowned as she fleetingly glanced at the church.

The small Episcopal Church, set back in a grove of pine,

was one of the landmarks the town was trying to hold on to. That and one block of Greek revival houses had marked the style of Lotuston for its one hundred and ninety-eight years of existence. Part of its style at least. Others were the red hole downtown, the cemetery of old cars, the sun-baked motel with its peeling paint, the filling station celebrated by a string of flapping pennants, and now, more than ever, the faces, mostly black. Greek revival was fighting for its life.

Once a farming community, the town, unlike other more industrious towns in the South, had steadily declined.

"You know there's only eleven communicants of us left now," said Mrs. ~~Turnbull~~^{CUTHER}. She was referring to the church. "But we're trying to keep on."

The church was ugly in its new paint, a shiny brown, its long shutters a light pea green. Turnbull asked why Charles had chosen those colors and instantly regretted it. She never brought up his name if she could avoid it. At forty Charles had the same job with the telephone company he had had at twenty-two. He was married to a former operator, a fact that had grieved his mother more than her husband's first stroke, almost more than the death of her own mother. Mrs. ~~Turnbull~~^{CUTHER} adored Charles and still saw him as the charmer he was reported to have been the one year he spent at the University of ~~Georgia~~^{Alabama}. Now he was middle-aged, balding and a drinker. Turnbull had never seen his charm.

"I told you we were all trying to be pleasant," snapped her mother. "Charles and everybody."

"I hear the whole town is going to get black before long," said Turnbull. "That's what a man on the plane told me."

Her mother narrowed her eyes into two fierce points. Turnbull and her mother never discussed racial matters. They had agreed not to. But even without trying the town brought out all the venom in Turnbull. While here she was a burning radical, argued the causes for socialism, visited blacks, took up their banner, was a militant egalitarian and insulted her mother for being a bigot, a racist. "A middle-class mind in a middle-class body," she had shouted once. Yet when she was in the North she defended the South as heatedly as a Ku Kluxer, even became sentimental about it, plumbing loyalties even she never knew existed. She never told her mother any of the latter. Instead she sat hoping that a Jesse Jackson or an Angela Davis would casually come walking into one of her mother's afternoon tea parties, ruin it and cause talk for years to come. Her father's genes had worked their will.

"How does the house seem to you?" asked her mother cheerily as she parked the car, bumping into the curb as usual. "Charles painted it, too." Her mother relaxed onto the seat and smiled at the white-columned house as if it were Charles himself. Turnbull could only imagine what it had taken to get Charles to paint it: the nagging, whining ("there's some decency left in us..."). Her mother lowered her head to get a better view. "Just say you were some stranger, just passing through, now wouldn't you point out that house?" Almost timidly she added: "I would."

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"Point it out for what?" asked Turnbull.

"As an example!" said her mother, her voice raised in astonishment. "It could be right out of Gone With The Wind. Looking at it, people know somebody nice lives in there."

Turnbull said nobody cared about old houses or furniture anymore, what people wanted now was Scandinavian modern. But Mrs. ~~London~~^{Cuthbert} said she wouldn't live in a house where everybody sat on the floor and there wasn't anything on the walls but some crazy picture with an eye in the middle of it. "Anybody who's anybody knows the value of the old."

The house was the second on the Greek Revival block. The first had become a funeral home with a large round green clock hanging over the fan window. Except for the clock it was similar to all the others: white with elaborate columns fronted by lush green boxwoods and a magnolia or two. The funeral home was whiter than the others.

Turnbull had a picture of her house in her apartment. She had it placed on the table in her living room. Nobody except the girl across the hall had ever been in the apartment. But the picture was there for all the world to see, should it so desire. The girl across the hall had remarked on the picture. She, too, thought it was just like Gone With The Wind. Secretly Turnbull was pleased. But the girl never came back and soon moved to another place.

"Now don't say anything when you see your father," said her mother as they made their way up the gravel driveway. "I think he knows everything. He may not seem like it, but I think he

knows what's going on. He can say some things but not a whole sentence. He doesn't like to even try. If I were like that I would at least try."

Turnbull had prepared herself for the worst. On the plane she had imagined his face, distorted. She had tried to think of the most horrible face she could imagine. Her father was a newspaperman. He had been editor of the Lotus County Bulletin, now defunct. After his first stroke Turnbull's mother sold the paper to a chain. A Mr. Greenburgh became the new editor. The paper was fiercely liberal. It lasted a year and a half, then died. A welfare office was in the building, which the chain still owned. Turnbull's father's people had owned the newspaper long before the War Between the States.

As they made their way into her father's room, a former library now a first floor bedroom, Turnbull held back as her mother strode before her. "Look who's here, Joe! May Tunbull. Home for a surprise!" She shot a smile back at Turnbull. "Now don't go thinking we called for her or anything. She just came on her own."

Her father was lying in the sleigh bed Turnbull always remembered in the room upstairs. The room was a sick room. Turnbull stood near the bed and looked down into her father's face. It was not changed, possibly a slight droop to the lower lip. Only the scowl had deepened and his eyes looked beyond Turnbull, seeming to rage at her mother, who was still pattering, folding a towel, testing the windowsill for dust.

"Isn't he fine, May Tunbull? Don't you think he's fine?"

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He was a dying man. Turnbull saw that. And for an instant she felt it was she lying there unable to speak or not wanting to and that her mother was bringing her death just as surely as if she were forcing it.

"What do you think?" her mother asked again.

"I think he needs us out of here," said Turnbull.

"No, now," said her mother. "I think we can relieve Amos a little."

Amos, the black yard man, was a miracle, her mother said. Her husband always smiled when Amos sat with him.

"He likes to go down memory lane," was Amos's explanation for the smile.

Turnbull watched as her mother ran her fingers across the bureau.

"We're all trying to be so pleasant because in spite of everything it's a pleasant wuld. I've always said that. Isn't that right, Joe?"

Turnbull left the room. On the back gallery Charles was leaning against the gallery railing. The Birmingham Post-Herald was open to the sports page. 'BAMA TO TROMP EAGLES, SAY PUNDITS.

"I see you still move your lips when you read, brother," said Turnbull. She noted he had taken to combing his hair sideways in an effort to cover an ever-increasing baldness. He had got fatter.

He did not look up from the paper. "I was wonderin whether that was a plane up there or a buzzard."

Turnbull sat in one of the tall rockers. "Well, we'd better start making plans now." She began to rock faster. "As soon as Papa goes,---I'll take Mother back with me, of course. But I think we had better start making arrangements, about selling the house now."

Charles tossed the paper onto the wicker table. "What house? What're you talking bout?" Charles had his mother's eyes: yellow like a cat's, except his were also red. So were the palms of his hands and the network of tiny veins beginning on his nose and cheeks. Charles consumed a steady flow of alcohol. Even now Turnbull smelled it. "Just you tell me, what house you talking bout?" His gaze was narrowed.

"Tara," said Turnbull. She knew what the house meant to Charles. He was the hero in it. He was the house and the house was everything. Without it he was nothing; the town was nothing, and he knew it. Without it he was only a telephone company employee who drank too much. With it he was Ashley Wilkes, he was General Lee, a sorrowing aristocrat brought low by the evil of others and unable to live in a world of sassy mulattos and ear-splitting yankees.

"Over my dead body," said Charles. "You just better go on back up yonder. You better just pack on up and go on up there--Heah?" His gaze was mauve. "You aren't any better than them others up there. You know that?"

"Those others, Charles," said Turnbull. Charles had grown up in a South where it was more manly to speak poor grammar. But mainly he was talking about the enemy, the Civil Rights

workers who had swarmed over the town a few decades back. They had happily gone about their business, ignoring Charles, ignoring even the house. Charles raged at them. Once in a drunken stupor he almost ran one of them down with his car. He had never forgotten them. "Hypocrites," he shouted at them.

The terrible thing was they had won, in a sense. And because they had there probably would be a black mayor next year, and the year after that a black council, county commission, board of education, librarian. Already the schools were almost totally black. The white children were bused to private day schools in neighboring towns. And the house? Who would live in it? What? The house! The ultimate humiliation.

Turnbull had known the town was dying almost since birth. She didn't know why its demise had come as such a shock to her mother and brother. Nobody had ever worked for the place. The city fathers, such as they were, died sallow and kindly in their Greek revival houses. There was an attempted Azalea festival once; a scheme to attract tourists. Everyone on the block opened their houses. Only the people on the block came.

Her father had been a worker. Week after week he had roared through his newspaper for the place to wake up, do something for the young, do something for industry, do something about the schools, do something about Montgomery, vote in the young, bargain for better roads, schools. He was never read, and now he, too, was dying. Death of towns. Death of kings.

"Mama's not going to want to go up there with you neither," Charles sneared at her. His lips were purple. Maybe he would

die of a heart attack.

"She's not going to want to starve down here with you either. Wake up, Ashley. The old world's dead. 'Gawne with the Weeeyind'."

"And who're you?" cried Charles. "Some archangel come down here to give us the word. Christ, we need you round here like a skunk."

Turnbull rose from the chair. The archangel, she said, was going by the real estate office. There had to be somebody practical around here, somebody who made some sense. They had to get what they could out of the house before it was too late. It probably was too late already. "Good-bye, old world; hello, new."

"Why doncha go on and marry one," Charles called after her. "You love 'em so much." He mumbled, "That is, if one of em would have you."

Turnbull left him standing on the porch, his lower lip hanging loose, looking after her, dazed. As she walked she pictured Charles living in some flat-roofed brick bungalow on the edge of town. The lawn would stretch to the highway full of weeds and in the center would be a large round ball and a cement bird bath. An aluminum crane would decorate the screen door.

II

In the late afternoon Franceene, Charles' wife, came home from her job at the "Why Not Eat Here?" restaurant on the highway. She was a "hostess" there, a ^{Position} ~~job~~ whose title caused little quiverings of pride to play about her lips whenever she spoke the word.

Turnbull, who had been sitting by her father's bedside thinking how much he looked like her, heard Franceene's flat whining "hay-lo" in the hall. Whenever Turnbull telephoned home Franceene always answered the phone as if, at last, something was happening. And the voice, "hay-lo," its boredom, its complete scenario came through the wires to Turnbull. For if Charles and Turnbull had their sibling differences, Turnbull and Franceene literally and hopelessly despised each other.

So, as Turnbull knew it would, her mother's voice immediately followed Franceene's. "May Tunbull," she called. "May Tunbull. Here's Franceene! You haven't seen Franceene yet. She's home."

Turnbull gazed blackly at the wall above her father's head and remained silent.

"May Tunbull?"

Turnbull bolted from the chair and strode out into the hall. "I heard you. I'm here. We need some quiet in this place."

"Well, I do," she heard her mother mumble. "I just wanted you to know Franceene was home." Turnbull had already noticed her mother had begun to talk to herself. She looked like a

small gray-haired child as she stood in the hallway waiting for Turnbull. Her large eyes were round and cowish. "Don't you want to see Franceene?" she asked quietly.

"I can hardly wait," said Turnbull.

Her mother then dropped both fists to her side. "Now you know what I said." Obviously it was a reference to pleasantry. "Franceene's had a hard day. She works hard all the time. All day long. Never complains--- She---"

Turnbull went upstairs to her room and then with resolution clomped back down, her arms crossed under her flat breast.

Franceene was still dressed in her "hostess" outfit, a black crepe with two large brilliants, one pinned over the heart and the other at the belt. Marriage and time had worked on Franceene's dimpled valentine face. Vague spots and puffs were now covered with a bottled sheen. The light and innocence of her cheerleader days were gone. Now she challenged the world as a plastic masque. The false eyelashes swept down like spider legs and her dyed black hair curled like the heroine of a soap opera. The valentine was broken, bruised, and she stood half in shadow, a plump attempt at being.

"Still Miss 'Why Not Eat Here?', I see," said Turnbull who purposely looked as unstylish as possible. She had found an old dress in the closet upstairs, overly long with purple and tan stripes, girdling her from top to bottom.

The greasy mouth of Franceene pouted. "Now May Tunbull, I'm not gone stand here and argur with you while your fawthah is there dyin."

Turnbull continued with her puckered smile. Nothing gave her greater pleasure than Franceene's peasant rages. Now she would put coal to the fire: "Why, my dear," she said, her eyes almost flirting, "here your silver wedding anniversary is coming up. I should think a little place of your own would be júst the thing." She turned her head. "It's time brother Charles gave up this big fancy womb. A little glass and brick job out on the highway perhaps? Ah yes." She gazed back at Franceene and the beet red of her face was positively quivering. "Besides," she said, "this place is up for grabs."

"What do you mean?" Franceene's mouth hung open like a sad slit.

"I mean hopefully somebody will take the old homestead off our hands. I talked to our esteemed real estate man Horry Weatherby, and though the picture isn't exactly Klieg lights---"

"You crazy, May Tunbull."

"No, I'm disgustingly sane. I merely told Weatherby that after Father goes Mother will be unable to afford to keep the place---" she stepped forward--- "which is true, of course. I can't see you and Charles paying the back taxes or putting on a new roof--or even---" She fixed her puckered smile. "You see, Franceene, Father is dying a poor man. He's broke, sister-in-law. You're on your own. The towns' kaput, too, and just as broke. It's all over. Dy-ing away...." She almost sung it.

"You're jealous, May Tunbull." The words were a snarl. "Always have been. That's what makes you so mean."

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"Gulls, gulls," sang big Mary Turnbull from the back hallway. "I found the walkin stick. Here it is---" She stood in the doorway, the gold-crowned black cane raised in her left hand. Standing so, she was an ageing Miss America, a child, a tattered queen in triumph.

Both Turnbull and Franceene gaped at her, their mounting rage interrupted by the impossible silliness of an imposter.

"I thought I'd lost it, May Tunbull. You remember it? It was your grandfather's, given to him by the citizens of Montgomery when he was on the Supreme Cote there." She lightly touched the crown. "He was deeply b'loved, you know. Something to remember." Her voice took on a lighter tone. "It never hurts to know you come from good people, give you a little extra something, you know." Then, as if remembering, she looked embarrassedly beyond Franceene's head. "Franceene's just like a member of the family. Aren't you, Franceene? A blood member, I mean. I---"

"Bound together in blood," chuckled Turnbull and sat on one of the hall chairs. "A little band of bloody Christians."

Her mother frowned at her quizzically. But then from the outer room came a shout, unmistakably the sickened voice of her father, coming as if it came with monumental effort, a noise from on high, as it were. The three gaped at each other. "Lawd, mercy," said Big Mary Turnbull. They rushed from the hall. "He made a sound," panted Big Mary Turnbull as she followed Turnbull into the library bedroom.

Her father sat in the middle of the bed, his hands palms

downward beside him as though a blessing had just ended. The pupils in his eyes were so enlarged it seemed he had not blue eyes but black ones. And his open mouth revealed a dark circle, surrounded in blue. His whole being appeared as an enormous bruise.

"Joe?" asked Big Mary Turnbull in a child's voice.

The black eyes gazed at her. He tried to sit up. Then the circle of his mouth began to move. He was singing:

"Happy Days are Here Again...."

"Happy...."

He fell back upon the pillow, the mouth stiffened into its perpetual circle. Mary Turnbull was reminded of a dead sparrow.

III

The "For Sale" sign went up one day after the funeral. Big Mary Turnbull was in a daze. She told all the callers that yes, it was true she was moving "up theeah with May Tunbull." She would come back on visits. She didn't know what to do with her father's desk, the one that had come down to her from way before the War Between the States. It was too large for Mary Turnbull's apartment. She didn't want to sell it. The other things she had sold to an antique man from Mobile. Charles and Franceen had no room either.

"Send me some pecans," she told everyone as they left the house. "That'll be just like home." She explained she wouldn't have a garden up there because little May Tunbull just lived in an apartment house. She was going to miss her garden. "Who'd

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think I'd be ending up up theah?"

They would have to leave the house empty since what seemed likely was that the bank would auction it off. She told all those who were neighbors she hoped somebody nice would get the house. "Because of yo sakes." She didn't want to hear about it if somebody not nice got it. "Just don't let me hear anything about such as that."

The funeral home, after some dickering, said they would keep the desk for her. After all it was just a matter of moving it next door. Big Mary Turnbull said she was much obliged and she might send for it at some later time. "It's all so sa-yad. Everything just gawne--- Gawne with the Wee-yun...."

She left with only two hand suitcases. One contained the clothes she owned and the other, the larger one, held old photographs, pictures and pieces of silver she could not bear to part with. Franceene and Charles took what remained of the furniture, even though Franceene had declared she wanted "modern furniture" more in keeping with the flat roofed house they had indeed ~~bought~~^{rented} in a grove of pine outside the town. Turnbull had already shipped the two portraits of her great-great grandmother and grandfather north. They were Colcocks and had built the house, the town and once owned most of Lotus County. For three years they had reigned at Columbia, South Carolina when Mr. Colcock was Governor. The Gardners and the Colcocks both were originally from South Carolina.

A taxi arrived to take Turnbull and her mother to the small airport at Decatur. It was the moment Turnbull dreaded more

than any other, almost more than her father's death. The death was expected, but the house was still whole, standing, and in its way it was as if they were walking away from her father, not when he was sick, but when he was well and roared away at the newspaper pleading for justice and honor and the mind's free will. Alas. They were walking away from everything, all that had gone before. Faith of our fathers.... Walking away.

Turnbull walked to the taxi and never once looked back. Financial strain had won over sentiment and if the house sold they were in the black, out of debt, and with a little luck they would have something left over. All last night her mother kept saying, "I've never lived in another house. Imagine that. Not another house. All those years." She kept reminding herself she wasn't like other people her age, though. She had always looked forward, never backward, and that was why she had all that energy. Starting a new life at her age was just what the doctor ordered. Besides when you know where you come from, nothing new is frightening. She knew she would probably have to go to parties and teas with some inferior people, but that was all right, because she knew just exactly who she was and when you were somebody nobody was too low to be kind to. She had learned that early and it had kept her in good stead.

The one thing she dreaded, hated, she said nothing about. It was Turnbull's bad moods. But that was all right, too. God in His Divine Wisdom had seen to it that she should live with Turnbull and change her moods, make her more like herself. Then, who knows? The poor child might even meet somebody,

marry. Turnbull still was young enough to have a child, though a late one. She would be a grandmother. Charles and Franceene couldn't have any children. No grandchildren anywhere. Her secret tragedy. All that good blood gone from the world. But she was cheerful.

"Better hurry on up, ladies---s'on time," drawled the taxi driver. He meant the plane, which in Lotuston was referred to as simply "it". "It" landed once a day at the Lotus County airport. Big Mary Turnbull had never flown, and the idea that this day, this moment, after years of looking up at the skies, observing, wondering, she was to fly away from her home like a ladybird, fly from her garden, probably never to return. All of it came to her like black wings as she sat in the back seat of the grimy cab. She looked at the house, the pillars, the boxwoods, and a small cry came from her throat...

In exactly four hours she was lying stretched out from the wall in Turnbull's cramped living room. A day bed sheeted and blanketed had been folded out from a sofa and she lay staring at a ceiling so low that at one point she fancied it might descend. The place was too heated and there was the smell of paint. Or was it the same odor that had struck her when she first entered the city in another taxi, speeding and screeching through the streets as if they were emergency cases.

It had all been a mistake. She lay there, flattened by her own exhaustion. But the murmurings and lights were there, somewhere behind her eyes. She should never have left Lotuston. Never in all her days would this place be home. Outside the

window a large green eye kept winking at her. It was a theater sign. It winked even through the drawn shade and she wondered how May Tunbull could have stood it all these years. The sheets were too starched. May Tunbull didn't even have a plant in the house. She had nothing of any importance. Not one single blade of grass. Not one....

The next morning she was left with the remnants of breakfast. She sat among the dirty plates and half-emptied cups of coffee. Broken egg shells still rested on the sink. Eyeing it all she felt more alone than she had ever felt in her life. At home she would have been outside now, perhaps, already have picked an early camellia, passed the time of day with Mrs. Robards who lived across the way. The rooms were so silent and small. She wondered if Mary Turnbull always left her apartment in such disarray. Neatness and housekeeping had never meant anything to the child. She was an intellectual. All intellectuals were dirty. Big Mary Turnbull had never known one who was neat. She had made Joe be neat. But he still dropped cigar ashes all over the table and didn't care where he placed a glass.

Well, lady, she said to herself, best you get yourself up here now, isn't anybody going to do it for you. By two that afternoon the apartment shone. She polished the tables, ran the sweeper (Mary Turnbull didn't own a vacuum). She even got out some vinegar and water and washed the windows, from the inside, and all the mirrors, even Turnbull's little hand mirror, which was smudged with finger marks and old cold cream.

As she surveyed her travail, she took up the picture of the house, wiped it tenderly and placed it back on its stand on the table. She then thought of the two portraits, which had terrified her by arriving that noon from the hands of a burly-looking thug who had two missing front teeth and seemed to want to look beyond her into the apartment. She had heard about gangsters in big cities. But the man left, glancing back at her once. The pictures, she decided, would look lovely over the table, give some tone to the room, show people even more than the house just what they were.

She needed a screw driver. The crates could not be opened without one. She remembered then a nice couple she had seen yesterday. She had had just a glimpse of them when they were entering their own apartment down the hall. They were rather elderly and they looked all right, if you judged by standards up there. She would introduce herself, tell them her situation, that May Tunbull was an intellectual but she herself was just a homebody and she wanted to surprise her daughter with her ancestors when she came home. She needed a screw driver. Besides, she was reasoning in the dark side of her mind, she needed friends. She saw the situation clearly. May Tunbull wasn't going to bring anybody home for her. If she were to have a friend it would have to be she who would make it. Church, she had already decided, was the way to do all that. But meanwhile, it didn't hurt to have a friend right here in the building. Besides, what if she should get ill? Was unable to use the telephone? Fall out with a stroke maybe even---

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She tipped out the door, making sure she had the key Turnbull had given her earlier. No one was in the hall. She patted her hair and cleared her throat. Wasn't this just like her. Here she had scarcely been in the city a whole day and she was already making a friend. She didn't believe May Turnbull knew one single person in the entire building. Still counting on her mother, she thought and smiled to herself as she rapped on the door.

No one answered and she rapped again, slightly hesitantly this time.

"Yeah?" a man's voice yelled from behind the door. Big Mary Turnbull stood back from the door. In her mind a man here would not look like someone with a voice like that.

She moved her shoulders and smiled at the blank door. "Only yo neighbor," she called gaily.

The door flung open. A dark-haired man, unshaven and wearing an undershirt which revealed an enormous amount of black and gray hair on his chest, glowered back at her. "Whatcha want?"

"I musta gotten the wrong doe," she heard herself saying. "Isn't there some nice elderly couple who lives---"

"Whaaat? Whatcha want, lady?"

She lifted her head with all the dignity she could command. "Is the lady of the house at home?"

The man looked down at her puzzled, then broke into a loud guffaw. "Lady of the house? Hey, Rose, come here. Thez some hillbilly out here, thinks this is a hooker's house. Hey, Rose---"

"Hillbilly?" The word was more of a gasp than a word.

A woman with a wide nose and pink curlers over her head sauntered to the door and gazed at Big Mary Turnbull with heavily lidded eyes. She said nothing.

"Hillbilly," growled the man.

"You had too much to drink, Josh," said the woman.

Big Mary Turnbull stepped forward and pointed a finger at the man. "I'll have you know, sir, I am from Alabama. My grandfather was governor of South Carolina. The word hillbilly is no where found in our family book."

"Yeah?" said the man. "Well let me tell you something, lady. I'm Joe Zamanski and I aint got no family book, see. All I got is me and what I make with my hands and my brain." He pointed to his head. "I got brains, see. Zamanski's got brains. And there's too many hillbillies coming up here taking up our jobs. We don't wanta see no more of your kind. That goes for your damn niggers, too. What do you think you are? Some kind of swamp angel? Governor. Who in the world cares? Go back where you came from!"

The door slammed in her face. She stared at it for some minutes, muttering. Then she turned and still muttering started back to her room. Wasn't a bit different than the War Between the States, she said to herself. That's what they sent down to the South, that kind with their ugly mouths and rude manners. Hillbilly. The word still rang in her ears. "I have a good mind..." But something, a buzzing, was forming in her head. Her vision was clouded and she leaned against the wall. She

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tried to steady herself. Where was the door to her apartment? All she could see was a long line of doors, which came and went like waves. Which was hers? She felt for her key. It was nowhere.

She began to walk and her heart accelerated. Which? Perhaps she was on the wrong floor. She saw the sign marked "Stairs". She entered and a feeling of suffocation met her. She was alone and lost in an iron grasp where there was no air. "May Tunbull." Where was she? She came out onto another hallway with a similar wave of doors.

An elevator door opened and two men and a woman came out of the elevator. "Please," she said. "Would you mind?" But the people ignored her. If only the dizziness, the confusion would stop. If whatever was in her head would clear--- Downstairs. She had to get downstairs. Below someone could telephone, help. She did not trust the elevator. So she walked down the stairs, eight flights, and by the time she was below her legs were trembling and she sat on the bottom step. In all the city, she was thinking, wasn't there someone? Someone who could tell her where she lived?

Her head began to roar with a sound. Where was it coming from? She opened the door into an empty foyer. True panic then took hold. She was unable to breathe and with all her might she struggled for breath. At last a woman who looked like a school teacher entered the way. She tried to pull at the woman's sleeve.

"Can you hep me? Please ma'm. Can you hep me?"

The woman hit at her with her purse. "Watch it, lady, or I'll call the cops."

She began to cry then. Two large tears ran down her face. If only she knew where she was. She was a captive. Captured by her own daughter. Captured and put in a strange land.
"Lawd, have mercy."

IV

By late afternoon she was outside the building. She had no coat and was wandering up and down the street. To each passerby she was saying: "Please, my home. Can you tell me where my home is? My grandfather was Governor of South Carolina. I've always believed in the Lawd. Please, can you...."

One side of her lip had fallen slightly.