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To pin this thing down, I will tell you a true and terrible story...

NEARLY 20 years ago a friend of mine, a painter, threw up a steady job and went to live in the country. He was a man of remarkable tenacity, even more remarkable creative gifts.

Useless to tell him that artists invariably starve. Hopeless to remind him that he had a wife and would probably soon have a family. He wanted to paint, and, come hell or high water, that was what he was going to do.

And, come hell or high water—and there was all too often the hell of red bank figures and all too seldom the high water of the sale of a canvas—that is what he did do.

He painted. He sweated. And sometimes he nearly starved.

And as if all this were not enough, he suffered the last two of them in the early years of the war when times were grim, nights intolerable, and canvases hard to get and harder to sell.

And as if this were still not enough, he joined up and became a war artist, plunging into the war with the same come-hell-or-high-water attitude as he had once done to live in the country.

Now the amazing upshot of all this is not that this man failed, as so many of his friends predicted, or demonstrated that he was a fool, as so many people guessed and hoped he would. He became a great success. His canvases now sell at £500 a time. His work is internationally known, bought and recognised.

JEALOUSY

by
H. E. Bates

looks even at their best, were not more seductive than those of a frost-bitten wren on a yank November field.

Yet again her there exists and grows and persists in haunting and preposterous emotion. She is black with jealousy for the achievements of two people to whom she has not spoken for nearly two decades.

left a peep-hole in the fence so that she could observe, on the other side, the progress of a life she could not attain.

Then she thought laid in front of and behind the artist's house, so that, as the artist's possessions grew, she could be sure that hers grew also.

On this land also the artist and his wife could not walk and see her; but she could in fact walk and see them.

endangered their tender existences.

By inventing something hateful she was more able more courageously to express her hatred. So for nearly 20 years a young couple, following the creative stream, have built up for themselves a successful, beautiful, unenviable life in which they have never desired to harm a soul.

In negation, a woman has watched it, mostly through a crack in a fence with poisonous eyes, consumed with what seems to be on the surface, a post-terrestrial, petty, maniacal obsession.

It would be easy to be horrified by this story if it is not violent. It would be possible to be amused at it if its end were ludicrous.

Yet its end, like the extraordinary threads which make it up, is neither violent nor ludicrous. It just drops out, part of an obscure, unnoticed, unresorted tragedy whose drab and irrational details could be repeated for a million years, with a million dogs, cats, parrots, or canaries or whatever you wish, all over the world.

Next week it is pretty certain, I think, that another novel, Nigel Balchin, will be writing of the odd currents of fate that run through the world of commerce.

It will have something to say, then, on what we call competition or the struggle of businesses to survive.

What of the struggle of men and women—especially women—to survive? To outstrip, out-do, out-thrust, out-love each other?

These are the questions in which, as a novelist, am more interested, more concerned, in which, as I see it, the clues and causes of what Shakespeare so aptly called "the green-eyed monster" lie.

But he life another artist. D. H. Lawrence's "The woman who was the central content of her lover's, whether lovers, whether love were her own or someone else's, was the flesh," and that God should be the God of the Father, but not the Mother.

And, to prove it, he wrote a sonnet, "Sons and Lovers," in which the consuming and possessive jealousy of a mother for her sons runs through the book like a dark and tragic fire.

The rivals

BUT if the woman's continuing, rolling, from the rest of the flesh," as indeed she is, then it is equally certain that she cannot, except through some thing without man. She can never be fulfilled without man.

Am I now going to say that jealousy is predominantly a feminine emotion? I will not be so dogmatic.

What seems clear to me, however, is that women need a man with such fundamental decency that every other woman, even her own mother and her own daughter, is a potential rival.

For that reason her jealousies are obvious. In her blood, not knowing it, she is terrified that the love of another woman will be so strong that she cannot reproduce her kind, will somehow be

THE AUTHOR

lost to her. At this point, if you are a woman, you will probably exclaim: "with mild outrage that you never think of such things."

Exactly. You never think of them.

You will probably also protest that you are unaware that what you call their cattiness can possibly arise from such profound and fundamental things. Exactly. You are unaware. Only a fraction of you have ever been aware.

Now is there necessarily any stigma in that? The profoundest of instincts are not municipal breaks, but up in public, in black and white, with equal application to all.

A tragedy

I AM somewhat less articulated as a writer of stories, because those stories are so concerned with the tragedies of unfulfillment. Yet, the central tragedy of life appears to me incontestably to be lack of love. The child that turns to the parent that cannot or will not give affection is recognised, now as the type of adult, almost every delinquent, every maladjusted malingering who is jealous of stability, law, and the fruits of success.

To be loved, to flower, to fruitfully to be fulfilled—the denial of these things can only be, for a lesser or greater degree, a tragedy.

To see these things being granted to others, and to be sharply aware of it as a manifestation of success, as being on in the world, as having all the luck, as gaining material security, as being a big fish in the other sea, is undeniably the main force as I see it behind the thing we call jealousy.

Yes, in thinking of jealousy, I feel a desperate, unavowable, repellent emotion or pure stink, call it what you like, are we necessarily right? "The Lord thy God am a jealous God." In remembering that quotation from Exodus, I am reminded that the word jealousy, by etymology, is simply another form of love.

That meaning is implicit in Shakespeare's "I have been very jealous for the Lord of Hosts."

Perhaps it is inappropriate to suggest, therefore, that a person who is in love but also to be jealous in and through love. In other words, to be jealous in pursuit of the creative end, that we adapt the word jealousy from the word jealous and to recall that in that language, the act of surviving is another meaning.

A shutter

JALOUSIE is, as you all know, a kind of wooden shutter, or a house window, and is made in such a way as to screen the interior from without and yet enable you to look out from within.

Perhaps that is why the unmarried woman with whose story I began felt she must put up a fence about herself and her peep-hole in the window which she could look out on the creative life, love, and fulfillment of others.

And perhaps not. It is much more likely that she does not know that she has built, unwittingly, her jealousie,

Fantastic

WE now come to an unpredictable point in this story. The effect of such an immense essay of trust in the creative urge would surely invoke, you say, nothing but universal admiration.

Not at all. On one woman, at least, the effect was dark and cancerous. For 20 years, in the house next door, she has looked upon the urgent struggle and fruition of this young man and his wife with hungry cannibalism. Like a curved canker she has lived, unimpinged, locked by jealousy.

I need hardly add that she is not married; or that her

Preposterous indeed, you say. Fantastic. The fancy of a novelist. I shall be telling you next, you will say, the impossible details of some secret love affair.

Not quite. At the same time the powerful emotions of this woman are not an illusion. Nor are they rare. She is the victim, indeed, of the most irrational, powerful, subconscious, perhaps the most common, of impulses.

How has she expressed this jealousy? In the most extraordinary ways.

First, and most significantly as we shall see, she barricaded herself behind high fences and masses of quick-growing, newly planted trees.

This was on the pretext that she did not wish to be over-looked. At the same time she

Imagination

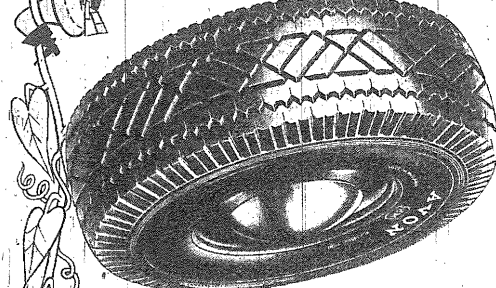
BUT presently it was not enough that she had her dogs, her cats, her parrot and her land and they their children. She invented something they did not possess, and in imagination gave it to them—and amazing! it was a big Alsatian dog.

There was, of course, no such dog. The artist and his wife did not happen to like dogs, and certainly not Alsatians. But the lack of the imaginary possession by their save her yet one more excuse for jealousy.

The dog was larger, fiercer, more aggressive than her own. It was, therefore, possible to imagine that it threatened and



It's no fantasy!



higher mileage
is a REALITY!

