

# Weekly Short Story

By ELLA CLINE

## TEA IN A TUMBLER

Mr. Seligman sat at his dining room table one evening, the voluminous sections of the Sunday papers covering all of the table's darkly shining mahogany. Invariably, whenever the four young Seligmans entertained, their father retreated, with book or papers, to the dining room.

The long living room had been cleared for dancing. Card tables, each with its quota of chairs, tallies, ash trays, et cetera, filled the music room and the sunroom. Gloria and Irma were arranging flowers and attending to the final details of the party; their brothers, Harold and Albert, had gone in the car to fetch some of the guests. Mrs. Seligman, handsome and still youthful, an apron over her black lace dress, was in the kitchen giving directions to the maid and the extra waitress about the preparation and serving of refreshments.

Yet in the midst of these festive activities, soft lights and appetizing odors, Mr. Seligman sat, frowning slightly, looking at the paper before him, but not seeing it. Instead he saw, more clearly than anything in that comfortable home, a slender young man—a boy really—with despairing eyes that looked hurt and hopeless from his lean unhappy face, while the long, thin fingers of his hand held his coat collar close about his throat as if he tried to hide as much of himself as possible. Mr. Seligman sighed deeply.

A slender girl in rose chiffon came with dancing step from the living room on some errand to the kitchen. Mr. Seligman stopped her. "Irma, are you too busy to get me some tea?"

"Of course not, darling. I shall tell—"

"Please don't tell anyone—get it yourself. You know how I like it—"

"I should by this time, dad," her blue eyes filled with mischievous laughter. She put her white hands, rosy tipped, on her slender hips and recited, "In a glass, a slice of lemon, raspberry or cherry jam, thin cookies—" Then, with a quick change of voice, "I wish you would confess, Mr. Samuel Seligman, senior partner of Seligman and Traube, Importers, why you must have your tea in a tumbler. The most devoted adherent to the accepted forms of etiquette could find no fault with your behaviour otherwise. Perhaps we should have you psychoanalyzed?"

"Bring the tea, professor," Mr. Seligman replied, smiling, "and I shall tell you all. It concerns a—ghost."

"Splendid! How thrilling! I go but to return."

Irma brought a silver tray filled with the tea essentials she had mentioned and daintily arranged them

"One day a kindly woman answered his ring, gave him a silver coin but would not take anything look, she closed the door in the boy's face. Suddenly, overwhelmingly, the truth came to him: He had not been peddling, he had been begging . . ."

"He rang the bell of that house again, violently, angrily, and when the woman came hurriedly to see what was wanted, he thrust a package into her hand, something worth more than the coin she had given him, and ran back to the miserable tenement his relative called home and waited for him to return from the tailor shop where he worked.

"The man laughed at the boy's bitter disillusionment. 'Nu, when you will have enough saved up, then you can become a regular merchant. And till then, better put your pride in your pocket.'

"There was nothing the boy could say. He, who cherished such high ambitions, such pride of race, who dreamt so nobly for the future, a beggar . . . He left the basket of goods and his relative's home and walked the streets of New York until he was exhausted. At midnight he found himself in a market place, crawled into a wagon and fell asleep among the bags and bundles it contained. He awoke on a country road, near a farmhouse, when the driver stopped for breakfast next morning, not knowing where he was or how long he had been traveling.

"When the driver returned, the boy explained, and offered to work his way. He carried bundles and crates, took care of the horses, cleaned the driver's boots, shared the driver's meals, sleeping in the wagon, and so was brought to Boston. From that first honest job to a partnership in an importing business, is a long story, so let's return to the tea and the ghost.

"He worked unbelievably hard every waking hour; his evenings in night school being his only diversion. Driven by the ambition to bring his mother and sister to America before he was demanded for military service in Poland. His mother being widowed, his military period might be short, or he might be altogether exempt, but he would have to be in the place of his birth to prove his claims.

"Sometimes, when I hear your brothers discussing their careers, see your sister so busy with social affairs and beaux; yourself, Irma, a student in Wellesley, and so wise in social welfare work, I wonder what that boy might have accomplished with like opportunities. I have little time to dream of what never has been, but with tea before me, memories crowd in, not very gay

she did, why didn't you come?' and looked displeased. To the boy's misery was added the probable disaster of losing his job.

"In a flood of words he told Mr. Traube about his mother, his young sister, the menace of the military draft, unexpected expenses, working clothes, his humiliation at seeing the fine garments of the arriving guests. Mr. Traube listened, still frowning. But when he glanced at the boy's shoes, shining with polish, at his trousers so carefully pressed, his frown changed to a smile of understanding, and he said:

"Well—too bad. My Raichen was hurt that you did not come. This evening we expect no guests and you must come home with me for the evening meal so you can explain matters to her yourself."

"After that the boy's perplexing worries seemed to melt away, for Mr. Traube's advice proved very helpful. Mr. Traube advanced him enough so that he no longer delayed in bringing his mother and sister to America. Mrs. Traube also was most friendly in helping the strangers establish their little home—"

"O, yes," Irma took up the tale, "and in a few years the boy became such an elegant and well dressed gentleman, and held such an important position in the Traube Importing Company, that dear Raichen had to propose marriage to him lest some other girl grab him away from her—"

"No, no, Irma. Your mamma is just joking when she says that. I loved her so much I did not dare say so for I was not good enough—such a lovely girl and with such fine parents, so she helped me a little, as she has been doing right along ever since.

"Now you know why I prefer tea in a glass, and why I become thoughtful every time the home is gay with young folk. It's that boy with the unhappy eyes hiding his blue shirt. Maybe talking about him—when he does come again his eyes will not be so gloomy—maybe that way I can reach him—reassure him—Anyway, some more tea, please, hot!"

Mrs. Seligman came into the dining room, minus the apron, as Irma brought in fresh tea.

"How many times must I tell you, Irma, to serve papa tea in a cup when we have company? It seems outlandish in glass, and I don't like it."

"Your tough luck, darling," her youngest answered lightly. "From now on I too shall imbibe my tea, if ever I take any, from a glass, and see visions."

Just then the door bell rang and there was the hilarious commotion of incoming guests. Irma went to greet them.

Mrs. Seligman sat down near her husband. He put his hand over hers and said:

"I've been telling Irma about your birthday party, when you were eighteen, do you remember?"

And she answered, "Can I ever forget it? I cried all night because my father's shipping clerk did not come! It was my first great sorrow. Every time the children have company I think of that party."

(The End)

den your soul. Your child is listening."

Mr. Seligman dropped a slice of lemon into his hot, fragrant tea and slowly stirred the amber liquid until a few dark leaves danced in the tumbler. Then slowly, thoughtfully, choosing his words as one who is not certain he can tell what is in his mind, he began:

"I was fifteen when I left Poland. I am nearly fifty now. In my home, in my business, in scarcely any of my contacts, is there much to remind me of my birthplace, or of the conditions I faced when I came to this country. Tea in a glass always reminds me of my father's study, books everywhere, of the black skull cap he used to wear, of the pride he took in his son who was soon to be Bar Mitzvah—asking the boy to bring him tea—to have tea with him. And often when you children entertain, I see again an unhappy youth, whom I never may hope to see otherwise—"

"Never? And you a pillar of the synagogue?"

"Never, child. So long as a person is alive, one may hope to get into communication. Our religion gives us assurance that death is not the final parting. Yet there is one I wish to comfort whom I may never reach—"

"Not living, not dead—how intriguing!" But laughter had vanished from Irma's sweet eyes as she felt her father's earnestness.

"Just a haunting memory of myself at twenty when the world was suddenly bereft of all happiness. It had to do with the joyous sounds of a young folks' party—a sort of ghost of a desperate state of mind that tested my courage to continue to live at all—If I could but reach to him across the years—"

"That is poetic, dad, honey. Has a poet lost his way into the importing business?"

"That other, he was a poet. His teachers encouraged him, praised his compositions. For nearly a year he worked on a poem, in Hebrew, that he was to read at his Bar Mitzvah, as a surprise to his father, whom he loved dearly. But his father died a week before the boy was thirteen, and never knew that the poem had been written. Something vital in the boy died then too. He never wrote poetry again.

"Two years later he was in New York, having stolen out of Poland one gray dawn, traveling steerage, coming to indifferent, distant relatives, bewildered; a stranger in a terrifying world. Knowing that somewhere, somehow, he must earn money for his widowed mother and orphaned sister; a child shouldering the responsibilities of a man.

"His relative gave him a basket filled with an assortment of merchandise and told him to go from door to door, point to the basket and smile pleasantly. For a beginner, the boy did very well, and he smiled delightedly at his customers as he thought of the profits, and the money he would send to his mother, until—"

allow. The committee in charge consists of Richard Jacobson, chairman, Louis Glickman and Sidney P. Whitkin. The officers to be installed are: Julius Rothstein, president; Sidney P. Whitkin, vice-president; Leon Goff, recording secretary; Louis Glickman, financial secretary; Harry M. Wassersug, treasurer; Samuel Baler, sergeant-at-arms.

On January 9, the Colons held their fourth semi-annual election of officers. Samuel Winisky, former treasurer, was elected president. The other officers elected were Melvin Richter, vice-president; Sydney Resnick, secretary; Carl Weiner, treasurer; William Wolf, sergeant-at-arms; Philip Snyder, utility officer. J. Stanley Ginsberg, the outgoing president, who held office for three successive terms, gave a short talk thanking the members for their co-operation. The captain and manager of the baseball team are Samuel Winisky and Philip Snyder, respectively.

Through some misunderstanding the Cavalier's basketball team will not start in the Park League at present but will have to wait until further notice. But this does not lessen the ardor of the team which practices almost daily at the Roxbury Boys' Club under the direction of McCully, former all-Hub football player of Boston College High, and star halfback on the Charlestown Yellowjackets. He has played for the Fittons and because of his reputation was put in charge of the Roxbury Boys' Club. It is fitting to mention that for the past four weeks, this club has been giving away shoes to the poor children of the district. This campaign is due to the masterful planning of Mr. Eaton. The debating team consisting of Sydney Levy, Morris Brenner and Captain Levine has started preparations for its next debate against the Victory A. C. which will take place at the "Y" January 30.

The Tasnors elected the following officers: Rose Karass, president; Rose Meshon, vice-president; secretary, Dorothy Rosenthal; treasurer, Rose Raymond; sergeant-at-arms, Marjorie Bennett. Miss Ida Salzmann, a senior at Boston University, spoke to the girls on Monday, January 23.

The Dodger Jrs. are proud of their adopted name, and to be thus affiliated with their older comrades, the Dodgers. Alfred Albert of the Senior group, directs the Juniors. Young Salzberg is the president of the club.

The annual dance of the Imperators will take place at Oberts Bungalow, Mattapan, on Wednesday, February 22. The committee in charge is exerting every effort towards the success of this affair. Jack Biderman, who was introduced as a new member of the association, will impersonate Bing Crosby. membership drive is

Leppo; vice-president, H. Goldberg; secretary, Si Needleman; and treasurer, Ben Luftman. The Majestics are planning an all star night to be held shortly. Due to bad weather and poor ice, the hockey team has not been able to play. The team consists of Bill Kline, I. Bloom, Nate Leppo, Teddy Hannington, I. Rodford and Buddy Cohen.

Election took place at the last meeting of the Chieftains as follows: Joe Giller, president; Bill Pearlmutter, vice-president; Jack Dana, secretary; Paul Feldberg, treasurer; Dick Ulin, press agent; Chet Cooper, sergeant-at-arms. A play has been selected for presentation at the all-star night, and rehearsals are being held under the able direction of M. H. Newman. A debating team is being organized with Captain Lipsky, Cooper, Ulin, Dana, Feldberg and Salzberg.

At a recent meeting of the Whirlwinds, Mr. Marson, a member of the faculty at the Boston Latin School, gave a talk which was not only entertaining but also very educational. Many more guest speakers are expected to address the Whirlwinds this year. The club recently organized its debating and handball teams with Hoffman and Bryer as the captains. A very successful season is anticipated. The debating team consisting of Hoffman, Rosen and Stone is now preparing for their first debate with the Spartans. The handball team is practicing daily in the gym and will soon round into condition. The team is composed of Friedman, Appel, Bryer, Levy and Worden. The thespians of the club are soon to start rehearsing for their next play, under the direction of Henry Baker. Any teams desiring basketball or hockey games see Weinberg on Wednesday evenings. Visitors are always welcome.

The Versatiles are very glad to welcome back their directress, who has been recuperating from a recent automobile accident. The Versatiles are to debate the Belmonts on February 16, the subject being "Disarmament." The two representatives to the Intermediate Council are Ruth Golov and Dorothy Cohen.

Among the most prominent clubs of the West End are the Aicos, a group composed of young ladies in their early twenties. In its short three years of existence this organization has accomplished a great deal. Each year this club runs a dance. This year the affair will take place at the Attic Studio, next to the Fenway Theatre, on Massachusetts avenue, on the evening of February 3. As a special feature this evening will be the sensational "blues" band, Bert Meyers and his Hollanders, formerly of the Hotel Buckminster. There will be dancing and entertainment from 8 to 12, and the admission is next to nothing.

A stamp club is being formed for boys between 13 and 16 years of age. Meetings are held Tuesday nights in the Boston "Y." James

two years ago, is again in charge. Former members are asked to get in touch with him on a meeting night.

The Dorchester Athials will celebrate their tenth anniversary with a formal banquet and installation of officers at the Hotel Brunswick, Wednesday evening, January 25. The new officers to be installed are: Benjamin B. Levenson, president; Stanley J. Mintz, vice-president; Max Gilman, treasurer; John Gilbert, recording secretary; executive committee, Lou Raphael, Ben Figure, Max Gilman; social committee, Stanley Mintz, Ben Figure, Morris Solov, and press agent, Al Sulkin. The committee in charge of the banquet consists of Ben Levenson, Phil Michelson, Al Sulkin. A competitive bowling tournament consisting of four teams composed of members of the organization, is now in progress. Dave Luftman's "Chickenflickers" are leading the league, with Al Sulkin's "Never-sweats" second, Stanley Mintz's "Absentees" third, and Sam Marks' "Vartvushers" fourth. The league bowls every other Monday at the Grove Hall Alleys. The Athials are open to challenges from any senior bowling organization in and around Boston. Address Dorchester Athials, care of Young Israel Center, 161 Ruthven street, Roxbury.

On January 13, the premier social venture of Boston's newly organized chapter of Phi Delta Mu took place, at the home of Leslie Litant, 23 Brunswick street, Roxbury, a private stag party was held. In addition to the large majority of members present about a half dozen guests attended. Refreshments were served. A prize was presented to Arthur Lebow for his storytelling ability. All details were left to the social committee, headed by Mr. Litant. It is hoped that all future affairs sponsored by Phi Delta Mu whether public or private will be as successful as this first event. Phi Delta Mu, originally of Portland, is Boston's only all-Jewish high school fraternity. Among its members are representatives of the graduating classes of Boston Latin School, Roxbury Memorial High School, and Dorchester High School.

The Icimians, a newly formed club, meeting at the Young Israel, have had their first official elections at the previous meeting. The officers are: President, Freidabell Radlo; vice-president, Selma Herman; secretary, Sylvia Belmarsh; treasurer, Frances Kabatchnick; sergeant-at-arms, Edith Halber; and press agent, Sylvia Schlinksky.

On Saturday, January 31, the Victory A. C. Juniors debating team, consisting of W. Jack Jacobson, Edward Allen and B. Josef Mendelsohn, will debate the Cavaliers. The subject is "Resolved, That Capital Punishment Should Not Be Abolished." W. Jack Jacobson, a member of the club and a senior at Boston Latin, is expected to star in the 400-yard dash and 660-yard dash. Swartz and Chursed, members of the club, comprise the champion handball team at the "Y." Harold Fireman and Irving Blitt are the foremost candidates for a regular