

The Bugles Blow



When Ellen awoke at seven o'clock on Tuesday morning, she rubbed the sleep from her eyes and quickly dressed for school. She chose one of the new dresses she had purchased at Howland's in Bridgeport, a red print daytime frock with princess seams, wing collar, nipped waist, and a gently flared skirt, finished off with a white bow. She paired this with navy blue ankle-strap sandals atop white ankle socks. She didn't feel much like eating, though she scrambled some eggs for herself and her father, and downed a full glass of orange juice, just to be safe. With no books to be concerned about as yet, she grabbed her purse and tucked a small spiral notebook into its side pocket.

She was the first one out the door that morning. Her father's 5th Avenue bus didn't arrive until ten minutes after eight, leaving him a little time to enjoy the morning paper and a cup of Swedish gasoline. As she left the house, and the rear screen door banged behind her, she found Melanie already standing on the sidewalk out front. She was dressed in a brown plaid skirt and white blouse, her red hair tied back in a ponytail. Students were walking up Carolina Street, both singly and in groups.

"I like your dress. It's cute," Melanie exclaimed. "Where'd you buy it?"

"At Howland's Department Store, in Bridgeport, Connecticut, just before I left for Gary. My Dad was in a generous mood. I got it on sale. It was only \$1.79."

"We've got some smart dress shops on Broadway, too, but my mother thinks I'm already too preoccupied with clothes and makeup. I'm better off working on my Dad when I want a new dress, or a pair of shoes. He's a real softy."

As the girls neared 7th and Carolina, students were congregating on the steps of the school and outside of Rubin's. It was a few minutes before eight o'clock. Two members of the R.O.T.C. were standing at the flagpole, ready to hoist the Stars and Stripes. Melanie introduced Ellen to some of her classmates. Then, suddenly, from inside the school came the sound of "Assembly," and the flag was quickly hoisted up the flagpole. Students stood at attention and held their hands over their hearts, or saluted, while the bugles blew. As the last note faded away, the students streamed in on the way to their morning registers.

Ellen said 'goodbye' to Melanie for the time being and made her way to Room 204, at the west end of the second floor hall. Standing outside the door was Miss Esther Tinsman, Emerson's veteran biology teacher, who greeted the senior girls as they entered and took their seats behind the lab counters. As

the girls continued to file in, Ellen's eyes gravitated to the **plethora** of stuffed animal specimens that lined the shelves and cabinets around the room. A stout woman with dark hair, Miss Tinsman appeared to Ellen to be in her mid-forties. She wore a dark blue suit and a white blouse. A white handkerchief peaked out from her breast pocket, and a decorative pin graced her lapel.



"Good morning girls."

"Good morning, Miss Tinsman."

"I trust you all had a good summer and are ready to put your shoulders to the wheel once again. Just think, one more year and, hopefully – if you work hard – we're going to let you all out on **probation**. You may chuckle, if you'd like. That was a joke. This begins our fourth year in Register. And, of course, few of you escaped from my biology class. I hope you will all make the most of your last year at Emerson. Remember, school and life are what you make of them. You won't regret the hard work you do here at Emerson. And, after you graduate, when you pick up a grasshopper, as I hope you'll do often, I hope you'll remember that it was Miss Tinsman who taught

you that it belongs to the Order Orthoptera and the Suborder Caelifera, and that you can distinguish between the thorax and the mandibles. Well, enough of **entomology**. And I want to remind all of you to be **punctual**. If, on the other hand, you are **dilatory** and arrive late to class, you will be marked absent. I can't stress enough that success in life depends, first of all, on being on time. Now, let me take the **roll**. Just raise your hands as you hear your name called: Elizabeth Adams, Lorraine Alamsha, Ellen Anderson... there's a new name and face. You're new to my Register, aren't you? Nor did I have you for biology, did I, Ellen?"

"That's right, Miss Tinsman. I'm new this year. My father is in Gary on a temporary work assignment. I'm from Stratford, Connecticut."

"Why, yes, I met you in front of the school the day after the art collection was **stolen**. My, you're a long way from home. Well, I'm happy to welcome you to Emerson, Ellen. I know you're going to like it here, however long you stay. Now, where was I? Gloria Angotti..."

No sooner had Miss Tinsman completed the roll than the bell rang and it was time for Ellen to move on to Room 310, her first period English class, with Gladys Pierce. Unlike her register group, which was composed of about forty girls, senior English was almost evenly divided between the sexes. Mrs. Pierce,

a slight woman with dark hair and an engaging smile, stood at the head of the class. Her name was already written in **cursive** on the blackboard. She wore a green plaid suit, white blouse and the kind of sensible black shoes typically favored by school teachers, probably something to do with being on their feet all day.

"Good morning, class."

"Good morning, Mrs. Pierce."

"I hope you're all looking forward to a year of reading some of the **great** works of English literature, and polishing your **grammar**." A few muffled groans could be heard from the back of the room.

"I heard that, Randall Sullivan. I wouldn't be too quick to **decry** the study of English grammar. Let's **dispel** that **misconception** right now. I want to **instill** in all of you an appreciation of the fact that proper grammar is essential to your daily life, even if you don't **acknowledge** it at this stage of your existence. Let's just say that I'll try to make it interesting for you doubters. Remember, people will judge you on the basis of your spoken and written grammar. If you intend to apply for a job in which communication is critical, a grammatical **lapse** may doom your chances. Your employer may interpret your error as **indicative** of more wide-ranging educational **deficiencies**."

"This year, we're going to be reading the **immortal bard**, William Shakespeare, as well as Charles Dickens, the English **romantic** poets, Thomas Hardy, and, if we have time, D.H. Lawrence. No, not *Lady Chatterley*, George Settle, but *Sons and Lovers*, a work of far greater **literary** merit. I hope I can instill in all of you an appreciation for the classics and the **profound** insights these writers bring to their craft."

"There's more to life than pulp fiction, you know. *The Shadow* and *Doc Savage* simply can't compare to Dickens' *David Copperfield*, or Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Great literature is much more than a good story. It's a way of imparting great truths through the lives and experiences of their characters. You may be interested to know that Miss Benscoter is working on a shorter, **abridged** edition of *David Copperfield* for use in freshman English. She hopes to get it published in a few years. Abridged editions may be more **concise**, and they have their place, but I think they lose the literary complexity and **nuance** of the author's original **unabridged** language. You're old enough to handle that complexity now."

"As a part of our work this year, I also plan to spend some time on literary terms. I will present you with literary **vignettes** that illustrate these terms or characteristics of literary expression. For example, who can tell me what



a **simile** is? Millie Zivonovich?”

“A **simile** is a figure of speech that compares two essentially different things, usually in a phrase introduced by ‘like’ or ‘as.’”

“Can you give me an example?”

“Let me see... How about: ‘the sun looked like a big yellow ball.’”

“Very good, Millie!”

“Then, how do we distinguish a **simile** from a **metaphor**? Ellen... Anderson?”

“Well, unlike a **simile**, a **metaphor** compares two unrelated objects or things without using the words ‘like’ or ‘as.’”

“Example?”

“‘All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players,’ from Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*.”

“You know your Shakespeare, I see.”

“Well, I’ve read some of his plays. I’m from Stratford, Connecticut, after all.”

“Ellen’s referring to the fact that Shakespeare came from **Stratford-upon-Avon**, in England, and that her hometown is named for it. Excellent, Ellen.”

“There’s one other term I’d like to leave you with today – **personification**, which is also called **anthropomorphism**. Would anyone like to have a ‘go’ at this one? Edward Madden?”

“Let me see. **Personification** is a literary device that gives human qualities to non-human objects like animals, **inanimate** objects, or an abstract **concept**.”

“And can you provide us with an example, Edward?”

“Rudyard Kipling. His *Jungle Book* has talking animals. Kaa is a talking cobra. I just saw the film a few months ago with Sabu. And if you go to the **Oriental Institute** in Chicago, you can see statues of Egyptian gods in half human/half animal form. And then there are my friends who talk to their cars when they **conk out**, like they were human beings.”

“Those are great examples, Edward. Thank you.”

“Speaking of literary terms, I also want you to be aware of the idea of literary **allusion** in a text. Literature is full of **allusions**, whether references from the Bible, classical mythology, history, art, music, and so forth. For example, what if I said that chocolate was Ellen’s **Achilles’ heel**? Virginia Kelley?”

“That chocolate is her weakness. This is an **allusion** to Greek mythology. Achilles’ heel was his weakness because his mother failed to dip it in the **River Styx** when he was an infant, along with the rest of his body.”

“Very good, Virginia. I’m pleased that you remembered this from your study of mythology in freshman English. You will discover that to be an effective reader, you must grasp the meaning of various **allusions** sprinkled throughout literature. This is certainly true if you plan to go on to college. Writers will typically assume that their readers share a certain level of **cultural literacy**,

a literacy that you gain by **accretion** through your school years. It’s what we mean when we say that someone is ‘well-read.’

“I also plan to review the principle parts of speech, sentence structure, the essay, and business communication this year. You will be expected to demonstrate mastery of correct grammar in a series of essays, and an ability to **fashion cogent** arguments, in support of your **thesis**. And, finally, you will all be responsible for writing a term paper, using the standard rules of **scholarly citation**. Later in the semester, I will more fully explain what this will **entail**. Whether you plan to go on to college or not, you’ll need to express yourself with clarity and good grammar. You will need to know when it is appropriate to use formal forms of oral and written **discourse** and when **colloquial** forms of expression are acceptable. And don’t feel offended if I point out your lapses in spoken grammar. I won’t **equivocate** when I hear you say ‘ain’t,’ or ‘done’ instead of ‘did,’ or ‘good,’ instead of ‘well.’ I also have a particular **aversion** to **trite** and **hackneyed** expressions, or **redundancies**. So, please don’t tell me about some ‘new and novel **innovation**.’ My aim is to help you **expunge** these grammatical **faux pas** before you leave my classroom and enter the real world where the **approbation** of your peers, or supervisors, will be critical to your success. If you’re going to be **credible**, you must speak with grammatical precision. One day, you will thank Mrs. Pierce for setting you on the correct grammatical path. Do I make myself clear?”

“Yes, Mrs. Pierce.”

After calling the roll, and assigning seats, she called on two of the boys to distribute copies of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, a literary **anthology**, and an English grammar book to each member of the class. Ellen found herself sitting in the row near the windows, with a birds-eye view of the Emerson zoo and the Little Building. Melanie sat two seats behind her.

“Your assignment for tomorrow will be to read Act 1, Scenes 1 and 2 of *Macbeth*. We’re going to spend the next class **explicating** the text, line by line. Are there any questions?”

“Mrs. Pierce, is it true that you know **Hoagy Carmichael**?”

“Well, I don’t know what that has to do with *Macbeth*, or literary explication, but, yes, I do know Hoagy Carmichael, or did, when I was in college. We were in the same class at Indiana University a few years ago. I won’t go into how many years ago that was because then you would just do the math and figure out how old I am. And, as you should know by now, a lady never reveals her age. But, I will say that it was back in the **heyday** of the Charleston, raccoon coats and flivvers – you can look those up.” She smiled **impishly**. “Yes, Hoagy started out playing the piano with a group called the Collegians at campus events, and writing his own songs. I’m sure you know many of them – *Up*

a *Lazy River*, *Stardust*, *Georgia on My Mind*, *Two Sleepy People*, and many more. Now, he's world famous, of course, and a movie star as well. Some of you may have seen him in *Topper* with Cary Grant and Constance Bennett at the Gary Theater a couple of months ago. I have to admit that it's a thrill to go to the movies and see someone with whom you once attended English class.

But, I **digress**. Are there any more questions – about Macbeth, that is? Hearing none, class is dismissed.”

With her English class **truncated** by a full ten minutes, Ellen and Melanie **hovered** in the third floor hallway, while Ellen read the inscriptions on some of the trophies in the cases that lined the wall. On both ends of the third floor, students filled four rows of desks in the study hall. Catherine Greenwald, another of Emerson's English teachers, was monitoring the east end study hall.

“I had Mrs. Greenwald for junior English,” Melanie whispered. “She has an **infectious** passion for literature. I memorized a half dozen poems in her class, and I thought I wasn't good at memorization. In fact, I can still recite: *There is another sky*,



by Emily Dickinson; and *Annabel Lee* by Edgar Allan Poe. She's even known to bribe students with candy bars as an added **inducement** to memorize lengthy poems. I remember her rewarding Fran Kent with a *Three Musketeers* for memorizing 'Shylock's lament' from *The Merchant of Venice*.”

When the bell rang, the halls were again crowded with young people rushing

hither and yon. The science lab – Room 210 – was one floor down, in the southeast corner. Ellen's physics teacher, Mr. Floyd Flinn, was already inside, standing behind a black marble lab counter with a sink at one end and several stacks of books at the other. Students paraded in and took their seats. He was a man of medium height, dark wavy hair, and wore wire-rimmed spectacles. He was dressed in a dark blue, double-breasted suit and flowered tie. His calm **demeanor** projected an **aura** of efficiency and



scientific **inquisitiveness**. Various scientific instruments were arranged on the counter in front of him. As students sat down, he began passing out copies of the semester's class **syllabus**.

“Good morning, students. My name is Mr. Flinn. Some of you may have already had me for chemistry, or general science, so you'll have an idea of what kind of work I'll expect from you in physics. We're going to be covering a variety of topics in the physical sciences this year, including the laws of motion, work and energy, properties of **matter**, mechanics, heat, **thermodynamics**, electricity and electrical energy, electric circuits, magnetism, **hydraulics**, measurements and calculation, light, **optics**, **momentum** and collisions, and modern electronics. We'll also consider the scientific method and the process of laboratory investigation. You'll also have an opportunity to conduct a variety of experiments illustrating the physical principles we'll be studying. The **syllabi** I'm passing out will **delineate** the **salient** points we'll be covering this semester.”

After taking the roll, Mr. Flinn spent the remainder of the period discussing the role of physics and physical laws in everyday life. He asked for volunteers to distribute textbooks.

“Over the past century, we have witnessed the development of the **internal combustion engine**. Now, even as we speak, scientists are working to harness the power of the atom – something we call **nuclear fission**. Work on nuclear fission accelerated in the 1930s when scientists came to the conclusion that manipulation of the **nuclei** of atoms was possible. In 1932, **Sir John Cockcroft** and **Ernest Walton** at Cambridge University in England were the first to split the atom and cause a nuclear reaction by the use of artificially accelerated particles. This research has now taken on a **heightened** importance, particularly for its military potential. It's quite possible that the Nazis are also interested in the military potential of atomic energy. Of course, this is all **speculative** at the present time. This semester, we're going to look at the principles involved in nuclear fission. I want you to appreciate that physics is far more than an academic exercise, but is very much related to everyday life, or death.”

Ellen sat **dumfounded** as Mr. Flinn explained in depth the basic scientific principles of what she was **intimately** involved in trying to expose. Only, it wasn't the Nazis who were implicated in this case, as he suggested, but agents of the Soviet Union anticipating the potential of atomic energy in the post-war world. She was almost tempted to speak up and set the record straight, but wisely held her tongue.

Her next class took her to Room 302: trigonometry with Miss Minnie Talbot. Miss Talbot, who had been teaching at Emerson since 1918, was the senior



member of the math faculty. In addition to **trigonometry**, she taught both **geometry** and **calculus**. A woman of average height and build, she wore a light blue silk dress and gold-rimmed spectacles. Her graying hair was pulled back in bun, a style much in favor among Emerson's female teachers. She appeared well organized, and had a seating chart all prepared. As she called the roll, she directed each student to take the seat she had assigned them. Ellen found herself in the front row, near the door.

"There, I think we're all accounted for. I trust you all had a good summer. I certainly did. I spent most of July and August visiting my sister in Nashville, Indiana, just outside of Bloomington, and a week with my parents in Wisconsin. The weather was delightful, with plenty of time for reading and relaxation. We attended some lovely concerts given by faculty and students of the Indiana University Music Department and did some hiking in Brown County State Park.

"We're going to start the year with a review of the principles of algebra and geometry. Before we get into trigonometry, I want to make sure you're comfortable manipulating algebraic expressions and solving equations. From your geometry, you should already know something about similar **triangles** and the **Pythagorean Theorem**. Trig has many practical applications in the natural and social sciences, but the chief ones are in geography, astronomy, physics, engineering, and chemistry.

"Basically, trigonometry is a branch of mathematics that deals with triangles, particularly those plane triangles in which one angle has 90 degrees. Trigonometry deals with relationships between the sides and the angles of triangles and with the trigonometric functions, which describe those relationships. It has applications in both pure mathematics and in applied mathematics."

Miss Talbot spent the remainder of the period reviewing some algebraic formulas and reviewing the principles of the **Pythagorean Theorem** and similar triangles.

"Does anyone in the class remember who **Pythagoras** was?"

"A Greek mathematician and philosopher," answered a girl in the third row.

"Correct, Betsy. Can anyone tell the class exactly when he lived?"

"About five hundred years before Christ. I know he lived before Socrates and Aristotle."

"That's right, Robin. He is one of a group we call the pre-Socratic philosophers, and lived from about 570 to 490 B.C. In other words, before Socrates."

Before the end of class, Miss Talbot **delegated** to several students the task of passing out the trigonometry textbooks.

"Your assignment for tomorrow is to read pages one through four of the first chapter and to do the problems illustrating the **Pythagorean Theorem**. We'll discuss these tomorrow."

As the bell rang for lunch, Ellen found Melanie hovering outside her classroom.

"I had study hall, while you were in there with 'Whispering Minnie.' How would you like to go to Rubin's for lunch?"

"Sounds swell. Lead the way."

Ellen felt the late summer warmth envelope her body as she and Melanie left the building and ambled down the front steps. As they crossed the street, the sidewalk outside Rubin's was already crowded with students, some drinking Waverly pop and eating hamburgers. The girls entered the confectionary and found two stools at the far end of the lunch counter. A good-looking young man wearing brown slacks and white dress shirt approached. He took particular note of Ellen.

"Who's your friend, Melanie?"

"This is Ellen Anderson, Frank. She's new this year. Ellen, this is Frank Roman."

"Pleased to meet you. So, what do you think of our school?"

"I like it a lot. The teachers I've met so far are great and the students are very friendly."

"Frank plays quarterback on our football team and he's also going to be in A Cappella with you this year, Ellen."

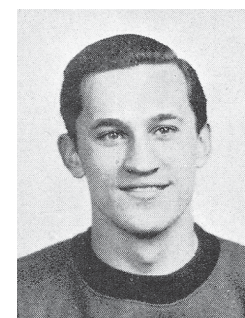
"Fantastic! An athlete who sings. Sounds like a winning combination. So, when does football season start?"

"This Friday, at Proviso. That's in Illinois. Our first game at Gleason Field is next week, against Tolleston," Frank explained.

"And what do you think of your chances this season?"

"Pretty good, I think. We were 6-1-1 last season and have many of our starters returning this year. Coach Rolfe thinks we stink, but he always says that. He just wants to make sure we don't get too cocky or **shirk** our responsibilities to the team. Well, it was nice meeting you, Ellen. I guess I'll be seeing you after lunch."

"So, what can I get for you girls?" asked Pop Rubin, sidling up to the counter, his **brusque** voice **belying** a kindly, **avuncular** disposition. He appeared to Ellen very much the **stereotypical** soda fountain proprietor.



"I'd like a plain hamburger and a chocolate malt," Melanie replied.

"I'll have a cheeseburger with a little ketchup, and also a chocolate malt."

"Coming right up! The **condiments** are right over there."

"You know, if we were in the school cafeteria, they'd make us eat our vegetables – even lima beans," Melanie said. "Mr. Carlberg – he teaches history – wouldn't let us return our trays until we had cleaned our plates of every last bean. He's our unofficial cafeteria monitor."



"We have a teacher like that back in Stratford – Mr. DeLeurere. He takes nutrition seriously. You gotta love 'em. They mean well. It's a manifestation of the principal of **in loco parentis**."

"In loco what? Does that have something to do with crazy parents?"

"No, silly. **In loco parentis** is Latin for 'in place of the parents.' Mr. Carlberg performs the role in school that your parents play at home – making you eat your vegetables. They believe

in a healthful **culinary regimen** and its **salutary** health benefits. I don't feel too badly, though. I get plenty of vegetables at home. My mother sees to that. I have to laugh when I think about the time I was just a kid and didn't want to eat my lima beans. My mother **chided** me by telling me there were starving people in India who would love to eat those lima beans. I told her: "Then, why don't you send them to India?" She sent me to my room without supper and told me I was a fresh kid." Melanie snorted into her straw and almost spilled her malted milk.

Ellen watched as dozens of students passed in and out of the screen door, many buying soda pop and candy bars, others hamburgers, apples, or ice cream sandwiches. Some youngsters bought penny candy.

"See those kids. They're not even supposed to be in here," Melanie explained. "If you're in the fourth grade and below, you're not supposed to leave the school grounds – not that I expect eight-year-old kids to be fully **compliant** with school regulations when an **enticing** assortment of sugary treats tempts them. Periodically, Mr. Spaulding or Mr. Bohn have to come over and shoo them back across the street."

Ellen spied *Doc Savage* and other pulps on the magazine rack. It made her think about *Macbeth* and what Mrs. Pierce had said, though she doubted that *Macbeth* would be a big seller at Rubin's. She had already observed several boys reading *Action Comics* on the school's front lawn. As twelve o'clock approached, students began filing out of the East Side confectionary



and slowly making their way back towards the school. Ellen's next class was A Cappella, a select choral ensemble that met in Room 112, with **Miss Grace Sayers**. Remembering that she was scheduled for a twelve o'clock audition, she promptly said 'goodbye' to Melanie and made her way to the last room in the first floor's east corridor, opposite the stairway. Miss Sayers, who was just finishing her lunch, looked up from her desk and smiled as Ellen entered the room.

Miss Tinsman, who shared lunch with her, excused herself as Ellen entered. The room contained a console piano and desk upfront and was lined with wooden writing chairs instead of desks. A pretty brunette sat at the piano.

"You must be Ellen Anderson? Are you ready for your audition?"

"Yes, Miss Sayers."

"What part do you sing, Ellen?"

"First soprano."

"Excellent. We could use another first soprano. Ellen, I'd like you to meet my accompanist, Nell Warda, one of our June graduates. She's staying on to help me this year, as she has for the past three years."

"I'm pleased to meet you, Nell."

"I'm pleased to meet you, too. I hope you're going to like it here at Emerson."



"Nell has been taking piano lessons since she was eight and plays like a dream. You should hear her play Chopin. But, why don't we start with some scales? Just sing on aaahhh."

After reviewing three or four scales over two-and-a-half octaves, Miss Sayers handed Ellen the sheet music of *I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls*, from **Michael Balfe's operetta, The Bohemian Girl**. A duplicate copy rested on the piano, in front of Nell. Ellen knew the melody,

which she had heard in the 1936 Laurel and Hardy **comedic** version of *The Bohemian Girl*, but had never sung it before.

“Do you know it?”

“Well, I’ve never sung it, but I do know the melody, from Laurel and Hardy.”

“I saw that film, too. Wasn’t that a funny one? It was at the Tivoli a few years ago. I think it was their best comedy, though they **altered** the plot a bit from the operetta. Nell will play the introduction. Just come in where it says ‘Arline.’”

Ellen began **tentatively**, but soon fully embraced the emotion **embedded** in the **lyrics**.

*I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls,
With vassals and serfs at my side,
And of all who assembled within those walls,
That I was the hope and the pride.
I had riches too great to count, could boast
Of a high ancestral name;
But I also dreamt, which pleased me most,
That you lov’d me still the same...
That you lov’d me, you lov’d me still the same,
That you lov’d me, you lov’d me still the same.*

Students began filtering in as she sang, quietly taking their seats. As her **lilting** and **mellifluous** voice trailed off into a faint **pianissimo**, the students already in the room applauded enthusiastically. Ellen observed Frank Roman among them. She blushed, then smiled appreciatively.

“That was lovely, Ellen, lovely. It sounds like you’ve had voice training.”

“Yes, I have. I studied with Patricia Brown in Stratford.”

“Well, it’s obvious that you have a beautiful soprano voice, and the makings of a fine soloist. I was particularly struck with the expressive manner in which you are able to **modulate** your tone in keeping with the lyrics. Needless to say, you’ve passed your audition. Why don’t you sit here in the front row? You know, I can still remember Leota Olson singing that number so beautifully in our production of *The Bohemian Girl* back in 1930. Mladen **Sekulovich**, a Serbian boy who’s now making his way on Broadway, played Devilshoof in that cast, but he changed his name to **Karl Malden**. His younger brother, Dan, was in A Cappella a few years ago.”

By the time the rest of the students had arrived, the choir had swelled to about fifty singers, about thirty girls and twenty boys.

“Welcome back, singers. You know your places, I’m sure: sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses by the windows. I hope there are enough chairs for everyone.

I may move you around a bit, later, to get a better balance of parts, but you’re fine for now. You will be interested to know that I have already lined up several concert appearances for the choir, the first of which will be in mid-October for the Gary Chamber of Commerce’s fall banquet. And, of course, we’ll be getting ready for our annual Christmas pageant and *Everyman*. Those interested in doing a skit for *Spice and Variety* may want to start thinking about what you’d like to do, or what acts you’d like to organize. If there’s a musical component to your skit, I will be happy to work with you after school, and arrange for Miss Cromer, or Nell, to play for you. Now, let’s warm up with some scales...”

The hour flew by as Miss Sayers passed out sheet music and the choir reviewed some familiar numbers from the previous year, including the choir’s signature *May the Lord Bless You and Keep You*. Ellen detected that some choir members had been with the group for several years already, some with good, strong voices. Overall, the **consonant** voices of the **ensemble** produced a full, rich sound. She left class feeling a sense of emotional **exuberation**.

Her next class, on the second floor, was Auditorium with Gertrude Palmer and Melba Cromer. Early arrivals filed in and took seats near the stage. By the time the bell rang, nearly two hundred seats were occupied with students of every grade from the seventh to the twelfth. Ellen already knew that Auditorium was a central part of William Wirt’s vision for the Gary Schools, and his Work-Study-Play system of education.

Once everyone was settled, Mrs. Palmer asked everyone to stand and sing **Emerson Loyalty**, with Miss Cromer at the keyboard:

*O, Emerson Our School
O’er other schools we’ll always rule.
We will link your name
With fairness, honor, and with fame.
Each one, O Emerson,
We’ll stand by you till time is done.
And still with voices loud and clear,
We’ll cheer for you Emerson.*

“Thank you, students, for that **zealous** outpouring of school spirit! Please be seated. For those of you who don’t know me, I’m **Mrs. Palmer**. Joining me this hour will be **Miss Cromer**, who played so beautifully on the piano, and who will leading our singing.”

Mrs. Palmer was an attractive woman with dark hair and blue eyes. She wore a maroon silk dress with a circle pin on the collar and a decorative handkerchief pinned below her shoulder. She **projected** a confident air and appeared totally in command of her audience, seemingly able to keep even the



most **obstreperous** students in line. The students appeared most **deferential** in response. She stood in the center aisle of the auditorium, and spoke in an easy, **conversational** manner, projecting her voice clearly to those on both sides of the room. Miss **Melba Cromer**, a small woman with a bright smile, blue eyes and brown hair, and wearing a dark blue sweater over a flowered blouse, sat on the piano bench.



“So, what is Auditorium? Literally, of course – if you know your Latin – it’s a place where you hear. But, it’s much more than that. Our classes will consist of variety of programs presented by students, teachers and outside visitors. We will sing the Emerson School songs, the popular college fight songs, and American folk songs. We will also listen to some of the finest pieces of classical music ever written and learn about their composers. This year, you’re going to have in-

numerable opportunities to practice your public speaking by addressing an audience, performing in a play or radio drama, and learning **parliamentary procedure**. Every week, we will elect a new chairman, and a secretary to keep the minutes. We have a variety of **didactic** goals in Auditorium. We will watch educational movies and **travelogues**, and the auditorium will provide a **forum** for community leaders in the fields of government, public safety, business, art, music, literature, and journalism, as well as members of the **clergy**, and local **philanthropists**. Our aim is to bring the wider world to your doorstep and to provide you with a sense of its opportunities. We also want to **cultivate** in you an appreciation for some of the finer things in life and **foster** a love of classical music, the opera, art, drama, poetry, and the cultures of other nations.

“Auditorium is also the place where our school spirit is most in evidence. And in that regard, I want to say a few words to you about the terrible tragedy that befell our school at the end of August. I refer, of course, to the theft of our beautiful art collection. Those paintings – some of them quite valuable – were donated by graduating classes since 1920. It’s hard to imagine our school without them. Thus far, the police have no leads as to their whereabouts or of the **miscreants who absconded** with them. So, I want to ask all of you to keep your eyes and ears open. Perhaps, one of you will uncover a clue that will lead to their recovery.”

As she listened intently to Mrs. Palmer’s words of **lamentation**, Ellen’s conscience was in **turmoil**, knowing full well where the paintings were now hidden and that the theft was possibly part of a plot far more **sinister** than anyone in the auditorium might have imagined.

“Our first item of business today is to elect our chairman for the week. In doing so, I want you to embrace the philosophy of the Auditorium, which is that every person has value and should have an opportunity to develop to his or her full potential. I expect you to behave as mature adults and not as members of **cliques**. I want you to support your classmates, particularly those who may be inclined to be shy or **diffident**, as they develop their self-confidence in public speaking and dramatic performance. After you graduate from Emerson, there’s no reason why any of you should feel **inhibited** or **inarticulate** in public gatherings. Do I make myself understood?”

“Yes, Mrs. Palmer,” responded the students, mostly in unison.

“Now, do I hear any **nominations** for the position of this week’s class chairman?”

“I nominate Dan Barrick,” shouted a girl from the back of the room.

“I nominate Steve Cajewski,” shouted a girl in the front row.

“It doesn’t have to be just boys. Girls are eligible to run as well,” cautioned Mrs. Palmer.

“O.K. I nominate Helen Dziurdzy,” cried a boy in the fourth row.

“Do I hear a motion to close the nominations?”

“So moved.”

“All in favor?”

“Aye.”

“Any nays? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed. Now, for the vote by show of hands. Will you two girls serve as vote monitors?” Mrs. Palmer singled out two girls in the front row.

“All those in favor of Dan Barrick, raise your hands.” The girls took a minute to count the raised hands on each side of the auditorium.

“Now, all those in favor of Steve Cajewski, raise your hands.”

“Finally, all those in favor Helen Dziurdzy, raise your hands.”

The girls conferred briefly, then one stepped forward and announced:

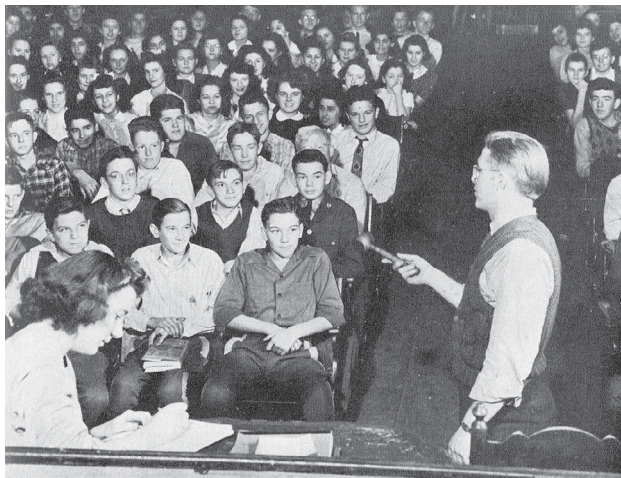
“Dan Barrick has been elected chairman with 143 votes.”

“Way to go, Serb,” came a good-natured shout of encouragement from the right side of the room.

“O.K., Dan. Now, I’ll ask you to step forward and take over the meeting. Here is your gavel. Use it with **discretion**. And the rest of you, observe closely so you can **emulate** Dan’s performance when it’s your turn to chair the class.”

Ellen recognized Dan as one of the tenors in A Cappella. She assumed he was Serbian, judging by the **appellation** coming from amid the crowd. His first official act was calling for nominations for the position of secretary. After a second set of nominations, Doris Nikchevich was elected secretary.

“Our daily agenda will begin with our chairman calling the meeting to order,



the reading of the previous day's minutes by our secretary, followed by announcements from the floor," explained Mrs. Palmer. "Have you got your notebook out, Doris? Dan will also have responsibility of introducing any special guests. If there are no special guests, or activities, he will then **defer** to Miss Cromer or

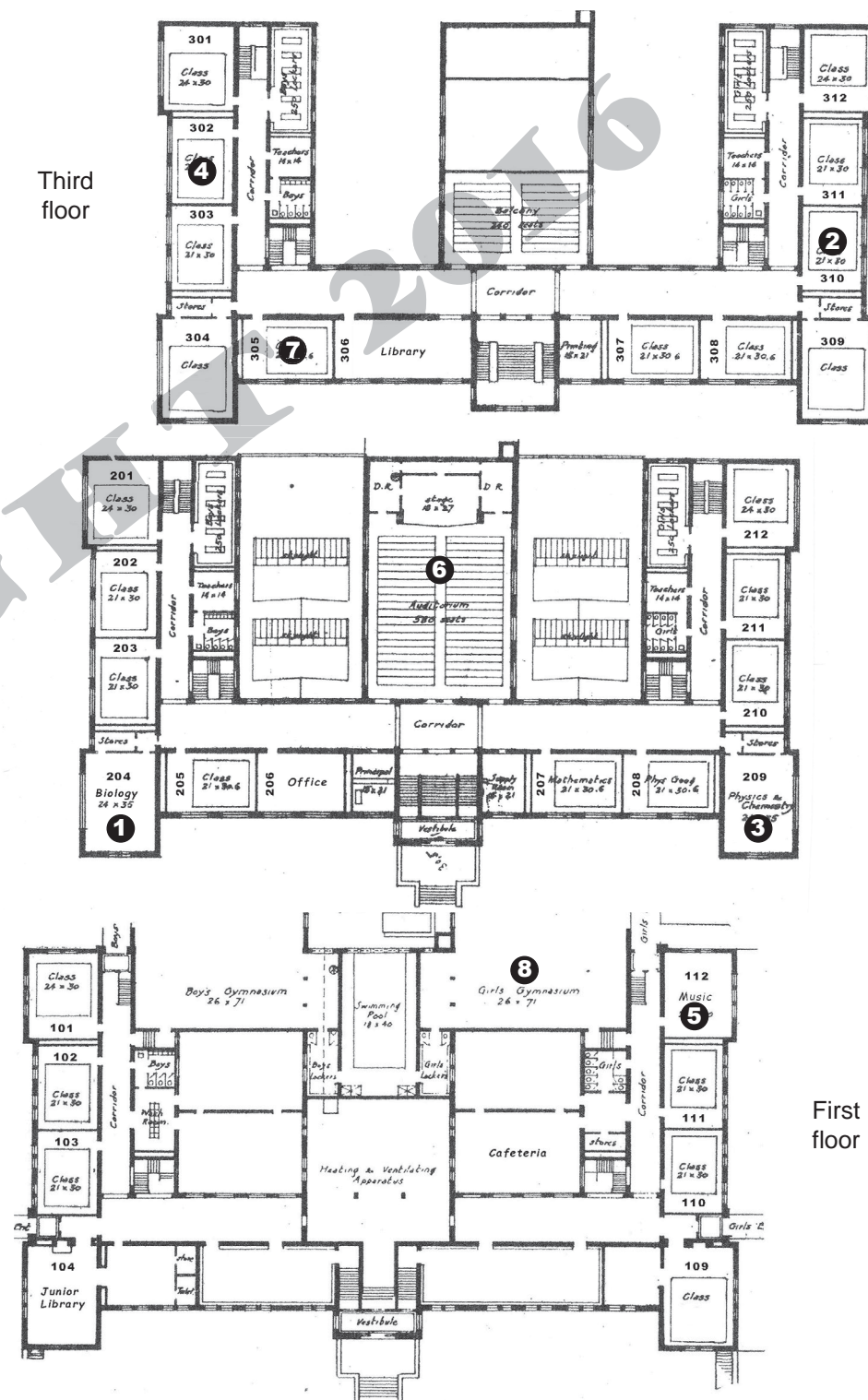
myself to proceed with the regular class activities. There will be times when we will be assisted by Miss Harrison, or another member of the auditorium staff, such as when we break up into smaller groups to practice public speaking and **elocution**, or to rehearse our plays or dramatic readings. Our goal is to prepare you to speak both **extemporaneously** and with the benefit of a printed text in front of you, and to learn to project and clearly **articulate** your words so that even those in the rear of the auditorium can hear you clearly without the use of a microphone.

"Dr. Wirt once described the Auditorium class as being at the heart of the Work-Study-Play system. With his passing, it's a legacy he has left to each one of you. I hope you will all take advantage of it and allow it to enrich your lives. For the remainder of today's class, we're going to sing some American folk songs. Would our monitors help me pass out the song books?"

When the 2:10 bell rang, Ellen was off to Civics with **Miss Henrietta Newton** in Room 305. She met Melanie in the third floor hallway.

Room 305 was lined with maps and charts illustrating periods in world and American history, including the Colonial Era, the American Revolution, Westward Expansion, the Mexican War, the Civil War, as well as current political maps of the United States and Europe. Portraits of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln were also mounted on the walls, as well as a colored charcoal portrait of Ralph Waldo Emerson, for whom the school was named. Miss Newton stood at the doorway, monitoring hallway traffic, and greeting students as they entered her classroom and took their seats. Her **demeanor** was as dignified as the **impeccably** tailored gray suit she wore. It was obvious that she knew many of the faces already from the American history class they had taken with her the year before. Miss Newton

Third floor



had been teaching history and civics at Emerson since 1918 and was, by now, teaching the children of that earlier generation. And, while she acknowledged various **familial** relationships, she **tactfully** refrained from calling attention to their academic **prowess**, or lack thereof, a habit of which some teachers were **wont** to engage. She had a reputation as a tough, but **evenhanded** grader.

After all the students had taken their seats, Miss Newton called the roll, nodding as students cried “Here,” or raised their hands in response. Assigning seats to conform to her seating chart was the next order of business. Ellen found herself three seats from the front in the row nearest the windows.

“There. I think that does it. Well, for those of you who may not know me, I’m Miss Newton. This begins my twenty-fifth year teaching at Emerson, so



I know many of you, or, perhaps, some members of your family. I can’t emphasize enough how important Civics is, and will be, to your future lives. Soon, we’ll be turning you loose in a **chaotic** world, a world **fraught** with **peril**. That peril is fueled by ignorance and dangerous political ideas – something we call **ideology**. What is ‘ideology,’ you may ask?” She walked to the front of the room, picked up a piece of chalk and wrote the word on the blackboard. “The root word of ideology, as you might expect, is the word ‘idea.’ An **ideology** is a set of conscious and unconscious ideas that reflect certain goals, expectations,

and actions. That’s a fancy way of saying that ideology is a **comprehensive** vision, a way of looking at the world. Ideologies are systems of abstract thought that are applied to the real world. An ideology starts out as a theory devised by philosophers, which politicians then attempt to impose on society. They do this first by destroying the existing order, followed by the imposition of what they think is a Utopia governed by an elite. Who can tell the class what the dominant ideologies are in the world today?”

“Yes, John.”

“Fascism and Communism.”

“Quite right. Fascism and Communism are the two leading ideologies contending for dominance in the world today. Communism has its philosophical roots in the ideas of Karl Marx. Fascism also draws from Marx, but also from various late 19th century political thinkers. In the 20th century, of course, **fascism** has been primarily influenced by **Adolf Hitler** who wrote *Mein Kampf*. Translated from the German, *Mein Kampf* means *My Struggle*. After Marx, Communism, or Bolshevism, was primarily influenced by the writings of **Vladimir Lenin**. During this semester, we will explore the similarities

and differences between Fascism and Communism, and contrast them with the **philosophy** and structure of our American Republic. By contrasting our American system of government with those two alien ideologies, you will gain a better appreciation of what makes America so exceptional in world history.”

“Where does **socialism** fit into this, Miss Newton?”

“Good question, John. **Socialism** is an economic system in which the government owns the means of production – in other words, the factories and businesses – with the **purported** goal of spreading the wealth. It’s the economic basis of **communism**. In other words, forced economic equality. Socialism can take **many forms**. Under social democratic governments, the goal of **purported** economic justice is advanced by taxation and the redistribution of **wealth** through government welfare programs. In its more extreme form – **communism** – government not only owns the factories, but makes all major economic decisions. In theory, such systems are supposed to be run by workers’ cooperatives, or councils, but, that’s all an **obfuscation** because, in reality, power in such systems generally **devolves** to a small ruling **elite** that claims to act in the name of the people. That’s what we now have in the Soviet Union, which uses socialist **doctrine** as a **smokescreen** for a system in which a dictator – Joseph Stalin – makes those decisions.”

“Another **virulent** form of government is **fascism**, a political regime that exalts the nation, and race, above the individual, and institutes a **centralized, autocratic** government headed by a dictatorial leader. What distinguishes **fascism** from **socialism** or **communism** is that it employs severe economic and social **regimentation** of private industry in place of outright ownership of the means of production. Private ownership of the means of production exists in name only, with the Nazi government calling the shots. It is the German government and not the **nominal** owners, that exercises all the substantive powers of ownership, including what is to be produced, in what quantities, by what methods, and how it is to be priced. **National Socialism** builds its Utopia upon the *Volk* – that’s German for people – and the purity and solidarity of the tribe. That’s where Hitler derives his concept of the **Master Race**, that he believes is destined to rule the world.

“Communism, on the other hand, builds its utopian vision upon a class foundation, the morally purified New Man or New Woman, which they collectively refer to as the **proletariat**, or working class. Their enemies are referred to as the **bourgeoisie**, a class which includes capitalists, business owners, shopkeepers, the middle class, and farmers who may own a couple more cows than their neighbors. But, the ultimate goals of the fascists and the Communists are essentially the same – to exalt the state above the freedom of the individual, all in pursuit of **collectivist** utopian goals. Thus, fascism and communism

are both what we would classify as **left-wing** movements. They enforce their will by the firing squad, the concentration camp, and the use of slave labor. So, don't be deceived by the fact that they are fighting each other at the present time. They are simply two totalitarian visions competing for dominance. After World War I, for example, they were in league with each other against the liberal political order of **bourgeois** Europe. The Communist leadership of the Soviet Union ordered their German party members to **collaborate** with the Nazis to bring down the **Weimar Republic**, which Hitler did in 1933.

"The novelist **Arthur Koestler** gets at the heart of the similarities between communism and fascism in his novel *Darkness at Noon*, which was published in 1940, shortly after the Hitler-Stalin pact was signed. The lead character, Rubashov, is dreaming about the last time he was arrested, by the Gestapo, and cannot determine which of the two hostile dictators is after him this time. Rubashov, you see, is an old Bolshevik, but arrested, imprisoned, and tried for treason against the very government he helped create twenty years before. Now, he has become a victim of Stalin's 1938 Purge. Koestler draws upon his knowledge of the Soviet police state and his experience of imprisonment in Franco's fascist Spain a few years before. Curiously, his assertion of the basic sameness of the two regimes was written at a time when he still considered himself a Soviet sympathizer, and had not yet broken with the party. Eventually, the youthful **ardor** he felt for communism and the Soviet **utopia** evaporated as he came to grips with the appalling evil of the regime. I know it's difficult for those of us in the United States to conceive that such **totalitarian regimes** are in control of much of the world, but such is the age in which we find ourselves.

"We, of course, live in a Constitutional Republic with a free market economy, in which economic decisions are made by people in their individual capacities. Decisions about what to produce and how those products are to be priced are based on millions, if not billions, of individual market choices. Imagine going into your local A & P, and choosing between Wheaties and Kellogg's Pep. The decisions about how much of each to produce and how they are to be priced are based on consumer demand and open competition, not on government fiat. In a socialist or fascist economy, the government might decide that everyone should eat Wheaties: **The Breakfast of Commissars**. Under socialism or communism, the government would own the factory that produces Wheaties, and make every other decision regarding its production and distribution. Under fascism, the government would tell the private business to produce Wheaties. Same result. Naturally, this produces greater societal unrest as people are forced to fight through the political process to ensure that their choices are given preference. In a free market, everybody decides what cereal they want

and the government stays out of the way, except to ensure that laws are obeyed, contracts are enforced, and **monopolies in restraint of trade** are outlawed. I use this simple example merely to illustrate what happens when the government steps in to make economic decisions best left to a free people. In the real world, of course, such decisions are far more significant than cereal choices, and affect the lives and fortunes of millions of people around the world.

"It is clear that communism and fascism have much in common. Both are **comprehensive** political ideologies that **advocate** violent revolution, but only until the ruling **clique** is firmly **entrenched**. After that, the rulers **decry** what they call '**counter-revolutionary** tendencies' that might threaten their dominance. Both believe in the necessity of an **elite vanguard** being in control, both have disdain for what are termed '**bourgeois**' values, for private property, and both have **totalitarian** ambitions. The most important consideration in both systems is that the state – that is, the government – is all-powerful, and the individual is important only insofar as he or she serves the state, like a cog in the vast machinery of government.

"By the way, how many of you have seen Charlie Chaplin's film *Modern Times*? Raise your hands. Most of you, I see. Good. Well, you may recall the scene where Charlie is working in a factory and is sucked into the **cogs** of a giant piece of machinery. That image is an accurate reflection of the modern totalitarian state where citizens are mere cogs in the state apparatus. Incidentally, when I use the word 'state' in this sense, I refer to **sovereign** political entities – nation states, or countries – rather than to the forty-eight states in the United States.

"The **irony** in all of this is that the United States is now in an alliance with one of these **totalitarian states**, or **regimes**, for the purpose of defeating the other totalitarian regime. Our system of government has nothing in common with communism, yet we are linked in a wartime alliance with it. It was the 19th century editor, **Charles Dudley Warren**, who was responsible for the **aphorism** that '**politics makes strange bedfellows**.' Nowhere is that more true than in our current alliance with the mass murderer, Joseph Stalin. Sadly, President Roosevelt embodies a troubling **naïveté** that Stalin's regime is some kind of **crude** Asiatic New Deal that will come around in the post-war era. He uses the term 'Convergence' to describe what he believes is the inevitability of our two systems coming together, or meeting in the middle, perhaps after the war is concluded. Why, he even considers British **imperialism** a greater threat to world peace. Yet, he seems to typify the attitude of many experienced democratic politicians around the world, as well as scholars and intellectuals, who are **lamentably sanguine** about the nature of communist **ideology** and Soviet behavior. Such is the power of **myth** or **utopianism** and its hold upon

the human **psyche**.

“Our system of government in the United States is the **antithesis** of ideology. This has effectively **inoculated** us in large measure from the **pernicious** influences of a **totalitarian** worldview. While our system of government obviously has certain philosophical underpinnings, those underpinnings are rooted in freedom, limited government, separation of powers, free markets, and individual liberty. Our Constitutional Republic leaves to a free people what in a communist or fascist regime is dictated by the government, or its dictator. Our system is not based on some **utopian** ideal that must be imposed on the people against their will, but on individual free choice.

“During this semester, we are going to explore the philosophical ideas that motivated the Founding Fathers to produce the greatest experiment in Ordered Liberty ever devised by man. I’m talking about our **United States Constitution** that was drafted in 1787. We’ll look at the ideas of St. Paul, John Locke, the Baron de Montesquieu, William Blackstone, Sir Edward Coke, Cicero, Plutarch, and other **progenitors** of the ideas that motivated the Founders. These are the writers with whom the Founders were most **conversant**. Their **Revolutionary** experience made them deeply suspicious of power, whether exercised by kings, or mobs. They feared the tyranny of an **oppressive** majority as much as they feared the tyranny of kings, or **oligarchs**. That’s why they created a **Republic**, not a democracy, because they feared mob rule. And that’s why they created a system of **checks and balances**, to prevent any one branch of government from becoming all-powerful. Unfortunately, we have seen **unconstitutional** assaults on that system, such as when President Roosevelt attempted to pack the Supreme Court to advance his progressive agenda.

“You are the heirs to that great experiment. Whether it continues for future generations rests on your shoulders. Some of you young men may be called upon to serve your country on foreign shores, just as those of previous generations were called upon. It’s called the price of liberty. Indeed, many Emerson graduates are already serving in various branches of the military, including, perhaps, some of your own family members. Others will be called upon to do their part on the home front, whether helping to produce the steel that fuels our war effort, buying war bonds or stamps, taking part in scrap drives, or in complying with the **ration system**. But, all of you need to fully comprehend the reasons why we are fighting.

“Some of you may have seen director **Frank Capra**’s film *Prelude to War*, the first in a series of documentary films entitled *Why We Fight*. If you have not already seen it, I urge you to do so. In that first installment, he explains the differences between democratic and fascist states, between free states

and slave states. One thing you will notice, however, is that our government is downplaying the true nature of Soviet communism in **deference** to our wartime alliance. But, don’t let that deceive you. I want to **underscore** that the Soviets are every bit as evil as the Nazis, perhaps even more so. Yet, President Roosevelt persists in using a variety of **euphemisms** to describe our wartime ally – like ‘Uncle Joe.’

“This war is not your typical **balance of power** struggle of the kind we experienced in previous centuries. This is total war, driven by the urge to **subjugate** whole nations and bring them under the domination of an alien **ideology**. And this urge to subjugate other nations and peoples is driven by the **utopian** visions of dead philosophers who thought they knew best how we should live our lives.

“I’m not **sanguine** enough to expect that our problems will end when, and if, we defeat Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. You have to imagine what a post-war world will look like with Joseph Stalin commanding vast **swaths** of European territory. Indeed, what will happen to Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Serbia, Romania, Greece, and other countries in close **proximity** to the Soviet Union when the war ends?”

Ellen sat transfixed by Miss Newton’s **trenchant** and **lucid explication** of the current **conflagration** in Europe, and the world, and the **objective** manner in which she **elucidated** the complex subject matter. But, she was also struck by the passion of her explanation and how similar Miss Newton’s worldview mirrored that of Miss Satterfield back at Stratford High. She raised her hand.

“Yes, Ellen... Anderson.”

“Miss Newton. I think we have only to look at how the Soviet Union treated little Lithuania, a nation of perhaps four million people, under the terms of the non-aggression pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. I mean, shortly after it was signed, the Germans marched into western Poland and the Soviets into eastern Poland. And less than a year later, the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania and the other Baltic countries. According to a Lithuanian friend of mine, it appears they had a secret agreement all along to divide up Eastern Europe. Since then, the Soviets have killed, or deported thousands of Lithuanians and other Baltic peoples to Siberia, as a means of bringing the country under its heel. They focus on arresting the professional and educated classes in an effort to **decapitate** potential opposition. They’ve also **profaned** and **desecrated** their houses of worship and arrested their priests. It’s insidious!”

“Quite right, Ellen. That’s the tragedy of the small nations that are trapped between these two military **behemoths**. They are virtually powerless to resist

the death and wanton **pillaging** suffered at the hands of the warring forces. Their only hope is that the western democracies can ultimately triumph and restore their freedom and independence. But, right now, that prospect looks **daunting** if the post-war world shapes up the way I envision.

“After the **devastation** of the **Great War**, it was President Wilson’s dream that a **League of Nations** would prevent future wars. And while it was a noble vision, it was unable to prevent a number of conflicts in the years leading up to the Second World War, including Italy’s invasion of **Ethiopia** in 1935, and the **Spanish Civil War**. And, of course, it was totally **ineffectual** in stopping the aggression of the **Axis Powers** in the present conflict. The fact that the United States Senate failed to ratify the **League of Nations** reflected the dominant **isolationist** sentiments that prevailed at that time. Whether the League of Nations would have had any **appreciable** influence on the course of world politics in the years leading up to the invasion of Poland is, of course, a subject of considerable **conjecture**.

“So you see, class, you are living in trying times. The oceans separating us from Europe or Asia, and the **insularity** we have enjoyed up to now, have given us a false sense of security. We initially resisted becoming embroiled in World War I because we viewed it as Europe’s conflict. **Ironically**, when President Wilson ran for re-election in 1916, his campaign slogan was ‘He kept us out of war.’ And, after the war, we **blithely** returned to a policy of **isolationism** that left us unprepared for Pearl Harbor. It’s hard to imagine that, prior to the Japanese attack, the sentiment of the American public was so strongly opposed to **intervention** that we would have allowed Europe to be trampled by the Nazi war machine, and China by the Imperial Japanese Army. The **America First Committee** was a reflection of that deep-rooted isolationist **sentiment**. While the oceans may provide us with a measure of security, most of the world is not so fortunate. Whether it’s the Far East, or North Africa, Norway, France, or Eastern Europe, the world is an extremely dangerous place.

“So, the study of civics takes on a **heightened** importance today as we contrast the brilliance of our Constitutional Republic and the freedom and prosperity we enjoy in America, with the war, devastation and cruelty that citizens in most parts of the world suffer on a daily basis because of the **insidious** effects of totalitarian ideology on the minds of men.”

As the class drew to a close, Miss Newton distributed the civics textbook for the semester: *The Story of American Democracy*, written by two Connecticut authors: Mabel B. Casner of Washington School, West Haven, and Ralph H. Gabriel, Professor of History at Yale University. Ellen could have sat and listened to Miss Newton’s **impassioned** lecture for hours, but her attention

was rudely interrupted by the 3:10 bell, reminding her that her last period physical education class was about to begin.

Ellen’s 3:15 physical education class met in the girls’ lower gymnasium. **Gertrude Reynolds**, her physical education teacher, stood at the door of her



office, with her little pet terrier at her feet. After the bell rang signaling the start of class, she blew her whistle and brought the class to attention.

“Line up girls, in three rows, at arm’s length from each other. Welcome to last period physical education. My name is Gertrude Reynolds, but you may call me Miss Reynolds. Most of you have already had me for physical education so you know how I conduct my classes. I regret to inform you that we have lost two of our faculty members since June. Miss Esther File joined the **WAVES** and is now serving at the **Great Lakes Naval Training Center**, and Miss Vogt left us to get married. But, we will **persevere**.

“Now, for some housekeeping details. You will all be expected to wear the standard green gymsuits in order to pass inspection. Those of you who need gymsuits can get them from the school store on the first floor. If you have not already done so, please be sure to stitch your last name and first initial above the breast pocket.”

As Ellen stood in the second row next to Melanie, she heard an audible groan emitted by some of the girls in the back row when the subject of gymsuits was **broached**. It appeared that, for some, the regulation green gymsuits required of female athletes failed to meet their current **sartorial** standards. Most, however, simply accepted them as a **rite of passage**.

“Your gymsuits will cost you \$3.50,” Miss Reynolds explained **succinctly**. “Unless you have a financial hardship, you will be expected to pay for your uniform by the end of next week. If you cannot

afford \$3.50, please see me. Fall sports will include field hockey, swimming and basketball, along with a healthy dose of calisthenics. Each of you will be



expected to participate in at least two sports each semester. Sally, here, will see that you are assigned a locker on the balcony. It is up to you to purchase a padlock. Any questions? If not, you are dismissed for the day.”

Melanie took Ellen by the arm and walked with her to their second floor lockers where they retrieved some of the textbooks they had acquired that day. Ellen’s mind was still preoccupied with the **profusion** of ideas presented by Miss Newton in Civics, ideas that made her physical education class seem **jejune** by comparison.

Then, suddenly, the bell rang. A few seconds later, the hallways were filled with students leaving their last period classrooms, accompanied by the sound of trumpets echoing through the hallways. Ellen, Melanie, and the rest of the students in the second floor hallway froze in place as three trumpet players in R.O.T.C. uniforms marked the end of the school day with the traditional *Retreat*. Outside, a detachment of R.O.T.C. members lowered the American flag from the 40-foot flagpole that stood to the right of the school’s main entrance. As the last note faded away, and the momentary stillness was broken by the **resumption** of student chatter, the girls continued down the front steps, out to 7th Avenue, and on their way home.



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