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WORLD'S
END

A LANNY BUDD NOVEL





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World's End

A Lanny Budd Novel

Upton Sinclair



Author's Note

In the course of this novel a number of well-known persons make their appearance, some of them living, some dead; they appear under their own names, and what is said about them is factually correct.

There are other characters which are fictitious, and in these cases the author has gone out of his way to avoid seeming to point at real persons. He has given them unlikely names, and hopes that no persons bearing such names exist. But it is impossible to make sure; therefore the writer states that, if any such coincidence occurs, it is accidental. This is not the customary "hedge clause" which the author of a *roman à clef* publishes for legal protection; it means what it says and is intended to be so taken.

Various European concerns engaged in the manufacture of munitions have been named in the story, and what has been said about them is also according to the records. There is one American firm, and that, with all its affairs, is imaginary. The writer has done his best to avoid seeming to indicate any actual American firm or family.

BOOK ONE

God's in His Heaven

Music Made Visible

I

The American boy's name was Lanning Budd; people called him Lanny, an agreeable name, easy to say. He had been born in Switzerland, and spent most of his life on the French Riviera; he had never crossed the ocean, but considered himself American because his mother and father were that. He had traveled a lot, and just now was in a little village in the suburbs of Dresden, his mother having left him while she went off on a yachting trip to the fiords of Norway. Lanny didn't mind, for he was used to being left in places, and knew how to get along with people from other parts of the world. He would eat their foods, pick up a smattering of their languages, and hear stories about strange ways of life.

Lanny was thirteen, and growing fast, but much dancing had kept his figure slender and graceful. His wavy brown hair was worn long, that being the fashion for boys; when it dropped into his eyes, he gave a toss of the head. His eyes also were brown, and looked out with eagerness on whatever part of Europe he was in. Just now he was sure that Hellerau was the most delightful of places, and surely this day of the Festspiel was the most delightful of days.

Upon a high plateau stood a tall white temple with smooth round pillars in front, and to it were drifting throngs of people who had journeyed from places all over the earth where art was loved and cherished; fashionable ones among them, but mostly art people, writers and critics, musicians, actors, producers—celebrities in such numbers that it was impossible to keep track of them. All Lanny's life he had heard their names, and here they were in the flesh. With two friends, a German boy slightly older than himself and an English boy older still, he wandered among the crowd in a state of eager delight.

"There he is!" one would whisper.

"Which?"

"The one with the pink flower."

"Who is he?"

One of the older boys would explain. Perhaps it was a great blond Russian named Stanislavsky; perhaps a carelessly dressed Englishman, Granville Barker. The boys would stare, but not too openly or too long. It was a place of courtesy, and celebrities were worshiped but not disturbed. To ask for an autograph was a crudity undreamed of in the Dalcroze school.

The three were on the alert for the king of celebrities, who had promised to be present. They spied him at some distance, talking with two ladies. Others also had spied him, and were doing as the boys did, walking slowly past, inclining their ears in the hope of catching a stray pearl of wit or wisdom; then stopping a little way off, watching with half-averted gaze.

“His whiskers look like gold,” murmured Lanny.

“Whiskers?” queried Kurt, the German boy, who spoke English carefully and precisely. “I thought you say beard.”

“Whiskers are beard and mustaches both,” ventured Lanny, and then inquired: “Aren’t they, Rick?”

“Whiskers stick out,” opined the English boy, and added: “His are the color of the soil of Hellerau.” It was true, for the ground was reddish yellow, and had glints of sunlight in it. “Hellerau means bright meadow,” Kurt explained.

II

The king of celebrities was then in his middle fifties, and the breeze that blew on that elevated spot tossed his whiskers, which stuck out. Tall and erect, he had eyes as gay as the bluebells on the meadow and teeth like the petals of the daisies. He wore an English tweed suit of brown with reddish threads in it, and when he threw his head back and laughed—which he did every time he made a joke—all the flowers on the bright meadow danced.

The trio stared until they thought maybe it wasn’t polite any more, and then turned their eyes away. “Do you suppose he’d answer if we spoke to him?” ventured Lanny.

“Oh, no!” exclaimed Kurt, the most strictly brought up of the three.

“What would we say?” demanded Rick.

“We might think up something. You try; you’re English.”

“English people don’t ever speak without being introduced.”

“Think of something anyhow,” persisted Lanny. “It can’t hurt to pretend.”

Rick was fifteen, and his father was a baronet who preferred to be known as a designer of stage sets. “Mr. Shaw,” he suggested, with Oxford accent and polished manner, “may I take the liberty of telling you how much I have enjoyed the reading of your prefaces?”

“That’s what everybody says,” declared Lanny. “He’s sick of it. You try, Kurt.”

Kurt clicked his heels and bowed; he was the son of an official in Silesia, and couldn’t even imagine addressing anyone without doing that. “Mr. Shaw, we Germans count ourselves your discoverers, and it does us honor to welcome you to our soil.”

“That’s better,” judged the American. “But maybe the Bürgermeister has already said it.”

“You try it then,” said Rick.

Lanny knew from his father and others that Americans said what they wanted to, and without too much ceremony. “Mr. Shaw,” he announced, “we three boys are going to dance for you in a few minutes, and we’re tickled to death about it.”

“He’ll know that’s American, all right,” admitted Rick. “Would you dare to do it?”

“I don’t know,” said Lanny. “He looks quite kind.”

The king of celebrities had started to move toward the tall white temple, and Kurt glanced quickly at his watch. “*Herrgott!* Three minutes to curtain!”

He bolted, with the other two at his heels. Breathless, they dashed into the robing room,

where the chorus master gazed at them sternly. "It is disgraceful to be late for the Festspiel," he declared.

But it didn't take three boys long to slip out of shirts and trousers, B.V.D.'s and sandals, and into their light dancing tunics. That they were out of breath was no matter, for there was the overture. They stole to their assigned positions on the darkened stage and squatted on the floor to wait until it was time for the rising of the curtain.

III

Orpheus, the singer, had descended into hell. He stood, his lyre in hand, confronting a host of furies with a baleful glare in their eyes. Infernal music pounded forth their protest. "Who is this mortal one now drawing near, bold to intrude on these awful abodes?"

Furies, it is well known, are dangerous; these trembled with their peculiar excitement, and could hardly be restrained. Their feet trod with eagerness to leap at the intruder, their hands reached out with longing to seize and rend him. The music crashed and rushed upward in a frenzied presto, it crashed and rushed down again, and bodies shook and swayed with the drive of it.

The spirits stood upon a slope within the entrance gates of Hell; tier upon tier of them, and in the dim blue light of infernal fires their naked arms and legs made, as it were, a mountain of motion. Their anger wove itself into patterns of menace, so that the gentle musician could hardly keep from shrinking. He touched his lyre, and soft strains floated forth; tinkling triplets like the shimmering of little waves in the moonlight. But the fiends would not hear. "No!" they thundered, with the hammer-strokes of arms and the trampling of feet. In vain the melodious pleading of the lyre! "Furies, specters, phantoms terrific, let your hearts have pity on my soul-tormenting pain."

The musician sang his story. He had lost his beloved Eurydice, who was somewhere in these realms of grief, and he must win her release. His strains poured forth until the hardest hearts were melted. It was a triumph of love over anger, of beauty and grace over the evil forces which beset the lives of men.

The mountain of motion burst forth into silent song. The denizens of Hell were transformed into shades of the Elysian fields, and showers of blessings fell upon them out of the music. "On these meadows all are happy-hearted; only peace and rest are known." In the midst of the rejoicing came the shy Eurydice to meet her spouse. Rapture seized the limbs now shining in bright light; they wove patterns as intricate as the music, portraying not merely melody but complicated harmonies. Beautiful designs were brought before the eye, counterpoint was heightened through another sense. It was music made visible; and when the curtain had fallen upon the bliss of Orpheus and his bride, a storm of applause shook the auditorium. Men and women stood shouting their delight at the revelation of a new form of art.

Outside, upon the steps of the temple, they crowded about the creator of "Eurythmics." Emile Jaques-Dalcroze was his name, a stocky, solidly built man with the sharply pointed

black beard and mustache of a Frenchman and the black Windsor tie which marked the artist of those days. He had taken the musical patterns of Gluck's *Orpheus* and reproduced them with the bodies and bare arms and legs of children; the art lovers would go forth to tell the world that here was something not only beautiful but healing, a way to train the young in grace and happiness, in efficiency and co-ordination of body and mind.

Critics, producers, teachers, all of them were devotees of an old religion, the worship of the Muses. They believed that humanity could be saved by beauty and grace; and what better symbol than the fable of the Greek singer who descended into Hell and with voice and golden lyre tamed the furies and the fiends? Sooner or later among the children at Hellerau would appear another Orpheus to charm the senses, inspire the soul, and tame the furies of greed and hate. Wars would be banished—and not merely those among nations, but that bitter struggle of the classes which was threatening to rend Europe. In the Dalcroze school children of the well-to-do classes danced side by side with those of workers from the factory suburbs. In the temple of the Muses were no classes, nations, or races; only humanity with its dream of beauty and joy.

Such was the faith of all art lovers of the year 1913; such was the creed being taught in the tall white temple upon the bright meadow. In these fortunate modern days the spread of civilization had become automatic and irresistible. Forty-two years had passed since Europe had had a major war, and it was evident to all that love and brotherhood were stealing into the hearts of the furies, and that Orpheus was conquering with his heaven-sent voice and golden lyre.

IV

All Lanny Budd's young life he had played around with music. Wherever he was taken, there was always a piano, and he had begun picking at the keys as soon as he was old enough to climb upon a stool. He remembered snatches of everything he heard, and as soon as he got home would lose himself in the task of reproducing them. Now he had discovered a place where he could play music with arms and legs and all the rest of him; where he could stand in front of a mirror and see music with his eyes! He was so excited about it that he could hardly wait to jump into his clothes in the morning before dancing downstairs.

At Hellerau they taught you an alphabet and a grammar of movement. With your arms you kept the time; a set of movements for three-part time, another for four, and so on. With your feet and body you indicated the duration of notes. It was a kind of rhythmic gymnastics, planned to train the body in quick and exact response to mental impressions. When you had mastered the movements for the different tempi, you went on to more complex problems; you would mark three-part time with your feet and four-part time with your arms. You would learn to analyze and reproduce complicated musical structures; expressing the rhythms of a three-part canon by singing one part, acting another with the arms, and a third with the feet.

To Lanny the lovely part about this school was that nobody thought you were queer because

you wanted to dance; everybody understood that music and motion went together. At home people danced, of course, but it was a formal procedure, for which you dressed especially and hired musicians who played a special kind of music, the least interesting, and everybody danced as nearly the same way as possible. If a little boy danced all over the lawn, or through the pine woods, or down on the beach—well, people might think it was “cute,” but they wouldn’t join him.

Lanny was getting to an age where people would be expecting him to acquire dignity. He couldn’t go on capering around, at least not unless he was going to take it up as a career and make money out of it. But here was this school, to provide him with a label and a warrant, so to speak. His mother would say: “There’s Lanny, doing his Dalcroze.” Lady Eversham-Watson would put up her ivory and gold lorgnette and drawl: “Oh, chawming!” The Baroness de la Tourette would lift her hands with a dozen diamonds and emeralds on them and exclaim: “*Ravissant!*” “Dalcroze” was the rage.

So Lanny worked hard and learned all he could during these precious weeks while his mother was away on the yacht of the gentleman who had invented Bluebird Soap and introduced it into several million American kitchens. Lanny would steal into a room where a group of boys and girls were practicing; nobody objected if a graceful and slender lad fell in and tried the steps. If he had ideas of his own he would go off into a corner and work them out, and nobody would pay any attention, unless he was doing it unusually well. There was dancing all over the place, in bedrooms and through corridors and out on the grounds; everybody was so wrapped up in his work that there would have been no special excitement if Queen Titania and her court had appeared, marking with their fairy feet the swift measures of the *Midsummer-Night’s Dream* overture.

V

Lanny Budd had made two special friendships that summer. Kurt Meissner came from Silesia, where his father was comptroller-general of a great estate, a responsible and honorable post. Kurt was the youngest of four sons, so he did not have to become a government official or an officer in the army; his wish to conduct and possibly to compose music was respected, and he was learning in the thorough German way all the instruments which he would have to use. He was a year older than Lanny and half a head taller; he had straw-colored hair clipped close, wore pince-nez, and was serious in disposition and formal in manners. If a lady so much as walked by he rose from his chair, and if she smiled he would click his heels and bow from the waist. What he liked about the Dalcroze system was that it *was* a system; something you could analyze and understand thoroughly. Kurt would always obey the rules, and be troubled by Lanny’s free and easy American way of changing anything if he thought he could make it better.

The English boy had a complicated name, Eric Vivian Pomeroy-Nielson; but people had made it easy by changing it to Rick. He was going to be a baronet some day, and said it was

deuced uncomfortable, being a sort of halfway stage between a gentleman and a member of the nobility. It was Rick's idea of manners never to take anything seriously, or rather never to admit that he did; he dressed casually, made jokes, spoke of "ridin'" and "shootin'," forgot to finish many of his sentences, and had chosen "putrid" as his favorite adjective. He had dark hair with a tendency to curl, which he explained by the remark: "I suppose a Jew left his visiting card on my family." But with all his pose, you would make a mistake about Eric Pomeroy-Nielson if you did not realize that he was learning everything he could about his chosen profession of theater: music, dancing, poetry, acting, elocution, stage decoration, painting—even that art, which he said was his father's claim to greatness, of getting introduced to rich persons and wangling their cash for the support of "little theaters."

Each of these boys had a contribution to make to the others. Kurt knew German music, from Bach to Mahler. Lanny knew a little of everything, from old sarabands to "Alexander's Ragtime Band," a recent "hit" from overseas. As for Rick, he had been to some newfangled arts-and-crafts school and learned a repertoire of old English folk songs and dances. When he sang and the others danced the songs of Purcell, with so many trills and turns, and sometimes a score of notes to a syllable, it became just what the song proclaimed—"sweet Flora's holiday."

All three of these lads had been brought up in contact with older persons and were mature beyond their years. To Americans they would have seemed like little old men. All three were the product of ripe cultures, which took art seriously, using it to replace other forms of adventure. All were planning art careers; their parents were rich enough—not so rich as to be "putrid," but so that they could choose their own activities. All three looked forward to a future in which art would go on expanding like some miraculous flower. New "sensations" would be rumored, and crowds of eager and curious folk would rush from Paris to Munich to Vienna, from Prague to Berlin to London—just as now they had come flocking to the tall white temple on the bright meadow, to learn how children could be taught efficiency of mind and body and prepared for that society of cultivated and gracious aesthetes in which they were expecting to pass their days.

On a wide plain just below Hellerau was an exercise ground of the German army. Here almost every day large bodies of men marched and wheeled, ran and fell down and got up again. Horses galloped, guns and caissons rumbled and were swung about, unlimbered, and pointed at an imaginary foe. The sounds of all this floated up to the tall white temple, and when the wind was right, the dust came also. But the dancers and musicians paid little attention to it. Men had marched and drilled upon the soil of Europe ever since history began; but now there had been forty-two years of peace, and only the old people remembered war. So much progress had been made in science and in international relations that few men could contemplate the possibility of wholesale bloodshed in Europe. The art lovers were not among those few.

When the summer season at the school was over, Lanny went to join his mother. He had tears in his eyes when he left Hellerau; such a lovely place, the only church in which he had ever worshiped. He told himself that he would never forget it; he promised his teachers to come back, and in the end to become a teacher himself. He promised Rick to see him in England, because his mother went there every “season,” and if he tried hard he could persuade her to take him along.

As for Kurt, he was traveling with Lanny to the French Riviera; for the German lad had an aunt who lived there, and he had suggested paying her a visit of a couple of weeks before his school began. He had said nothing to her about an American boy who lived near by, for it was possible that his stiff and formal relative would not approve of such a friend. There were many stratifications among the upper classes of Europe, and these furies had never yielded to the lure of Orpheus and his lute.

Kurt was like an older brother to Lanny, taking charge of the travel arrangements and the tickets, and showing off his country to the visitor. They had to change trains at Leipzig, and had supper in a sidewalk café, ordering cabbage soup and finding that the vegetable had been inhabited before it was cooked. “Better a worm in the cabbage than no meat,” said Kurt, quoting the peasants of his country.

Lanny forgot his dismay when they heard a humming sound overhead and saw people looking up. There in the reddish light of the sinking sun was a giant silver fish, gliding slowly and majestically across the sky. A Zeppelin! It was an achievement dreamed of by man for thousands of years, and now at last brought to reality in an age of miracles. German ingenuity had done it, and Kurt talked about it proudly. That very year German airliners had begun speeding from one city to another, and soon they promised air traffic across all the seas. No end to the triumphs of invention, the spread of science and culture in the great capitals of Europe!

The boys settled themselves in the night express, and Lanny told his friend about “Beauty,” whom they were to meet in Paris. “Her friends all call her that,” said the boy, “and so do I. She was only nineteen when I was born.” Kurt could add nineteen and thirteen and realize that Lanny’s mother was still young.

“My father lives in America,” the other continued; “but he comes to Europe several times every year. The name Budd doesn’t mean much to a German, I suppose, but it’s well known over there; it’s somewhat like saying Krupp in Germany. Of course the munitions plants are much smaller in the States; but people say Colt, and Remington, and Winchester—and Budd.”

Lanny made haste to add: “Don’t think that my parents are so very rich. Robbie—that’s my father—has half a dozen brothers and sisters, and he has uncles and aunts who have their own children. My mother divorced my father years ago, and Robbie now has a wife and three children in Connecticut, where the Budd plants are. So you see there are plenty to divide up with. My father has charge of the sales of Budd’s on the Continent, and I’ve always thought I’d be his assistant. But now I think I’ve changed my mind—I like ‘Dalcroze’ so much.”

VII

Beauty Budd did not come to the station; she seldom did things which involved boredom and strain. Lanny was such a bright boy, he knew quite well how to have his bags carried to a taxi, and what to tip, and the name of their regular hotel. His mother would be waiting in their suite, and it would be better that way, because she would be fresh and cool and lovely. It was her business to be that, for him as for all the world.

Kind nature had assigned that role to her. She had everything: hair which flowed in waves of twenty-two-carat gold; soft, delicate skin, regular white teeth, lovely features—not what is called a doll-baby face, but one full of gaiety and kindness. She was small and delicate, in short, a delight to look at, and people turned to take their share of that delight wherever she went. It had been that way ever since she was a child, and of course she couldn't help knowing about it. But it wasn't vanity, rather a warm glow that suffused her, a happiness in being able to make others happy—and a pity for women who didn't have the blessed gift which made life so easy.

Beauty took all possible care of her natural endowment; she made a philosophy of this, and would explain it if you were interested. "I've had my share of griefs. I wept, and discovered that I wept alone—and I don't happen to be of a solitary nature. I laugh, and have plenty of company." That was the argument. Wasn't a beautiful woman as much worth taking care of as a flower or a jewel? Why not dress her elegantly, put her in a charming setting, and make her an art-work in a world of art lovers?

Her name was an art-work also. She had been born Blackless, and christened Mabel, and neither name had pleased her. Lanny's father had given her two new ones, and all her friends had agreed that they suited her. Now she even signed her checks "Beauty Budd," and if she signed too many she did not worry, because making people happy must be worth what it cost.

Now Lanny's mother was blooming after a long sea trip among the fiords, having kept her complexion carefully veiled from the sun which refused to set. Her only worry was that she had gained several pounds and had to take them off by painful self-denial. She adored her lovely boy, and here he came hurrying into the room; they ran to each other like children, and hugged and kissed. Beauty held him off and gazed at him. "Oh, Lanny, how big you've grown!" she exclaimed; and then hugged him again.

The German boy stood waiting. Lanny introduced him, and she greeted him warmly, reading in his eyes astonishment and adoration—the thing she was used to from men, whether they were fourteen or five times that. They would stand awe-stricken, forget their manners, become her slaves forever—and that was the best thing that could happen to them. It gave them something to look up to and worship; it kept them from turning into beasts and barbarians, as they were so strongly inclined to do. Beauty had put on for this occasion a blue Chinese silk morning robe with large golden pheasants on it, very gorgeous; she had guessed what it might do to Lanny's new friend, and saw that it was doing it. She was charming to him, and if he adored her he would be nice to her son, and everybody would be that much happier.

"Tell me about Hellerau," she said; and of course they did, or Lanny did, because the

German boy was still tongue-tied. Beauty had had a piano put in the drawing room, and she ran to it. "What do you want?" she asked, and Lanny said: "Anything," making it easy for her, because really she didn't know so very many pieces. She began to play a Chopin polonaise, and the two boys danced, and she was enraptured, and made them proud of themselves. Kurt, who had never before heard of a mother who was also a child, revised his ideas of Americans in one short morning. Such free, such easygoing, such delightful people!

The boys bathed and dressed and went downstairs for lunch. Beauty ordered fruit juice and a cucumber salad. "I begin to grow plump on nothing," she said. "It's the tragedy of my life. I didn't dare to drink a glass of milk at a *saeter*."

"What is a *saeter*?" asked Lanny.

"It's a pasture high up on the mountainside. We would go ashore in the launch and drive up to them; the very old farmhouses are made of logs, and have holes in the roof instead of chimneys. They have many little storehouses, the roofs covered with turf, and you see flower gardens growing on top of them. One even had a small tree."

"I saw that once in Silesia," said Kurt. "The roots bind the roof tighter. But the branches have to be cut away every year."

"We had the grandest time on the yacht," continued Beauty. "Did Lanny ever tell you about old Mr. Hackabury? He comes from the town of Reubens, Indiana, and he makes Bluebird Soap, millions of cakes every day, or every week, or whatever it is—I'm no good at figures. He carries little sample cakes in his pocket and gives them to everybody. The peasants were grateful; they are a clean people."

The boys told her about the *Orpheus* festival, and Bernard Shaw and Granville Barker and Stanislavsky. "It's quite the loveliest place I've ever been to," declared Lanny. "I think I want to become a teacher of 'Dalcroze.'"

Beauty didn't laugh, as other mothers might have done. "Of course, dear," she answered. "Whatever you want; but Robbie may be disappointed." Kurt had never heard of parents being addressed by such names as Beauty and Robbie; he assumed it was an American custom, and it seemed to work well, though of course it would never do for Silesia.

They were having their pastry; and Beauty said: "You might like to stay over for an extra day. I'd like to have a chance to see more of Kurt, but I've accepted an invitation to spend a fortnight in England, and then go to Scotland for the shooting." Lanny was disappointed, but it didn't occur to him to show it, because he was used to seeing his mother in snatches like this; he understood that she had obligations to her many friends and couldn't be expected to stay and entertain one boy, or even two.

Kurt, also, was disappointed, having thought he was going to feast his eyes on this work of art, created in far-off America and perfected in France. He made up for lost time, and was so adoring, and at the same time respectful and punctilious, that Beauty decided he was an exceptionally fine lad and was glad that dear Lanny had such good judgment in the choice of friends. Lanny had written who Kurt's parents were, and also of the aunt in Cannes, the Frau Doktor Hofrat von und zu Nebenaltenberg. Beauty didn't know her, but felt sure that anybody with such a name must be socially acceptable.

VIII

In the afternoon they went to an exhibition of modern art. "Everybody" was talking about the Salon des Indépendants, and therefore Beauty had to be able to say that she had seen it. She had a quick step and a quick eye, and so was able to inspect the year's work of a thousand or more artists in fifteen or twenty minutes. After that she had a dress fitting; the business of being an art-work oneself didn't leave very much time for the art-works of others. Lanny's mother, flitting through life like a butterfly over a flower bed, was so charming and so gay that few would ever note how little honey she gathered.

She left the two boys to share the display between them. The painters and sculptors of a continent had turned their imaginations loose, and the boys wandered past wall after wall covered with their efforts. Each seemed to shriek: "Look at me! I am the ne plus ultra!" Few seemed willing to paint in the old accepted way, so as actually to reproduce something. Here faces were made into planes and conic sections; eyes and noses changed positions, trees became blue, skies green, and human complexions both. It was the epoch of the "Nude Descending the Staircase"; this nude consisted of spirals, zigzags which might have been lightning flashes, a tangle of lines resembling telephone wires after a cyclone. You couldn't form the least idea why it was a "nude," and wished you might know the artist and ask if it was a colossal spoof, or what.

There were plenty of recognizable nudes; they were shown in the morgue, on the battlefield or the operating table. There were women with great pendent paunches and breasts, men with limbs diseased or missing. You got the definite impression that the "independent" artists of the continent of Europe were a disturbed and tormented lot. Perhaps they lived in garrets and didn't get enough to eat; Lanny and Kurt, neither of whom had ever seen a garret or missed a meal, did not think of that explanation. They could only wonder why, in a world with creatures like Lanny's mother, painters should prefer ugly and repulsive subjects. There was something wrong; but the riddle couldn't be solved by the son of Beauty Budd nor yet by the son of the comptroller-general of Castle Stubendorf in Upper Silesia.

Beauty had an engagement for dinner, so the two boys went to a cinema, an art which was still in its rough-and-tumble days. The French equivalent of a custard pie was, it appeared, a bucket of paperhanger's paste; the paperhanger was mistaken for a lover by a jealous husband, and the pursuit and fighting ended with the pot of paste falling from a ladder onto the husband's head, to the hilarious delight of the husband-haters of Paris. In the orchestra pit a solitary man sat in front of a piano and a book of scores marked for different kinds of scenes—love, grief, or battle, whatever it might be. He would turn hastily to the proper page, and when the ladder was about to topple he was ready with the thunderstorm passage from the *William Tell* overture. Quite different from the Salon des Indépendants, and also from Hellerau; but the tastes of boys are catholic, and they laughed as loudly as the least cultured bourgeois in the place.

Next morning Beauty did not get up until nearly noon, so the boys drove about; Kurt had never been to Paris before, and Lanny, quite at home, showed him the landmarks and gave him

history lessons. Later came a polo-playing American by the name of Harry Murchison, a scion of the plate-glass industry; he had a fancy car, and drove them out to Versailles, where they had lunch in a sidewalk café, and wandered through the gardens and forests, and saw the Little Trianon, and were told by a guide about Marie Antoinette and the Princesse de Lamballe and other fair ones of the vanished past—but none of them so fair as Beauty! Both Lanny and Kurt were a bit jealous of the handsome young American who sought to monopolize the mother; but she was kind and saw to the equal distribution of her favors.

When they were back in the hotel she had them show some “Dalcroze” to her friend while she dressed. Harry was taking her to the opera, it appeared; but first they had dinner, and then drove the boys to the station and saw them on the *rapide* for the Côte d’Azur. Beauty always had tears in her eyes at partings, and so did Lanny, and—unexpectedly—so did Kurt. Beauty kissed him good-by; and when the two boys were settled in their compartment and the train was under way, Kurt exclaimed: “Oh, Lanny, I just *love* your mother!”

Lanny was pleased, of course. “So does everybody,” was his reply.

Côte d'Azur

I

On the eastern side of a little peninsula which juts out into the Mediterranean stood the tiny village of Juan-les-Pins, looking across a bay, the Golfe Juan, with the Estérel mountains in the background. On this lovely sheltered coast was a villa, with a tract of two or three acres, which Robbie Budd had given to Lanny's mother years ago. He had put it in trust so that she could not sell or even mortgage it, thus placing her in an odd position, with financial ups and downs that made no real difference. Just now "Juan," as it was called, was enjoying a mild prosperity; land was being divided up into *lotissements*, considerable sums were being offered, and Beauty had the thrill of being worth a hundred thousand francs. In due course would come a depression, and she would be "ruined," and sorrowful about it; then would come a terrific "boom," then another "slump"—and Beauty believing in each one. But always she and Lanny would have a home, which was the way Robbie intended it to be.

This had been Lanny's nest ever since he could recall. In its deeply shaded pine woods he had picked the spring flowers and learned the calls of birds. On its slowly shelving sand-beach he had paddled and learned to swim. Down the shore were boats of fishermen drawn up, and nets spread out to dry, and here was the most exciting kind of life for a child; all the strange creatures of the deep flapping and struggling, displaying the hues of the rainbow to the dazzling sun, with fisherboys to tell him which would bite and sting, and which could be carried home to Leese, the jolly peasant woman who was their cook. Lanny had learned to prattle in three languages, and it was a long time before he was able to sort them out; English to his mother and father, French to many guests and occasional teachers, and Provençal to servants, peasants, and fisher-folk.

The house was built on the top of a rise, some way back from the sea. It was of pink stucco with pale blue shutters and a low roof of red tiles. It was in Spanish style, built round a lovely court with a fountain and flowers; there Lanny played when the mistral was blowing, as it sometimes did for a week on end. Along the road outside ran a high wall with a hedge of pink and white oleanders peering over it, and a wooden gate with a bell which tinkled inside the court, and on each side of the gate an aloe, having thick basal leaves and a tall spike with many flowers—"God's candelabra," they were called.

Here was a happy place for a boy, with no enemies and few dangers. His father taught him to swim in all sorts of water, and to float as peacefully and securely as a sea turtle. He learned to row and to sail, and to come in quickly when storms gave their first warnings. He learned so much about fishing, and about the nuts which the peasants gathered in the forests and the herbs which they found in the fields, that Beauty used to say, if they ever got really poor, Lanny

would feed them. He learned also to make friends, and to share in so many occupations that he would never need to be bored.

His mother, being a lady of fashion, naturally worried now and then about the plebeian tastes of her only child, and when she was there would invite the children of her rich friends as playmates. And that was all right with Lanny, the rich children were interesting too; he would take them down the shore and introduce them to the fisherboys, and presently they would be ruining their expensive clothes learning to cast a hand net for shrimp. They would plan a walking trip into the hills, and rest at the door of some peasant cottage, and when they came back would tell how they had learned to weave baskets. Beauty would say with a laugh that Robbie's forefathers had been farmers, though of course in Connecticut they weren't the same as peasants.

II

Lanny Budd had never been to school, in the ordinary sense of the word. For one thing, his mother so often took him on journeys; and for another, he taught himself as many things as it seemed safe to put into one small head. He remembered phrases of every language he heard, and that was saying a lot on the Riviera. He was forever picking at the piano, and if he saw people dance a new dance, he had learned it before they got through. All his mother had to do was to show him his letters, and presently he was reading every book in the house that had pictures. You might be surprised to hear that Beauty Budd considered herself a lady of literary tastes; it meant that she noted the names of the books she heard people talking about, bought them, read the first few pages, and then was too busy to look at them again. Sooner or later Lanny would get hold of them, and if he didn't understand them, he would start pestering somebody with questions.

A good part of his education had come from listening. All sorts of people came to the house, and a well-bred little boy would sit quietly in a chair and not say a word. As a rule, people would forget that he was there, and have no idea that he was stowing things away in his mind: society and fashion, what people wore and what they ate, where they went and whom they met; the aristocracy of Europe and its titles; the rich people and their stocks and bonds, dividends and profits; the new cars, the new restaurants; the theaters and what they were showing, the operas and the names of the singers; the books that people were talking about; the journalists, the politicians, the heads of states—everything that was successful and therefore important.

When they were alone, the child would start in on his mother. "Beauty, what is taffeta, and what do you mean by cutting it on the bias? What are penguins and why are they like French politicians? What were the Dreyfusards, and why did the abbé get so excited when he talked about them?" It was hard on a mother who had developed to a high degree the art of taking part in conversation without bothering too much about details. With Lanny she had to get things right, because he would remember and bring them up again.

He had developed at a very early age the habit of cherishing some profound remark that he

had heard one of his elders make, and getting it off in other company. Of course it would cause a sensation; and of course an active-minded child did not fail to enjoy this, and to repeat the performance. He had the advantage that he was operating behind a screen; for the elders seldom realize how shrewd children are, how attentively they listen, and how quickly they seize upon whatever is of advantage to them. The elders would say anything in a little boy's presence—and then later they would be astonished to find that he knew about such matters!

The city of Cannes lay only a few miles from his home, and the mother would betake herself there for shopping, and to have her charms attended to. Lanny, having promised never to go away with anybody, would find himself a seat on a street bench, or in a sidewalk café; and sooner or later there would be someone taking an interest in a bright lad with wavy brown hair, lively brown eyes, rosy cheeks, and a shirt of gray oxford cloth open at the throat.

In this way he had met, during the winter before he went to Hellerau, Colonel Sandys Ashleigh-Sandys—do not pronounce the y's—late of His Majesty's Royal Highlanders in the Indian Northwest. The colonel had white mustaches and a complexion like yellow parchment; it was trouble with his liver. He wore a linen suit, comfortably cut. A member of the exclusive "British colony," he would have turned away from any grown person who ventured to address him without a proper introduction; but when the tables were crowded and a small boy invited him to a seat, he did not think it necessary to decline. When the boy began to chat with all the grace of a man of the world, the colonel was inwardly amused and outwardly the soul of courtesy.

Lanny chose to talk about the latest popular novel he was halfway through. The old martinet with parasites in his liver questioned him about his reading, and found that this benighted lad had never read a novel of Scott, had never even heard of Dickens, and all he knew about the plays of Shakespeare was the incidental music of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, written by a Jewish fellow. Lanny asked so many questions, and was so serious in his comments, that before they parted the colonel offered to send him a one-volume edition of the poet which he happened to be able to spare. One condition would be imposed—the lad must promise to read every word in the book.

Lanny had no idea of the size of that promise. He gave it, and also his name and address, and a couple of days later there arrived by the post an elegant tome weighing several pounds. It was the sort of work which is meant to be set upon a drawing-room table and dusted every day but never opened. Lanny kept his pledge literally, he began at the title page and spent a month reading straight through, in a state of tense excitement. He wore his mother out at mealtimes, telling her about the lovely ladies who were accused of dreadful crimes which they had not committed. Just what the crimes were supposed to be was vague in Lanny's mind, and how was his mother to answer his questions? What did a man mean when he said he knew a hawk from a handsaw, and what were maidenheads and how did you break them?

Presently there was Lanny making himself swords out of laths and helmets out of newspapers, and teaching fishermen's children to fence and nearly poke one another's eyes out! Shouting: "Zounds!" and "Avaunt, traitor!" and "Lay on, Macduff!" down on the beach! Spouting poetry all over the place, like an actor—maybe he might turn out to be that—how was

any woman to know what she had brought into the world? It was evident to her that this child's imagination was going to carry him to strange places and make him do uncomfortable things.

III

Lanny and Kurt, arriving at Cannes, parted company before they left the train. The German boy was to be met by his aunt; and this widow of the Court-Counselor von und zu Nebenaltenberg was a person with old-fashioned notions who would probably disapprove of Americans on general principles. The situation turned out to be even more difficult, for the aunt knew or professed to know all about "that Budd woman," as she called Beauty, and was shocked that her nephew had met such a person. She wouldn't say what it was—just one word: "*Unschicklich!*"

Kurt asked no questions. "Mrs. Budd has gone to Scotland for the shooting season," he remarked, casually. He sat erect in the stiff chair, facing the meager, severe old lady, telling her the news about the many members of their family. He ate a sound German luncheon of rye bread with slices of *Leberwurst* and *Schweizerkäse*, followed by a small *Apfelkuchen* and a cup of weak tea with milk. When the two had finished this meal, the aunt laid out the proper portions of food for her solitary maid, and then opened a cedar chest which stood between the windows of the dining room, and stowed all the remaining food therein, and carefully locked the chest with one of a bunch of keys which she carried at her waist. "You can't trust these native servants with anything," said the Frau Doktor Hofrat. Her husband had been dead for ten years, but she still wore black for him and of course carried his titles.

However, she was a woman of culture, and in due course asked about Hellerau, and Kurt told her. She was prejudiced against Jaques-Dalcroze because he had a French name and beard; but Gluck's music was *echt deutsch*, so the Frau Doktor Hofrat asked questions and wished that she might have seen the Festspiel. Only after Kurt had awakened her curiosity to the utmost did the budding diplomat mention that his American boy friend had a real gift, and might assist him to give a Dalcroze demonstration. He was a very well-bred and polite boy, Kurt assured his aunt; he was only thirteen, and probably knew nothing about the "*Unschicklichkeit*" of his mother. Furthermore, he was an artist, or going to be, and one should not judge persons of that sort by ordinary standards. Consider Wagner, for example. Concerning even Beethoven there had been rumors ...

By such insidious devices Kurt won his aunt's permission to invite Lanny Budd for tea. A telegram was dispatched, and the Budd chauffeur drove Lanny over at the proper hour. He entered a plain, immaculate apartment, clicked his heels, bowed from the waist, and apologized for his German—which really wasn't so bad, because he had had two German tutors, each for several months. He ate only one tiny sandwich and one cooky, and declined a second cup of tea. Then while Kurt played the piano he gave demonstrations of what the Dalcroze people called "plastic counterpoint"; the elderly widow played folk songs which Lanny did not know, and he listened, and invented movements for them, and made intelligent