

/YANKEE GO HOME/

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## Yankee Go Home

At its northernmost tip in the bay of Eilat the Red Sea is a deep inky blue. The usually placid body of water is guarded on both sides by wild and rugged desert mountains studded with outcroppings of black basalt that make the earth appear charred as though a great fire had raged there long ago. But nature's grandest treasure lies beneath the sea among the scarlet corals that are home to riotously and brilliantly colored tropical fish. For that reason the Red Sea is a mecca for divers around the world.

Robert Stein was only twenty two years old, recently graduated from an up-state New York liberal arts college with a degree in history, undecided about a professional career, and fearful of a livelihood that portended the comfortable but bland existence of his father, a prosperous lawyer in Boston. Robert sensed that all his life elegant upholstery had cushioned him from the harshness of a world beyond Beacon Hill. So he went to Israel because he was Jewish and lived on a kibbutz for almost a year, not far from the Red Sea, while he continued to search for that significant drama which might reveal his destiny. Still unsure of himself he left the kibbutz and moved closer to the sea.

He had been working for two weeks at the Red Sea Diving Shop, owned by Dirk Warfield, an ex-Marine who had served in Vietnam, when Mr. Benevisti came to see him. The shop, a wooden building, painted light blue, and partially shaded by an acacia tree that appears haphazardly stuck in the sand like a large beach umbrella, is located on Coral Beach, south of the wharves where Israeli Zim freighters harbor, far south of the new white plaster casts that are Eilat's resort hotels. Before Dirk bought the shop it had been a felafel and concession stand adjacent to Shaoul's Cafe Morokko, a white, sun-blistered wooden building, shaped like a pavillion, roofed with red tiles, and attached to a large pier where several small fishing trollers dock. Shaoul's is frequented by the divers who come to Coral Beach, as well as the stevedores, fishermen, khaki-clad unshaven Israeli soldiers, and a few Bedouins, who all make up Eilat's local color. The beach is cluttered with assorted body shapes barely clothed and dabbed in grease to affect the natural dark brown shade of the Bedouins who comb the beach with their camels and make a living by posing for camera-toting tourists.

Benevisti carried a camera and looked like a tourist. He wore a navy blue blazer, lime trousers, and cream shoes, and he walked with the aid of a cane. He was elderly and stately, distinguished with robust, pink jowls and a white, wavy shock of hair that shone brilliantly in the mid-morning sun. His eyes were hidden behind an almost opaque pair of brown sunglasses which he never removed. Benevisti perspired profusely and had to pause several times during his conversation with Robert to wipe his



brow with a handkerchief. When he introduced himself, he knew Robert's name, even though they had never met. Benevisti spoke in carefully measured tones, in English that was heavily accented but educated and precise, of the Law of Return, the right of all Jews to immigrate to Israel. Benevisti was from the Jewish Agency. They talked at length about Robert's commitment to Israel and Robert explained that he supported rights of those Jews who believed that Israel was their homeland. They talked about the problems facing Jews in Russia and Benevisti asked Robert if he could help Jews leave Russia, would he? He said that the Agency needed couriers, young people they could trust, Americans preferably, who could travel easily in Europe without being conspicuous, to carry money and documents that would help Jews escape Russia. Robert said yes. Benevisti asked him to keep their conversation confidential.

Two weeks later Robert met Mr. Shamir and Mr. Zohar in an office cluttered with steel filing cabinets stacked almost to the ceiling, on a second floor just above a haberdashery on Ben Yehuda Street in Tel Aviv. Shamir sat behind a desk facing Robert. Shamir was very tall and looked as if he could play basketball as a forward. His hair was thin and graying, prematurely. His complexion seemed anemic, silty in color and texture. He spoke English fluently with a slight British accent like an Israeli of Anglo-Saxon descent. Zohar, who was smaller, and dark skinned with black curly hair, appeared to be younger. He sat in a chair in a corner off to the side from Robert, and hardly spoke at all. Both men dressed were casually, the collars

on their short-sleeved shirts left unbuttoned in keeping with the damp summer heat. Robert talked at length with Shamir about his commitment to Zionism, while Zohar observed studiously.

"Have you always been a Zionist?" Shamir asked.

"I never belonged to a Zionist youth organization, if that's what you mean," Robert answered. "I remember as a child my parents giving me money to take to synagogue to buy trees for Israel."

"For us Israel is more than an arboretum," Shamir said.

"I guess as a child I thought Israel was a place where you plant trees," Robert said. "In highschool I was Shylock in the school play." Robert remembered thinking that he had been picked for the part in Merchant of Venice because he was the Jewish member of the Thespian club. He hated the part. He thought Shylock was hideous and grotesque; at least the director had made him play the part that way. "When I started college I began reading Jewish writers and poets."

"Are you religious?" Shamir asked.

"I don't keep the sabbath," Robert answered.

"Neither do I," Shamir said benevolently and laughed.

"I've been here nearly a year," Robert spoke up. "Most of the time living and working on a kibbutz. While I've been here, there has been a war. I know Kibbutz Helmonit is a long way from the Suez Canal or the Golan Heights, but there were American volunteers who left the kibbutz when war broke out. You know the kibbutz is only a mile from the border with Jordan. No one knew Jordan would stay out of the war. We slept in shelters thinking

they would enter the war. I stayed."

"Do you plan to stay?"

"I don't know," Robert said.

Zohar hunched forward slightly and nodded at Shamir. His black hair glistened from the overhead light. The glare reflecting off the steel filing cabinets made Robert feel uneasy. He trusted these men because they were Israelis. They had been trusted with the fate of the Jewish people. They were Jews who had honed their skills at war, made sure that those who would mock Robert for being a Jew or even threatened to slaughter him, would be punished. In their presence Robert felt strong and safe. Not only as a Jew did Robert admire Israelis. Most Americans did. Israelis won wars.

"How long have you known Dirk Warfield?" Shamir asked Robert.

"Dirk?" Robert said. "Only a few months. He used to come to the kibbutz from time to time. I heard that he had lived there and left after breaking up with a girl from the kibbutz. I also saw him when I went with some of the other American volunteers into Eilat to drink beer. We drank beer at a place on Coral Beach called Shaoul's Cafe Morokko. He was usually there. One night we talked about baseball. I grew up in Boston and am a Red Sox fan. Dirk is a Yankee fan. We became friends one night arguing about baseball. A month ago he offered me a job working at the diving shop. I rent out snorkeling and scuba gear while he is out diving or giving lessons."

"Why did you leave the Kibbutz?" Shamir pressed on.

"Dirk said if I worked for him he would teach me to dive, when there was time," Robert continued. "I had never done anything like that. I had a Danish girlfriend at the kibbutz, who went back to Denmark. I felt ready to do something new."

Shamir stood up and walked around to the front of the desk. Robert now grasped how truly enormous Shamir was. He loomed over Robert like a gaunt visage of Goliath. Shamir leaned back against the edge of the desk, half seated, facing Robert. His legs spread apart, body braced firmly against the desk's edge, he bent slightly forward, propping himself with hands on his knees, and asked, "Do you know where Dirk goes diving?"

"He dives around the reef off Taba." Zohar's eyes were keenly riveted on Robert as he answered. "Dirk's discovered a large school of the Morays in the Taba reef. He dives at night a lot. The eels come out of the reef at night."

Shamir continued. "What do you know about him?"

Their questions puzzled Robert. At first he thought it was only natural that they should be interested in who his friends were. As the questioning continued, however, it seemed they were more interested in Dirk than himself.

"I know he was a Marine in Vietnam," Robert said. "He served in some kind of commando unit, the SEALs, I think. That's where he learned how to dive. I think he was in Vietnam in 'sixty-six or 'sixty-seven. I'm not sure. He never talks about it. I think he loves the sea. He knows the reefs well."

"What else do you know about him?" Shamir's questions seemed

relentless.

"He likes baseball," Robert sighed with exasperation. "He's a friend, just a friend. Christ, I don't even know his age. Why are you asking me this?"

"Patience," Shamir said softly. He stood up, walked over to the corner of the room where Zohar sat, then paused. "Do you know where Dirk received the money to open his diving shop?" he continued. "His family isn't wealthy. His father is a welder at a shipyard in New Jersey."

Robert knew that Dirk was from New Jersey, but he didn't know what Dirk's father did for a living. Robert didn't know what they expected him to tell them.

"I don't inquire into people's finances," Robert said. "It's bad manners. I suppose he already had some money saved from when he was in the service. Combat pay!"

"Indeed!" Shamir raised his voice, then lowered it. "He has a large bank account in London. Eight thousand pounds sterling with the Bank of Kuwait."

Shamir spoke softly now, in an avuncular manner. "Dirk smuggles arms and munitions for the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria. He smuggles the weapons from Aquaba across the bay."

Robert wanted to tell them they were mistaken. That was what he wanted to believe. Even if they spoke the truth, he wanted to say that it was none of his business.

"Robert, we want you to help us learn who his contacts are," Shamir said.

Robert stood up and started toward the door.

"Walk out of here now and everything you said when you walked in is a lie!" Shamir shouted.

Robert stopped, wheeled about-face, and confronted Shamir. "You're asking me to spy on a friend. I can't do that."

"He's not your friend, Robert."

"How do you know? How do you know he's not my friend?"

Shamir spoke slowly and softly. "Dirk's been seen in Jordan. But help us make sure." Shamir looked questioningly at Robert for a moment. "Maybe we are wrong."

"I'm not an informer," Robert said. "It's a question of honor."

Shamir paused for several moments. "Will you help us make sure?" he asked Robert in a voice that was mild and gentle.

"I'll help you because I believe Dirk is innocent," Robert said.

"Fine," Shamir said. "We trust you."

Robert listened to their plan. They asked him if he was seeing a girl. He said no. They told him that was good. They told him he would meet a girl named Esther at a discotheque in Eilat. She was very attractive, about his age. In the eyes of others he and Esther would be lovers. She would be his contact and he would move into her apartment. He would tell her where Dirk had been, where he was going, what his plans were, and who had been to the diving the shop to see him. His relationship with Esther should be strictly professional. Esther understood that, he must understand as well. This was the best possible cover, the least likely to arouse suspicion. They told him he would still be

friends with Dirk. Nothing would change. If secrecy was preserved, he would never be in any danger. No one need ever know the truth of their relationship. No one must ever know. They emphasized how important secrecy was. Zohar would oversee the operation and spoke for the first time: "As long as you guard the secret, you will be safe. You are your own worst enemy."

As Robert left the office he could not shake the feeling that he had betrayed a friend. At first he wondered if this were only an elaborate ruse to test his commitment to Zionism, to see if he were cut out for some other mission the Jewish Agency might have in mind for him. Nevertheless, they had told him that neither Benevisti nor they were from the Jewish Agency. They worked for Israel's internal security force, the Shin Bit. Hadn't he resisted their ploy? What choice did he have? Robert convinced himself that he might clear Dirk.

Robert walked down Ben Yehuda Street toward Allenby. The yellow afternoon light shone brightly. The whiteness of the plaster buildings that lined Tel Aviv's commercial district glared intensely at Robert. It was dingy and sullied. Robert walked past the collection of storefronts displaying vast arrays of hats. He stopped in front of one of the shop windows, hands thrust in the pockets of his bermudas, and stared for several moments. There were beaver-lined hats, wide-brimmed black hats, and skull caps worn by religious Jews. Fedoras. Derbies. Bowlers. Berets for artists. Berets for soldiers. Each cap had a different face in Robert's mind. When he spied a straw fedora, he imagined his own face as its owner and began to eye the fedora lustfully.

Robert entered the shop and bought it.

Donning a new hat Robert left the store, turned on Allenby Street and started in the direction of the sea. Passing the cafes where Israelis sat drinking coffee or Coca Cola, their faces hidden by the afternoon Hebrew newspapers, Robert sensed for the first time how remote America seemed. For the first time the Hebrew chatter of passersby on the street seemed to him a foreign language. The cars passing on the street were not Fords or Buicks, but Peugeots and Volvos. Horns blared anxiously. Robert longed to escape and continued walking toward the sea. Close to the beachfront he passed old run down hotels, their plaster walls graying and peeling with age. Open vestibules to street-front bars were guarded by prostitutes posted like sentries, whose thick make-up resembled the peeling plaster of their brothels. The garishly clothed whores cast wicked glances at Robert beckoning him to enter their dimly lit, strange, forbidden world. Robert paused in front of one of the bar entrances, poked his head inside for a moment. A prostitute nodded at him encouragingly. Was this the world of secrets to which he belonged? He had been trusted with a secret. That somehow validated his existence in world that now seemed utterly mysterious. Refusing the whore's solicitation, Robert tipped his new hat and continued walking toward the sea. Out of the dark shadows of the beachfront hotels, Robert emerged into the suddenness of bright sunshine along the seashore where he could hear the calls of large sea birds that wheeled laboriously overhead. The beach was crowded with rows of colored umbrellas.



Beyond the umbrellas were yellow sand and blue sea. Robert had come to look at the sea. Beyond the sea was America. Dirk wasn't Jewish so why was he in Israel? Robert wondered.

They had told Robert that Dirk was a mercenary, but he had difficulty picturing him as a "soldier of fortune." Dirk was not powerfully built. He was too thin, almost emaciated, as though disease had wasted him away. His copper face was distinguished by a pointed chin and deeply sunken eyes that accentuated his sharp cheek bones. His hair was cut close to his scalp in a burr, Marine style. Robert knew that Dirk was proud to have been a Marine. Dirk's wiry frame did suggest a certain toughness that was revealed in his sinewy gangling body, usually clothed in denim cut-offs and a white t-shirt. Dirk was the sort, Robert thought, who kept getting up and coming back at you in a street fight, the kind who is never truly licked. Dirk moved with a cat-like quickness. The tolling cries of the gulls and the relentless washing of the sea against the sand held Robert's attention. Questions still lingered in his mind.

Robert returned from the sea, started back toward Ben Yehuda Street the same way he had come. Looking at the sea had been disappointing. Maybe he expected a bottle to wash up on the shore containing a message with the answers to all his questions. He hurried to catch the number four bus back to the central bus station in Tel Aviv.

Robert could not sleep on the bus ride from Tel Aviv to Eilat. He continued to wonder about Dirk. Why would Dirk trust him? Robert remembered Dirk introducing him to the Bedouin called

Frenchee, a local black marketeer. The three drank Turkish coffee together at Shaoul's. Frenchee's wizened, stubbled face, the color and texture of a prune, displayed a massive walrus mustache, the shade of pewter. He wore a black-and-white checkered kafiyyeh and khaki army shirt. "Frenchee runs a duty-free shop," Dirk had told Robert. Frenchee changed Robert's dollars for Israeli currency at thirty per cent over the official rate and offered to sell him wrist watches, tape recorders, silk, and American cigarettes at half their regular price. Frenchee also offered to sell him hashish. Why had Dirk invited him into this world?

Robert remembered the evening Dirk had nearly persuaded him that it was duty of all Americans when they went abroad to become Yankee fans. He and some other Americans had left the kibbutz late one day to go drink beer at Shaoul's. Dirk had invited them over to his table, where he sat alone sipping the bourbon the proprietor, Shaoul, stocked especially for him. The baseball season had just started. Robert picked the Red Sox to win their division, but feared a late season surge by Baltimore. Dirk favored the Yankees. The argument was furious. Everyone at the table believed in a different team and while everybody spoke the common language of baseball the table had become a Tower of Babel.

Dirk craned forward on the table with both elbows and pointed a raised finger at them.

"You know," he said. "Nineteen-sixty-four was the last year the Yankees won a pennant. It's been a decade. That's when the trouble began. Riots! Demonstrations! Americans spying on

Americans! They asked me to do that once. I wouldn't. I left. We stopped trusting ourselves. We lost faith. Keep the faith baby! Yeah! but we lost it. We lost it when the Yankees stopped winning. We started to think we were losers. America needs a winning Yankee ball club."

"Absurd!" Robert remembered saying. "Everybody wants the Yankees to lose. Outside of New York everybody hates the Yankees."

"Neah," Dirk said. "They don't really hate the Yankees. What you call hate, I call respect. When the Yankees come to town, everybody goes out to see them. The Yankees fill a ball park. But when the Yankees quit winning, Americans quit watching baseball. Our national pastime! Rejected! There weren't winners left to believe in. There's no longer a place in America's heart for the Yankees. They might as well be without a hometown. Nobody cares about them because they don't win anymore. I'll tell you what. Hank Aaron's going to break Babe Ruth's record this year. There'll be some fanfare. But he'll never be as great as he would have playing for the Yankees. The King and the Crown Prince were Yankees."

Robert remembered the nostalgia the others began to feel for the great Yankee teams of the past. Soon it seemed everyone was hoping that New York would get back into the fray. Now Robert wondered if he secretly wished that the Yankees would win a pennant. But he was Boston bred and the Red Sox were in his blood. He recalled staying out late that night until only Dirk and he remained at the table, sipping Dirk's bourbon, until they

were both too drunk to even remember the in-field of the `twenty seven Yanks.

"When the Yankees win a pennant," Dirk confided to him that night, "I'll go back. When the Yankees win again, maybe Americans will believe they're winners. Maybe I can go back then. Maybe I can have some pride then."

It seemed to Robert that some kind of bond had been established between Dirk and him that night, even though he would continue to root for the Red Sox and Dirk for the Yankees. The bus from Tel Aviv to Eilat arrived late that night.

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When Robert met his accomplice, Esther, he was startled to discover how conspicuously attractive she was. She was sleek, graceful, eye-catching as a leopard in a rain forest. Her coal black hair hung in straight shoulder-length strands. A warm olive complexion softened the sharp features of her cheek and jaw. When she spoke to Robert, her deep, throaty voice was animated and vivacious and when she lavished public displays of affection on him, her large bright eyes seemed to glow. At the discotheques she would kiss him deeply, and when they walked along the beach she held his hand. She was convincing when she needed to be, Robert thought. The truth was that Esther was the most attractive woman he had ever known.

Even though Robert knew that he and Esther would never sleep together, he supposed that she might have some affection for him.

In her presence it was easy for him to forget the affection he had for Christina, to whom he still sent letters to Denmark. Robert remembered holding Christina tightly on the third night of the Yom Kippur war after they had been sent to the bomb shelter, because a Jordanian infantry brigade had been seen approaching the border. That affection had been spawned in the throes of fear. Christina's pale complexion, matronly figure, contrasted starkly with the dark and mysterious image of Esther in Robert's mind. With Esther it was something entirely different.

For a week Robert had been seeing Esther and neglecting Dirk in the evenings. Esther always flattered Robert for his appearance; she even admired his new straw fedora and sometimes when they went out in the evenings she asked to wear his new hat. Robert suspected that it looked better on her than on him. Most flattering of all was the way Esther trusted him. Late in the evenings they would sit in candlelight on the living room divan, that was a hide-away bed for Robert, and Esther seemed to tell him everything she knew about Israeli intelligence. She laced their conversations with anecdotes about Israeli agents operating in foreign countries and with tales of derring-do. She had even told him that the terrorist Abou Daoud had been one of their agents.

"The elegant murderer?" Robert protested, borrowing the name the newspapers had used to describe him.

"It's true," Esther said. "We turned him."

"But the papers said that his death wasn't an accident," Robert argued. "They said he had been set up by Israeli agents,

and his death had been made to look like an accident."

"He really did die in an auto collision," she said. "We started the rumor that our agents were behind his death to hide the fact that he had been working for us."

"No one suspects?" Robert asked.

"No one," she said. "The world believes what it wants to. You can be trusted, can't you?"

Esther's trust made Robert want to believe that the public charades of affection weren't really artificial and he didn't want to violate her trust, hoping that after this was over they might continue their relationship.

Last night she told him that once she dined at a table next to Omar Sharif at the Intercontinental Hotel in Amman. When he asked how it was possible for her to move from Arab country to Arab country without arousing suspicion, she rose from the sofa and fetched her purse from the kitchen to show him her collection of false documents. Esther then reached over Robert and grabbed the pillow beside him. After removing the pillow case and draping it over her head like a shawl, she took a handkerchief from her purse and veiled the lower half of her face just below her eyes. He couldn't forget the way her eyes seemed to glitter, peering wickedly into his for an instant. She spoke several words in Arabic in her low guttural voice and tossed her head back in laughter. "I make a good Arab." she said resolutely afterwards. Then she told Robert that it was time for her to meet Dirk. She wanted him to tell Dirk that they were seeing each other and arrange a meeting, maybe at Shaoul's Cafe Morokko. Robert was not

anxious to tell Dirk now. He wanted to be alone with Esther in the evenings, to listen to her tales of the world of intrigue. He hadn't told Dirk who he had been seeing, because he didn't think Dirk cared about who he slept with. What bothered Robert more was Esther's insistence that she meet Dirk. When Robert protested and asked her why, she only told him that it was important. For his own safety it would be better if he accepted the plan without asking too many questions. Robert was beginning to understand a reality that was painful for him. He knew that he had falsely expected what had been expressly forbidden him. He surmised that they wanted Dirk to work for them. That was why Esther insisted that she meet Dirk. They needed him to introduce Esther to Dirk and eventually he'd be replaced by Dirk, who would probably be replaced by whoever Dirk's contact in Jordan was. There was not much solace for Robert in the knowledge that he was the lowest rung on the ladder. He wanted to tell Esther that if that was their plan, he would not go on. He would not play that part. But the fault had been his. They'd been honest. He hadn't. Hadn't he agreed to be used? Robert agreed to play along and arrange the meeting.

Staring into the mirror behind the half-moon shaped bar counter at Shaoul's Cafe Morokko, Robert waited impatiently for Dirk and exhaled a long slow draught of cigarette smoke. He swirled his glass of Arak, an absinthe flavored liquor that was too bitter and vowed never to order it again. The reflection of his solemnly knit brow, straw fedora, and cigarette jutting out from his hand like a weapon drawn in self-defense made Robert see

himself as a crude parody of a figure from a gangster movie, out of place in the modern world. The shrill whine of a ceiling fan that needed oiling and the musty odor of rotting timber added to Robert's sense that he did not belong to this scene. No one could ever believe that Robert was deceitful enough, ruthless enough, or bold enough to joust with the Titans Dirk and Esther had become in his mind. He took off his hat and extinguished the cigarette.

Still dripping from the sea Dirk entered the bar barefoot, wearing only cameleopard swim trunks. He seated himself at the bar beside Robert, called to Shaoul to bring him a beer, and turned to Robert.

"Have a busy day?" He asked Robert.

"I had a slow day."

"If you're not tired," Dirk said, "I thought you might want learn to dive tonight. It's time you see the reef from below, not above."

"I have a date with Esther," Robert answered.

"Esther." Dirk mused momentarily. "So she has a name. Is she a local?"

"Yeah," Robert said and began to recite the story he and Esther had prepared the night before. "She's a desk clerk at the Neptune Hotel."

Dirk responded with a shrill whistle. "No wonder you never bring her around this tumbledown slum."

"That's not true," Robert responded, as if he had been startled. "She says that all she ever hears me talk about is you."



She says she wants to meet Dirk Warfield. If you're interested, I'll introduce you this week."

"Sure," Dirk said. "If she's a friendly?"

"Yeah," Robert answered knowing that Dirk called Israelis who like Americans "friendlies". "She likes Americans. She says she even wants to go to America . . . to study hotel management."

"America . . . America," Dirk said shaking his head. "They all want to go to America. When I lived with Afrat on Kibbutz Helmonit, she wanted to go to America. I didn't. That's why we broke up. I like most Americans, I just don't want to live there. But the women always want to go to America. In Vietnam it was that way. Locals sleeping with our boys, looking for exit visas from the war. GI's making commitments they couldn't keep." Dirk raised the pitch of his voice, mocking a woman nagging, and stared straight ahead at the mirror. "America! America!" He turned to Robert, and the pitch of his voice returned to his own. "Christ, you'd think they were the chorus from West Side Story."

"You don't miss the States much," Robert quipped.

"I miss a steak cut two inches thick," Dirk said. "That and baseball."

Robert wanted to know why Dirk was living in Israel. He decided to ask him, hoping that the answer might be convincing enough that he could continue to believe in Dirk's innocence.

"You like it here?"

"Call me crazy, but I do," Dirk answered. "I like war. I like danger. It keeps me high. I like people at war. They're fatalists. They live for the moment and they never expect more

than the worst."

"That's cynical," Robert said.

"You better be cynical if you live around here," Dirk said. "Look around you. There's desert and nothing else. The desert is a reminder that you better not expect tomorrow. Even the mountains look like giant chunks of shrapnel. You'd think their jagged peaks could draw blood."

Robert left the bar believing that Esther was right. It didn't matter to Dirk whose side of the war he was on, just as long as he was around. Robert felt ludicrous and insignificant, knowing that he would soon be played for a cuckold. Esther hadn't told him, but he knew that was the way the script had been written. Still he wasn't ready to accept his fate. He wanted to make Esther like him. She might feel sorrow when they parted. At least there was dignity in that.

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It was nearly evening; Robert and Esther had been waiting for Dirk at Shaoul's for almost an hour. Robert had not seen Dirk that day. In the morning he had found a note at the diving shop from Dirk saying that he had gone to Taba for the day. Dirk had told Robert he would plan to be at Shaoul's to meet Esther. Robert no longer expected him to show up. He hoped Dirk wouldn't.

"It was really bad last night," Robert told Esther.

"Why?" she asked.

"Dirk was really drunk last night," he said.

"What happened?"

"We were drinking with some Americans, Eric and Kathy, from the Kibbutz." Robert told her. "They're Canadian citizens now. They returned from traveling in Sinai yesterday. This morning they left Eilat on a freighter for Nairobi. Last night Eric said something about Bedouin hospitality and charm. He said their way of life was more romantic, sleeping under the stars, wandering about the desert. Dirk said the Bedouins were ruthless liars and thieves and they would kill you for your wrist watch."

"They are mostly smugglers," Esther told him. "The Bedouin is the pirate of the desert. Yet, the Bedouin is famous for his hospitality. If he makes you his guest, he will treat you like royalty."

"Eric told Dirk about sitting with the Bedouins and drinking their tea," Robert said. "Dirk exploded with laughter. He told Eric that if a Bedouin offers a man tea, it is an insult. He said the Bedouins believe that tea is a woman's drink. Men drink coffee."

Just then a small cat, scrawny and lean, strayed into the cafe and climbed on top of the half moon bar counter. When Shaoul spied the cat he rose to his feet and began to bellow Arabic curses and wave his arms. Shaoul was an enormous man. The sight of the little cat unnerving him so was funny. Throwing her head back, like a palm bending with a gust of wind, Esther laughed hysterically as Shaoul chased the cat around the bar trying to give it the boot. The trash bins behind the cafe were haunted by a pride of cats and Robert wondered why Shaoul didn't keep a dog.

But Eilat was no place for dogs. The desert heat would be too much for a dog. When calm returned Esther was still smiling. Robert noticed that he had been frittering at the Macabi label on his beer.

"You don't think he's going to meet us, do you?" Esther said.

"No, he was really upset when he left last night."

"About the Bedouins," she laughed.

"No!" he said. "About Vietnam. Last night was the first time I ever heard him talk about what it was like. I never ask him. Maybe he talks to the soldiers around here about the war. But last night was first time I've heard him talk about what the war was like."

"Why?"

Robert proceeded to tell her about it, speaking slowly and deliberately. "He talked about the war because of Eric and Kathy. They'd left America and gone to Canada so Eric wouldn't be drafted. They have Canadian passports now. Dirk must have known. All of a sudden he started talking about Vietnam, about dysentery, about black-water fever, about the leeches, thick as fleas on a dog's back, about seeing wild pigs eating the roasted flesh of dead humans. Then Eric said something about napalm and genocide. That's when Dirk exploded, but he wasn't laughing. He was angry."

"What happened?" Esther asked, leaning forward. Robert understood from the earnestness in her voice that she was genuinely interested.

"Dirk grabbed his glass of bourbon and slammed it on the

table," he told her. "There was a pool of bourbon and shattered glass on the table and Dirk called Rick a self-righteous bastard. He was very drunk, but still quick because when a fly that was buzzing around his face landed on the spilled bourbon, Dirk was able to catch it with his hand cupped."

Robert made a swift lateral motion with his hand just above the table top.

"Then he flings the fly in Eric's face and calls him a self-righteous bastard again," Robert continued. "'Tell me you're a freakin' coward, but don't be a self-righteous bastard,' he shouted at Eric. He told Eric he could respect a coward and if Eric left America because he was afraid to go to Vietnam, he could respect that. It seemed like the soldier in Dirk demanded unconditional surrender. Eric just sat there quietly, never losing his cool. Maybe he would have, but Dirk just got up and walked away."

"That's all?" Esther said.

"That's all," Robert said, "except it's hard for me not to feel sorry for Dirk. He's so cynical about everything. He wears scars we don't see."

Esther frowned at Robert.

"My brother was wounded in the Yom Kippur War," she said curtly. "He was a tank commander in 'Tsvika's force,' three tanks that stopped sixty tanks at Rafid Crossing. But there were six hundred Syrian tanks. My brother's face was burned badly."

Robert knew that she meant this as a reprimand. He thought there was a difference, but he wasn't sure.

"I don't like what we're doing," he told her.

"You don't have to," she said. "It is better if you don't like it. But this is not the place to talk about it."

"I don't think Dirk's coming," he said. "Let's leave."

As they left the cafe Robert scanned the pier jutting out into the bay from Shaoul's to see if Dirk's skiff had docked yet, but he did not see it. He looked across the bay at the Jordanian port, Aquaba. Dusk cast the city in an opalescent haze. The minarets rising above the city looked like a parade of ceremonial lances. Dusk had not yet settled on the mountain peaks behind Aquaba. They glowed fiery red.

He turned to Esther and said, "Let's go out to eat. Maybe after that we could go dancing at a discotheque."

"We're going back to the apartment," she said. "I will make you an omelette and a salad."

"Why?"

"To wait."

"For what?"

"We'll wait and see."

Robert entertained himself after dinner by reading the baseball box scores in the International Herald Tribune. The Yankees had a new owner that year, a ship builder from Cleveland, George Steinbrenner, who made headlines with brash and arrogant promises that the Yankee clipper would sail again. The Yankees were leading their division by three games over the Red Sox, but Baltimore was only four games behind having just won five of

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their last six games on the road. The Orioles were beginning their late-season surge as Robert had feared. He didn't know who was the greater threat to the Sox's chances, the Orioles or the Yankees. At that moment he had more to fear for the sake of the home team from the Yankees. "Damn the Yankees," he cursed and crunched the newspaper in disgust when Esther entered the living room.

"What's wrong, Robert?" she asked. The lilt in her voice suggested frustration.

Robert was going to tell her that it was the damn Yankees. The truth was their masquerade no longer intrigued him, but frightened him.

"Everyday I tell you who comes to see Dirk at the dive shop, where he says he's been, where he says he's going. You never tell me anything. Why?" Robert asked petulantly.

"Robert, I don't know how long this will continue," she answered calmly but sternly. "But I don't think we are wasting time. The less you know, the safer you are."

The phone rang and Esther answered. She spoke for several minutes in Hebrew. When Esther spoke in Hebrew Robert felt alone. He wondered if Esther had a boyfriend. She might even be speaking to a husband.

Esther finished speaking on the phone and turned to Robert. "Dirk didn't meet us at Shaoul's because he is in Jordan," she told him.

"I don't believe you," Robert said disconsolately, but he feared that it was true and that Esther might soon leave him.

"He was seen there, earlier today, by an informer," she said.



"I didn't see him there, you didn't," Robert said. "Do you know this informer? Do you know that he can be trusted?"

"Do you know where he is?"

"No I don't. Why should it be any of my business?"

"You made it your business," she answered and walked over to him and took his hand. "Robert, you had a choice. But I know that doesn't make it easier for you. Maybe Dirk's being in Jordan means that this will be over soon. Let's go dancing. I think we both feel trapped together in this apartment. I am sorry it's so small, but this isn't America. Let's get out before we become like caged porcupines."

Robert didn't want it to be over soon.

They went that evening to the discotheque, Palmetto Gardens, where it had been arranged for Robert to first meet Esther. The nightclub is stuck between two hotels along Eilat's north beach, and attracts mostly young Israelis. The large arbor constructed with thick bamboo poles shelters a tile dance floor and is surrounded by a flagstone patio, decorated with white ironwork furniture and potted palmettoes. A Yemenite band whined an electric version of the kind of music Robert was used to hearing in the Arab souks. Somehow the dancers managed to jerk their bodies as if they were hearing American disco. Israeli disco! Israelis should stick to their folk dances, Robert thought to himself as they entered the club. Esther was eager to dance. She had dressed smartly in tight beige jeans, a green chambray blouse, and patent black leather pumps. She even wore his hat.

She was very sexy whirling about the dance floor. At first Robert was timid and self-conscious, trying to keep up with her feverish pace. Soon he abandoned himself to the music's time. He started flailing his arms and legs like a marionette mocking the other dancers. Esther laughed. When she laughed, he noticed how her eyes grew large and bright, filled with a childlike wonder. He wanted to believe that her laughter and the look in her eyes were genuine.

When they finished dancing, they took a table outside on the patio and sipped syrupy rum concoctions served in hollowed pineapples. The warm sea breeze was soothing to Robert as well as the sound of the rustling leaves of the two date palms on the patio's edge. Esther asked him about his family. Robert spoke exuberantly about growing up in Boston. He told her about going to Fenway Park as a small boy with his Uncle Max who taught him about baseball. Uncle Max would point to the on-deck circle and say, "Look, it's Ted Williams." Robert would stand up and wave his pennant and scream, "Teddy Baseball, Teddy Baseball." Robert wondered if it was still possible to have boyhood heroes. He told Esther that Uncle Max was a self-made millionaire who had made his fortune, Robert was sure, by hobnobbing with the underworld and that he didn't disapprove when Robert told his family he was going to Israel. "Do it for the adventure," Uncle Max had trumpeted.

"You should stay in Israel," Esther said abruptly, leaning toward him and patting his hand.

Robert wanted to believe that Esther would miss him if he

left.

"I'm a Jew but not an Israeli," Robert told her. "My family still lives in America."

"Maybe home is where your children will be born," she said.

"When I was on the kibbutz," he mused out loud, "I had a Danis girlfriend. She said I didn't seem like an American. She meant it as a compliment."

"No you don't. You really don't, Robert," she pronounced his name with a long "o" and a rolling "r."

"People will always think I'm an American," he said. "Even my name, Robert, is American."

"Change your name to a Hebrew name," she said. "My parents came from Iraq. When they came here they changed their names. Many do."

Robert tried to think of a Hebrew name Esther would like. Izthak, Uzi, Avi.

"Eleazar," he said triumphantly. "Like Eleazar ben Yair, the Jewish Zealot at Masada."

"Eleazar is a good name," she said. "But you aren't a Zealot. You're a dreamer." Esther threw head back in affectionate laughter.

"What is a good name for me?" Robert asked.

"Michah," Esther said. "Michah was the name of the prophet who chose to live in poverty. An American Jew who comes to live in our poor land is like Michah. It is a beautiful name."

"For an American Jew?" Robert said sarcastically.

"For any Jew," Esther answered.

"Is Michah your boyfriend's name?"

"No," she laughed. "Michah is not my boyfriend's name."

"What is his name?"

Esther did not answer him. Instead she glanced at her wristwatch and surveyed the thinning crowd and abandoned stage where the band had played.

"You're tired, Robert. It is late. We should go home."

As they left Esther put her arm around Robert's waist, and he put his arm around her shoulder so that people would believe they were lovers. All Robert could think about was the way she said he didn't seem like an American, and how much he resented her for saying it.

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The following morning Dirk was back. He told Robert he had spent the night on the beach at Taba. That day, an American friend of Dirk's from Kibbutz Helmonit, Alex Berkowitz, called to say he was coming to Eilat. He had some good news to share with Dirk. On the kibbutz Alex and Dirk had been good friends. Since Dirk left, their friendship had cooled. They no longer saw one another often. Robert knew Alex only slightly. He knew that Alex had immigrated to Israel when he was sixteen just after the Six Day War. Alex belonged to a Zionist youth organization and had served in the Israeli Army. After the army he had settled on Kibbutz Helmonit and married an Israeli.

Robert met Dirk late that afternoon at Shaoul's. When Alex

arrived Dirk ordered a round of beers, but Alex refused and asked for coffee instead. His eyes were bloodshot with fatigue and he seemed to have difficulty focusing on either Dirk or Robert. He beamed with delight, however, when he announced that his wife was pregnant.

"Muzel tov!" Dirk said jubilantly.

"Muzel tov," Robert repeated.

"How long have you known?" Dirk asked.

"I found out the day before yesterday," Alex said. "My wife's known for three weeks. I was in the reserves in Hebron. She wanted to surprise me when I came home. Some homecoming!"

Dirk called to Shaoul to bring a bottle of whiskey and asked Alex about his reserve duty. Alex said it had lasted nearly sixty days and he had been home only once during that time. It bothered Robert that Dirk should speak so comfortably to Alex when Dirk was endangering his friend's life.

"Were the Arabs quiet?" Dirk asked Alex.

"They were a little heated," Alex answered. "Two weeks ago three terrorists hijacked a busload of Arabs. Arabs terrorizing Arabs! Imagine that! There's a lot more of that than people realize. They asked the passengers to get off the bus, ordered the driver to take the bus into the mountains. They shot the driver, an Arab, because he was working for Egged, the Israeli line, not an Arab line. Then they drove the bus off the mountain.

"God, they hate us there," Alex said shaking his head in despair. "I had a few good reasons to be glad to go home."

Shaoul arrived with a bottle of bourbon and set it and three glasses on the table. Dirk paid Shaoul in dollars and pointed at Alex.

"He going to be a father," Dirk said.

"Muzel tov!" Shaoul proclaimed with an ivory grin.

Shaoul returned to the bar and Dirk filled the three shot glasses with bourbon. This time Alex accepted. Dirk urgently downed his shot and poured another.

"Still drinking hard?" Alex asked Dirk.

"I hold it well enough," Dirk answered.

"When you left the kibbutz, you were drinking too hard," Alex told him.

"Maybe I had cause," Dirk answered. "How is Afrat?"

"Do you still think about her?" Alex asked.

"Sometimes."

"Are you seeing anybody?"

"No," Dirk answered and downed another shot of bourbon.

Dirk poured himself another shot and offered to fill Alex's glass. This time Alex refused.

"You need to pull the thorns from your side," Alex said.

"What I don't understand is why the kibbutz refused to make me a member," Dirk said.

"We asked you to stay on as a guest for a little while," Alex said sympathetically. "I thought it was a mistake. I thought we should have accepted you. But some thought that after you and Afrat stopped seeing each other, you would leave. You were a hard worker. Everybody knew that. While you and Afrat

were together, people understood why you wanted to stay. Then you started drinking. That worried some. Mostly they thought because you weren't a Jew, you would go back to America."

"I'm not bitter," Dirk said. "But then you made me feel like some kind of undesirable, like maybe I was an Arab!"

"It was a mistake," Alex said. "I know that, but that's just the way things are. I'm a Jew. Israelis know why I'm here. You're not. Automatically you're suspect. There's some truth in that logic. Still I'm sorry. I'm sorry we misjudged you. But as long as you're here in Israel, others will misjudge you too."

Dirk sat solemnly in his chair, quietly brooding. With his right hand he reached across his chest for a pack of cigarettes rolled up in the right sleeve of his t-shirt. He offered Alex a smoke. Alex refused. Dirk poured another glass of whiskey, downed the shot, and inhaled on his cigarette. It seemed to Robert that these were Dirk's ritual gestures.

"You really think I'd be better off in the States," Dirk said to Alex.

"Yes." Alex paused for a moment and then said, "Americans owe you something, Israelis don't."

"When I came home from Vietnam, I felt like some kind of fucking freak," Dirk said and his face became flushed with fiery anger. "I was a Marine. I was an animal, a god-damned freak. Mother-fucking-Christ. I'd just as well be a Beduoin. God damn you! The kibbutz was my home. You made me leave my home! At least on the kibbutz no one made feel ashamed of being a Marine. I'm not ashamed either. I'm not ashamed of anything I do."

Dirk turned to Robert and said, "You're a college boy! Have I done anything to be ashamed of?"

"No," Robert said.

"You're a bullshitter, Robert," Dirk said and smiled passively. "You're damned ashamed of who I am! I've killed!"

"You were defending yourself," Alex said.

"Everyman who kills is defending himself in his own mind," Dirk said and reached for the bottle and took a swig, instead of pouring the bourbon into a glass.

"Maybe," Robert said, "a man has to defend more than himself."

"And what could be more precious than your own life?" Dirk asked sarcastically.

"A place to die," Robert said. "Home. Isn't that what it is? Isn't home a place where we can be buried? The place where our life goes on after us?"

"What if a man hasn't got a home?" Dirk asked and stared for a moment at Robert.

Robert could not answer. Dirk seemed to stare knowingly at Robert. Dirk looked at Alex and then back at Robert. Robert was certain that Dirk knew about him. Dirk was telling him that he knew. What man didn't have a home? Dirk didn't have a home. The Palestinians don't have a home. That's what the conversation had been leading up to. Robert could see the terror in Dirk's eyes, the terror of being homeless, dispossessed, abandoned. Yes, terror! That's what it was. Not money. Not eight thousand pounds sterling in a bank in London. But terror of dying in a



place where he wasn't wanted. Dirk had accepted terror and learned to live with it as one learns to live with a friend. To be homeless is to live with terror, Robert thought.

Robert finished his drink and said that he had to leave. He was supposed to meet Esther shortly.

Outside the desert heat burned dry like a potter's kiln. He felt faint, weary, weakened from his confrontation with Dirk. On the way home he stopped at a kiosk, bought a bar of chocolate and the latest edition of the International Herald Tribune, which he folded without even looking at the headlines and carried between his arm and his ribs. For the first time he was really afraid of Dirk.

At the apartment Esther had set out some lemonade and cake for Robert. She was reading the evening paper.

"Dirk's back," Robert said.

"We know," Esther said lowering the paper for a moment and then returned to her reading.

Robert set his paper on the coffee table and unfolded it revealing the headline which read: Ford Pardons Nixon. My God, Robert thought, Nixon pardoned!

"Stop reading, damn it!" Robert shouted. "Dirk knows!"

Esther lowered the paper again and frowned. "What does he know?"

"He knows about us," Robert said.

"He knows that we live together," she said.

"Don't be flippant."

"Did you tell him?"

"No, I didn't tell him."

"Did you say anything to give yourself away?"

"No, but I'm sure that he knows," Robert said and glanced back at the headline that was soiled from the melted chocolate bar that he carried inside the folded newspaper. "My God! Nixon's been pardoned. How could Ford do it?"

"Why do you think he knows?" Esther asked.

"Something he said. He said when the kibbutz rejected him, they made him feel like an Arab," Robert said. "Then he looked at me in a queer sort of way."

"Is that all?"

"He looked at me as though he were daring me!"

"Is that all?"

"He's a zealot. A palestinian zealot. He hates you!" Robert shouted.

"He doesn't know," Esther spoke softly. "When you spy on someone eventually you feel like you're being spied on. It's good. It's your psyche warning you to be cautious. That's all."

"Sure," Robert said. He turned away from her, no longer expecting her to believe him and examined the lead paragraph of the story about Nixon's pardon. He still couldn't believe it. Who would pardon Dirk for his crimes? He wanted to get out. He started toward the door.

"Where are you going?" Esther asked.

"Back to Shaoul's."

"What did you tell Dirk when you left?"

"I told him I was going to meet you."

"What will you tell him if he sees you now?"

"I will tell him we had a fight, a lover's quarrel."

"That's good, Robert," Esther said smiling. "Don't stay long."

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Robert looked for Dirk at Shaoul's. He surveyed the pier looking for Dirk's skiff. Across the bay the sand dunes glowed the shade of meershaum. Not finding Dirk's skiff, he decided that Dirk had gone to Taba. It was nearly nightfall. It was about three miles on foot along the beaches from Shaoul's to Taba. Robert decided that he had to find Dirk. He had to warn him. He had to confess. He'd tell that they wanted to make him a double agent. If Dirk couldn't be turned, he'd be killed. The illusion was over. Robert would end the affair. The prospect of confronting Dirk terrified Robert when he thought about it, walking along the beach. The full moon flared brilliantly orange just above the opposite shore, where Robert suspected Dirk would soon emerge from the sea decked out in his diving gear like some primitive creature from the depths of antiquity. This was the being Robert would have to confront. Robert wrestled in stark terror with this image of Dirk. Robert knew his plan was mad.

Robert could not shake the fear that kept creeping up on him like the chill in the evening air. He passed some reed huts, where Bedouin fisherman sat outside basking in the soft glow of fading coals. One of them gracefully moved a long narrow-handled

coffee pot, a finjan, back and forth over the remnants of the campfire, performing this desert ritual. As he approached the camp the sea air grew redolent with the sweet pungent odor of whole cardamon used to spice the coffee. The others sat silently, motionless around the fire like graven images of gnarled and dessicated old gnomes. Robert knew if he stopped, the Bedouins would invite him to sit with them and drink and smoke a cigarette. He quickened his pace.

In the distance Robert could see three date palms silhouetted in the moonlit sands of Taba. As he neared, he spied Dirk's skiff moored about hundred yards from the shore. Robert lay on the beach for several hours staring at the sea, waiting for Dirk. As the moon rose higher, grew paler in the night haze, Robert knew that he had gone too far. As the hours wore on, he was certain that Esther would become suspicious. He had gone too far. Dirk had gone too far. Why? Because he had been insulted. Robert imagined writing on a wall in bold spray painted letters: Marine! Gentile! Arab! Shylock! All names! All insults! Each with its own reasons that Robert would never understand, because they were meaningless as the desert landscape. Yet these reasons had become people's causes. No More! Both he and Dirk had gone too far. It was time for them to go home. Robert wanted to take Dirk home with him. The Yankees were leading their division, but even if they didn't win the pennant this year, it was time to go home.

In the moonlight Robert detected a slithering motion in the water approaching Dirk's skiff. As it neared he was able to

see several bouyed packages tied together like knots in a kite's tail. Then he saw the shadowy figure of Dirk in a wet suit with two oxygen tanks on his back rise out of the water alongside the skiff. As Dirk pulled himself into the boat, Robert sensed movement behind him and then saw a shadow dart forward and fall prone onto the sand off to his side.

"Dirk!" Robert screamed. "They know! Go back! They know! No more secrets! They know! There are no more secrets!"

Robert could see Dirk fall backwards, somersaulting headlong into the water. Then Robert felt the sharp pain of a fist jab into the small of his back, the crook of a man's arm around his neck, and was thrown backward onto the sand. He heard two shots ring out and an explosion. The munitions Dirk had loaded onto the skiff had exploded. There was fire on the water. The water poured fire into the sky and the sea was illuminated in a rouge glow by shooting flames. In a moment of terror Robert knew that he had been trusted with a secret and broken that trust. He had told Esther Dirk's secret and she believed him. Dirk could not be turned. As the flames subsided, Robert felt calm and terror in knowing that Dirk had returned to the sea. Rejecting terror, he waited to see the sorrowfully pale dawn light the opposite shore.

The End

## Critical Commentary

I begin discussing "Yankee Go Home" by acknowledging my debt to Henry James. My story has a simple espionage plot. As espionage plots go, mine is not especially compelling. Yet as a revelation of character, the plot has its own intrigue. The best espionage stories are not adventure stories but psychological thrillers. While writing "Yankee Go Home" I reminded myself of James' oft quoted dictum: "What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?"

Henry James could have been a master spy. The part given Robert Stein in the Israeli intelligence agency's scheme to approach Dirk Warfield seems to have been determined by their evaluation of Robert's character. When Mr. Benevisti meets Robert, we can believe that Benevisti is able to surmise that Robert is a young romantic, idealist in search of a mission. Certainly Robert's immediate willingness to undertake a mission for the Jewish Agency would have led Benevisti to this conclusion. The way in which Shamir and Esther inflate Stein's sense of importance makes evident the way in which they intend to use him. Stein is told that he can be trusted. How accurately they have read his character! We recall that Stein admires Shamir and Zohar because they have been trusted with the fate of the Jewish people. Shamir and Esther have informed Robert that they

trust him with the fate of the Jewish nation. Indeed, Robert can very easily believe that he has found his destiny, his part in a drama in which he will rise to a significant stature as a Jew. Even when Robert protests that he believes in Dirk's innocence, Shamir coyly suggests to Robert that their information may be mistaken. Robert is important to them. Robert has access to important knowledge.

For the first half of the story we are given two points of view: we read the story through Robert's limited omniscient point of view, but we are allowed to understand that his point of view implies the point of view of Israeli intelligence as well. It has always seemed to me that one of the flaws in espionage stories is that they are often told from several points of view. The reader must be shown what is going on in the both the mind of the antagonist as well as the protagonist. Yet, I am quite certain that James would have easily deduced from his knowledge of Robert's character the actions and plan of Israeli intelligence. This is the essence of reading a story told from the limited omniscient point of view. Character is a premise which produces rational behavior thoroughly consistent with that premise. If we understand a person's character, his or her actions make perfect sense. Israeli intelligence can conceal from Robert the reality of their plan by inflating Robert's sense of importance in their scheme. Robert is much like Lambert Strether in this respect. In The Ambassadors Strether is able to believe that Chad Newsome's attachment to Madame de Vionnet is virtuous and not carnal, because he overestimated his own role in their

affair.

If, like Strether, Robert has overestimated his own importance, Israeli intelligence has underestimated Robert's capacity for self-indulgence. It is important that we recognize that Robert's imaginative faculty is an indeterminable variable. Esther leads him on, but always makes sure to cut him off at the appropriate moment. She manipulates him by tempting him with that he cannot have. Robert's desire to glorify himself is insatiable and ultimately threatens to undo the plan. Esther has shown him that she completely trusts him, which is what Robert desires. Even though bounds were arbitrarily placed on Robert's desires (he was told at the beginning that his relationship with Esther would be professional), that which was forbidden him becomes what he desires most. If Esther can tell him the secrets (probably lies) of intelligence operations, surely she is honest in the attentions she shows him. The moment that Robert suspects that she is not honest with him, that she does not completely trust him, Robert's imagination will lead him to suspect the worst about himself, rather than the best. Because his expectations have been raised to such heights, Israeli intelligence creates a situation where Robert's deflation will be severe the moment he begins to suspect that he cannot know or have all that he wants. Robert had begun to believe that what was illusion is in fact real. The plan must inevitably self-destruct. From the point of view of the planners this is not necessarily bad, provided that it does not happen until after Esther has been introduced to Dirk. I think we must presume that



Robert is correct in deducing that his role in the operation is to provide Esther an introduction to Dirk. Henry James would have understood why Robert can assume that he has correctly deduced their plan. Lambert Strether leaves Europe and Maria Gostrey because to remain would have meant that he somehow got something out of the whole affair. What Strether does not confess to Maria is that he has benefited enormously from the affair. He has regained his vision. In order to preserve his new found vision, it is necessary that his actions reflect a vision which is not self-serving. So by making his decision to leave Europe, which for him is an act of self-sacrifice, Strether is able to save his intellectual eyes from the cataracts of egoism. Robert's deduction that he is the lowest rung on the ladder in the Israeli plan is the first determination he makes concerning himself and his relation to history which is not self-serving. The imagination which fueled Robert on his journey into a fantasy world is the same imagination which brings him back to reality. The master spies can assess the premise of Robert's character upon which rational choices will be made, but his imaginative responses are less predictable. Once Robert sees himself in the light of reality, he ceases to be so easily used. He has volition.

Esther was in a position to completely control Robert, so why shouldn't he have immediately consented to Esther's request that she be introduced to Dirk? Because if she really trusts Robert, she doesn't need to meet Dirk. What can she find out from Dirk that Robert can't? Robert is correct in assuming that

he has been given the role of the cuckold. The espionage plan is the mirror in which Robert sees himself. And he looks ludicrous. Robert removes his straw fedora after this revelation and begins his journey homeward at this turning point in the story.

The first half of the story can be seen as Robert's movement away from Dirk toward Esther. The second half of the story can be seen as Robert's movement away from Esther toward Dirk. I begin my discussion of the second half of the story by acknowledging my debt to Ernest Hemingway. I've learned how to understand character from Henry James. From Ernest Hemingway I've learned to understand voice. Actually the matter is slightly more complicated. As Henry James stated plot is determined by character. I believe that voice is determined by character as well. The voices of James and Hemingway appear to be anti-types. If Hemingway's style became compelling in the twentieth century, I believe that the reason for this is that his characters better reflect the concerns of our times. James' style is no longer fashionable today because his characters do not reflect contemporary sensibilities and anxieties. His characters are too firmly rooted in a Victorian society whose values no longer seem relevant to the concerns of twentieth century. One might say that James' characters are cushioned from the harshness of the world by elegant upholstery. Hemingway's characters are deliberately exposed to the harshness of a world where war has taken its toll. World War seems to be the predominant concern of men in the twentieth century. Even in peacetime we constantly worry about war. We live in an age of

terror. Holocaust lowers on the horizon. Hemingway's voice is a reflection of man living with terror. His characters snap to attention with the drum beats of his prose. It is as though each metrical foot in his prose were saying: one must get a hold of oneself. Man marches to war to the beat of a drum. While I do not consciously imitate Hemingway, I am quite certain that my affection for his prose style is reflected in my own prose. If that is true, it must also be true that my characters owe a debt to Hemingway's characters.

Having lavished sufficient praise on Hemingway's prose style, I must acknowledge another debt to him. It is now apparent to me that "Yankee Go Home" is in many ways a rejoinder to Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises, a novel which has disturbed me for many years. I have always felt that Robert Cohn was unfairly presented in the novel. Like the Romantics who saw Satan as the real hero of Paradise lost, I've believed for a long time that Robert Cohn is the hero of The Sun Also Rises. What if the novel had been told from Robert Cohn's point of view? How different it would have been. In a sense "Yankee Go Home" attempts to retell that story from Robert Cohn's point of view with this thesis: Robert Cohn is the ugly romantic side of Jake Barnes which he cannot discard. He is unable to forgive Cohn for what is in fact his own failing. In my story Dirk Warfield and Esther represent the romantic projections of Robert Stein. He accepts the fault as his own and forgives them. After forgiving them he can discard them as illusions. Forgiveness softens the blow of disillusionment.

Like Cohn, Robert Stein is immature and innocent, supremely idealistic and inclined to romanticize. The way he sees the world around him reveals this aspect of his character. For example, the minarets rising above Aquaba look like a parade of ceremonial lances. When he tells of going to Fenway Park as a boy and seeing Ted Williams, he wonders if it is still possible to have boyhood heroes. His attraction to Esther reveals this ugly romantic side of himself. He is unable to conduct himself in a mature fashion in her presence and unable to accept the boundaries of that attraction. His attraction to Dirk Warfield reflects this side of himself as well. He loves his illusions. One wonders if Jake Barnes' resentment of his friendship with Robert Cohn masks his fear that he exists in the eyes of others, especially Cohn only as an illusion. In The Sun Also Rises we see Cohn through Jake Barnes' eyes; in "Yankee Go Home" we see Jake's analogue Dirk Warfield through Robert Stein's eyes. The important point here is that both Warfield and Cohn are not fully developed characters because they are portrayed for us through the eyes of another. Human vision is always incomplete; only with the frequency of a total eclipse in which we see the sun's corona are we granted a glimpse into the character of another. We recall that that Jake believes that Cohn has perverted the sport of boxing for the purpose of punishing those who mock his Jewishness. In "Yankee Go Home" Warfield has perverted the sport of scuba diving for the purposes of punishing those who have mocked him for being a gentile. I have reversed the situation of The Sun Also Rises, by taking a character like Jake Barnes and

allowing him to wear Robert Cohn's shoes.

The point is that James is correct when he says that incident is determined by character, but what his dictum does not seem to recognize is the extent to which character is influenced by social circumstance. An individual's social circumstance is the individual's relative integration into his or her social milieu. Dirk Warfield and Jake Barnes are similar in many respects, both are victims of twentieth century warfare. Both are scarred psychologically. Yet their characters differ in one important respect: Warfield is socially isolated; Barnes is not. We should remember Shakespeare's Othello. Incident is determined by Othello's character which is directly related to Othello's blackness in a white social milieu. It is interesting to note that play works equally well when the repertory company is black and Othello is white. Because Othello has been isolated socially by his blackness, he is easy prey for Iago because he is often alone. It is in this context that we should understand Othello's violent outburst and crime. The same is true of Robert Cohn's violent outburst. And the same holds true for Dirk's crimes as well.

Man as a social being instinctively seeks union with a social milieu. The anxiety caused by separation from his milieu makes him grotesque. Malcom Cowley in his famous introduction to Winesburg, Ohio argues that Anderson's menagerie of grotesques in that collection of stories are the products of failed efforts to communicate with one another. I think this is true. When human beings communicate with each other they

naturally bond to one another. When this bonding is artificially inhibited, they become grotesquely comic or grotesquely tragic. Robert Stein became grotesquely comic as a result of being a Jew in Yankee Boston. We recall that when he is asked why he became interested in Israel, he responds that he was the only Jewish member in his Thespian club and consequently he was asked to play Shylock. He needn't to have experienced any overt encounters with anti-semitism in his childhood. The fact that he was asked to play the part was enough to remind him that he really didn't belong to Beacon Hill's Yankee WASP society. I don't think that the anxiety he must have experienced was insignificant. Robert Stein has walked a mile in Dirk Warfield's shoes and it is credible that he should be empathetic when Dirk reveals his own tragic anxieties. Robert knows what it's like to be left out. His capacity to sympathetically identify with Dirk, to see himself in the other, is redemptive even if it is too late to redeem Dirk. In that moment when Robert is able to glimpse into Dirk's character, he rises to a greater stature and dignity than Esther can confer. He has gained dignity in his own right. No one bestows it upon him as he has hoped for throughout the story. The central theme of this story can be summarized in the following way: Theater is fine, but in real life the parts we play must be those we write for ourselves, not those history and others destine for us. Yet as long as we are blinded by our misperceptions of others, and their misperceptions of us, we are held in a bondage to others that is not of our own volition. To be able to bondly freely to the other by seeing the other

sympathetically and humanely makes us free to write our own parts. By the end of the story Robert is not only free to forgive Esther, but also free to fulfill a chosen obligation to Dirk. Robert's chosen obligation is to forgive. Tragically and ironically it is too late to save Dirk, yet Robert's gesture is not absurd or insignificant, even if we hold him responsible for Dirk's death. We should understand that Dirk's death was inevitable. Dirk had crossed the line into the world of suicidal terror. He had become anathema to life itself. Yet the final judgment of the absurd, water pouring fire into the sky, Robert's mission to save Dirk's life resulting in Dirk's death, is also passed on Robert. He has survived and can imagine the dawn in all its unpleasantness. He accepts that dawn even it is much less than he might have hoped for, because he has discovered an imaginative bond with his fellow man, even if it is denied him in reality. His imagination will define his place in society in a way that cannot be witnessed by others. And his identity will exist in his imagination and not in the testimony of others.

YANKEE GO HOME

by

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## ABSTRACT

"Yankee Go Home" is a story about a young Jewish American's experiences in Israel, immediately following his graduation from college. Robert Stein lived for a year on Kibbutz Helmonit in the south of Israel, before moving to Eilat on the Red Sea. In Eilat Robert worked for another American, Dirk Warfield, at the Red Sea Diving Shop. Dirk had been a commando in the Marines. While working for Dirk, Robert is approached by a man who claims that he is from the Jewish Agency, and is recruiting young Americans who can travel freely and inconspicuously around Europe in order to carry documents for Jews who wish to escape Russia. At another interview Robert is informed that Dirk smuggles weapons and munitions from Aquaba, the Jordanian seaport across the bay from Eilat. At first Robert will not believe this disclosure about his friend, but agrees to help the men who are Israeli intelligence agents because they've told him that maybe they are wrong about Dirk's activities and Robert could help clear Dirk by keeping an eye on him for them. Robert is told that another Israeli agent will be working with him posing as his girl friend in Eilat. Esther, Robert's accomplice in the mission is very attractive, but Robert was warned from the outset that any carnal attachment to her is forbidden. Still he has difficulty distinguishing between the illusion of their relationship and its reality. Eventually Robert deduces that his role in the

operation is provide a way for Esther to meet Dirk so that he might be persuaded into double agency. Robert becomes certain that his original judgment about Dirk was mistaken. He knows that Dirk is terrorist. He also come to understand why. Dirk had served in Vietnam and when he returned home he was ostracized. He tried to settle on a kibbutz in Israel but was not allowed to stay as a member because he was not Jewish. Dirk is homeless. Robert knows that Dirk will never become a double agent and tries to warn him because he fears that the once the Israelis know, they will kill him, but by the time Robert does warn him it is already to late.