



# The Dark Hours

•  
Don Marquis

"Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour and the power of darkness."

VOICE OF JESUS IN THE DARK HOURS

"He has published a drama of poignant beauty and memorable reality on the betrayal, trial and crucifixion of Jesus. Whether any other poet in America could have approached his achievement of this theme, I do not know. No one has. . . ."

"THE DARK HOURS, even silently read, is of a seizing and transporting reality. Its dramatic stress is intensely felt. . . . I am there with Judas, with Peter, with Lazarus, I feel within myself the suspicious spleen of the high priest, the impotent deprecation of Pilate, the anguish of Procla, the nonchalance of the Roman soldiers gambling for the seamless garment, all the troubled confusion of blind men, lepers and possessed men healed, the mocking scoffs and panic blood lust of the rabble—and the stark solitude of one crying: 'It is finished.'"

"I believe this to be a great tragedy, greatly conceived and written with austere sincerity. When it is adequately produced, as I hope it may be, it should affect us as the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles affected the Greeks."

STUART P. SHERMAN.

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Doubleday, Page & Co.

## The Phoenix Nest

ROBERT GRAVES is an English poet whose verse we hold in high estimation, and of late years Robert has got interested in the dream-world. Greenberg, Inc., has just published his "The Meaning of Dreams," which we sat down lately to read and inwardly digest. Most interesting we found his chapter on the theory of The Double Self.

Briefly (he says) this is Dr. Rivers's suggestion, that when we are up against a problem that has two possible ways out, we try either one way or the other; it is necessary for the success of our attempt that there should be no uncertainty in our minds while we are taking the particular course we have decided upon; therefore we forget the other. Whenever we are faced by a problem of this sort, and it happens every day, sometimes many times a day, we split up two selves, each self standing for one of these opposing courses of action, and we then behave as the hypocrite or as the kleptomaniac or as the madman, though not of course in so strikingly peculiar and sensational a way. All instances of absence of mind are due to conflict of this sort, all cases of inconsistent or strange behavior.

He goes on to say that the weaker self, that loses the decision, usually becomes victorious in a dream. Well, just the other day we had a curious experience about that.

Along Third Avenue runs the Open Air Line of the orange-colored "L" trains. Hastening to the Grand Central for our express the other day, we glanced up and perceived an "L" train passing in all its glory against an early Spring twilight. We were arrested in our tracks. But, after a short conflict, our better self asserted itself and we tore our eyes away from the spectacle and hastened on. We made our express by a minute. That night we dreamed a curious dream.

It seemed that we were again hastening for our express. Again we were arrested by that golden fissure in the violet sky. The train clove the twilight on heels of thunder. The Elevated uprights rocked beneath its flight. As we stood agape we felt a violent wrench through all our being. We tore ourselves from the embrace of the lean and wrinkle-overcoated pedestrian with whom we seemed to have become entangled, and, spurning his loaded brief-case into the gutter, dove—but upward—in a most graceful arc, to the flying glory overhead. We felt our hair playing about our head like lambent flame, and all our limbs were of a sudden incomparable lightness. We stepped on the front platform of the train as it was slowing-up for 42nd Street. Sliding open the front door and inserting ourselves suddenly into the motorman's cubicle, we introduced ourselves with a smile. The man's hair went a ghastly white and he toppled over. Stopping to assure ourselves, however, that his heart still beat, we seized the lever, turned on the juice, and had the enormous pleasure of seeing the 42nd Street platform stream away behind us filled with frantic faces and a long wailing echo.

Passing 50th we increased the speed. As we had anticipated the train at length rose completely from the rails. It curved upward and outward, shaking free its coils like a golden snake. We pushed the lever to its utmost, turned, and stuck our head out of the door to observe the interior of our own car. Pandemonium, you might well think, would be reigning. But no! The passengers hung to their straps or rocked bovinely in their seats as though nothing had happened, save that one or two,

having passed their stations, were wrangling querulously with the conductor at the rear door. He, on the platform, rubbed his eyes, and at last perceiving the tail end of Harlem flashing away far beneath us, seemed to believe that something was wrong. He came up the swaying aisle and stuck his head in the door. "Say, Ed,—," he began. Then his mouth opened. "Don't worry," we beamed at him. Then we added airily. "Tell 'em Albany's the next stop—at least—maybe."

But the conductor had flopped right straight backward upon the matting. "Drunk!" we heard one elderly passenger exclaim, looking disapprovingly at him over the edge of his paper. The others were now hanging out of the opened windows on both sides, admiring the view.

We passed Albany with a bare nod of recognition and winged higher. That train just switched its tail coquettishly and licked upward like lightning for the night-blue depths above. The last car snapped its couplings and rocketed in a fine arc through space, shaking out the passengers like parti-colored confetti. The passengers in our own car clapped their hands in innocent delight. A sack-like East side mother was holding a small child up to the window. He stretched his baby hands to the earth, now a dim, small spinning silver orb beneath, and crowed lustily.

As for us, we were beginning to sing and shout, "Oh Jupiter, Jehovah, and all the Plan-ets!" This, as we remember it, we kept repeating *ad nauseam* to our own great satisfaction. Of course, we knew, or we had known, that Jehovah is not to be called a planet. But it all seemed quite natural at the time. Getting a slight reflection of ourselves in the window beside us, we were charmed to observe that the hair on our head was a flickering of very pretty red and yellow tongues of flame, but, if such a thing could possibly have happened, we might have been disheartened to recognize that, at the same time, we were without any clothes at all. As it was, we seemed to be a fine physical specimen chiefly resembling a tinted drawing by William Blake. So we didn't care. And as for the occupants of the car, thank Heaven they seemed in some mysterious way, suddenly to have shucked their dusty and drab insignias of mortality and all to be sitting and lounging quite pink and young, with flamy coronals of their own where had been disgracefully dirty derbies, soft hats, and cheap bonnets from the department stores.

We curved our train gracefully around Saturn, and could not but admire the aureate gleam of its serpentine length. Lights sprang on throughout the cars, as the plum-blue night deepened, and the stars above, below and around us dazzled out in myriads. In the cars the passengers leaped to their feet and began suddenly singing and swaying all together, and through our brain ran the burning line, "The sons of God shouted for joy!"

Frenzied with ecstasy, we pointed her nose skyward and looped the loop with our fiery train. There was a flash—a billow of purple thunder—and we stooped to retrieve our brief-case that had dropped into the gutter. We glanced upward. The tail of the Air Line train whipped past, above us, behind the corner of a building. Glancing down at the watch in our palm, we gasped, and we ran. \* \* \*

W. R. B.

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