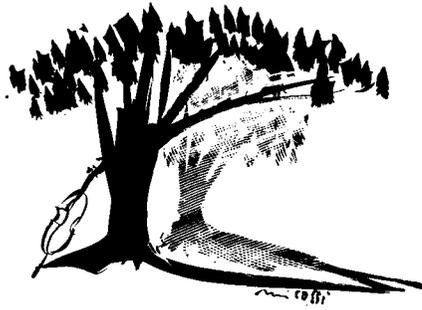


AT HOME & ABROAD



The Raid on Castalia

MARYA MANNES

I WAS ASLEEP when the police came to Castalia. At least, I had gone to bed before eleven and was aware only at a dim level of consciousness of a great deal of noise and movement around the sixty-two-room house where Dr. Timothy Leary lived. The noise was quite different from the sounds I heard from his room above when I first fell asleep: music with a regular cadence, and the occasional shuffling of feet. I assumed that this noise was merely late party-making by the twenty-four other people spending the night there, and I remember thinking it must be very late and wishing they could be more considerate.

At some point I was conscious that the woman who shared my room had gone to the door to find out what was going on. She came back shortly and said, "The police are raiding us. They want to search us."

I got out of bed and started to put on my raincoat over my improvised nightwear of shorts and a sweater, but she said, "No, they want us to strip." A policewoman with a pleasant face who wore a red suit and carried a shoulder bag came in and we stood there naked while she looked at the inside of our arms and thighs for needle marks.

"I'm just a middle-aged square," I told her. She smiled and said, "So am I, dear," apologized for bothering us, and went out of the room. We learned later that while all the men's belongings were ransacked, only the women were stripped.

We slung on pants and tops and

went out on the landing where most of the others were sitting or standing while state troopers and plainclothesmen passed back and forth, searching the maze of rooms for whatever they could find. Occasionally they would return with a paper box, a plant, or a package and take them downstairs. Once someone asked what was in a box, and the trooper said "Goodies!"

Leary was among us, in the jeans and light blue shirt he had worn all day, his bare feet dirty from



hours spent chopping down thickets and small trees in a fir grove back of the house.

"I was told they'd be around some time," he said, "and I've cleared everything out of the house. Anyway, if I were hiding anything, it would be in a place they couldn't find."

His sixteen-year-old son Jack sat on the landing near him with a sullen look on his handsome face. Sometimes he strummed a guitar or banjo. He was joined from time to time by a young man who improvised with him on his own guitar.

DURING the four hours on the landing of the main stairwell, guarded above and below by plainclothesmen and other troopers, seated or coming and going, we talked and drank cheap red wine from a gallon Leary brought up

from the pantry or tea brought by others. We talked and waited and speculated and sometimes joked, but nobody thought it was funny.

It was nearly four in the morning before the police searched my room. In their haste to get through the sliding door they pushed me against a painting on the wall back of me. It fell with a resounding crash and knocked over the wine jug, which somehow on its downward hurtle nicked the upper lip of a young woman standing near me. Blood started to pour from under her nose, while dark wine stains spread on the green mat at our feet. She was taken to the bathroom and mopped up, and returned holding a wad of Kleenex to her mouth.

People were then taken downstairs one at a time for questioning. This intelligent and gentle young woman, who looked much younger than her twenty-eight years, was asked, among other things, "Have you had sexual intercourse here?" She said no, she hadn't, and told us later that she wondered what that had to do with anything anyway. Searching through her effects, they took her Vitamin A tablets, her Bufferin, and her prescription diarrhea pills.

The police took down our names and addresses, but asked of me only whether I was the one "that knocked down that picture." I said yes, it had fallen down when I was shoved against the wall. Why this should be the only clue of identity of interest to the law mystified me.

At about four-thirty we were all summoned downstairs and told to wait outside the living room. There Leary, mustering a smile, addressed us: "I have an announcement to make. We are in the hands of the Chinese and the Russians. But we have our own agents working too!" There was scattered and rather forced laughter.

Then we were told to congregate in the living room, where we sat on the mattresses and faced about twelve of the agents of the law at the far end of the room. One of them said, "Those of you whose names I will call off can leave the room."

A young girl who had seemed terrified all through the raid turned to me and whispered, "Then we're not criminals, are we? Does that mean

we're innocent—we can go free?"

I said yes, not to worry. They called out all the names except those of Dr. Leary, a mystic from California and his wife, and a young New York photographer.

The rest of us left the room and most of us went to bed. Those who didn't wait to see Leary and the



others handcuffed and driven away. Some followed them to the Poughkeepsie jail, to get a last look at the former Harvard professor.

THE LONG NIGHT was preceded by a long day. Assigned by a magazine to interview Leary's eighteen-year-old daughter Susan, I had been driven from New York to Millbrook by the public-relations expert in charge of the Timothy Leary Defense Fund and the woman who is his partner. On the way up he briefed me on a number of aspects of the Leary case, speaking factually and knowledgeably, but with obvious affection and admiration for the embattled and legally embroiled proponent of LSD. His only critical observation was that Leary might be a little naïve: "A good man and a brilliant man, but not always realistic in his dealing with the world at large."

There was certainly nothing worldly about the place where Timothy Leary has lived for the last three years. Castalia, named for the foundation that supports his work, consists of several hundred acres of beautiful Dutchess County land once owned by a German named Dietrich, who not only imposed on it the most formal gardens, vistas, chalets, follies, fountains, and fir groves, but also imported two hundred Italians to build him a lodge, a summerhouse, and a portcullis entrance knobbed with native gray boulders. He also employed an architect to erect a huge wooden mansion of unparalleled ug-

liness—the nadir in turrets, porches, and fretted woodwork—as his own main residence. Here Dr. Leary lives, works, and on weekends receives a steady stream of visitors—students, disciples, observers, friends, and curious strangers. The doors are always open.

We arrived about ten-thirty on the morning of Saturday, April 16, driving to the back of the house and finally finding an entrance from the curving front porch. On the right of a bare entrance hall was what seemed to be the living room. I saw mattresses on the floor, on one of which lay a young man, on another a huge Great Dane. To the left was another bare living room, without mattresses but with a Victorian sofa on which were two large paper kites and a pith helmet with yellow ostrich feathers on it. Stuck on the newel post of the massive oak staircase was a stuffed tiger head with a large pink flower in its mouth.

The rooms—every part of the vast house—had the abandoned look of minimal, sporadic care: dusty, empty, disordered, totally depersonalized. As I later saw, nearly all the weekend visitors take a hand in sweeping, tidying, dishwashing, vacuuming, or cooking, but the ceaseless tide of human traffic defies order and cleanliness. The garbage bags are always full, the sink piled with dishes to be washed later, the floors tracked with outside dust, the closets bursting with cartons and junk, the icebox crammed with food.

The kitchen is the main core of the house, and I never saw it, at any time of the day or night, without at least five people sitting on pads and cushions around a foot-high round wooden table, eating. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner merged imperceptibly, and there was always someone to fry bacon, boil water, make biscuits, mix salad, or prepare the main dish—on this Saturday night a splendidly seasoned fish with all the trimmings.

WHO WERE all these people? Well, on this weekend of the raid, there were twenty-six of us, including Dr. Leary and his son, but not including the two teenagers and five little children belonging to three sets of visiting parents. The older ones were usually outdoors, jumping on

the trampoline or exploring the woods or bicycling. But the toddlers—bright-eyed, fresh-skinned, and affectionate—were around us all day long, usually in the kitchen, all of them living together in perfect peace and amity.

This was indeed the prevailing climate of this communal household. Apart from the five or six "irregulars" like myself, most of the group at Castalia shared the qualities of affectionate calm, of above-average sensitivity and intelligence, and of mutual helpfulness. The loves of parent for child, of husband for wife, of most of them for Leary, were open and palpable. Only three of the visitors that weekend—all young and male—looked beatnik or withdrawn. Indeed, they withdrew, most of the time, into the woods or their own rooms.

Among the others were the fair and fragile young wife of a well-known bandleader (and mother of five), a young secretary and volunteer worker from Washington, a research psychiatrist working on a Federal grant, a documentary-film photographer, another photographer specializing in Polaroid research, two artist-designers, a dry-goods manufacturer, and a fashion editor on a national magazine for young women.

Most of the men and women at Castalia that weekend had, of course, taken LSD a number of times, and I overheard one of them—the young father with the pure and gentle face—describe to a non-user what he had felt on his last "trip."

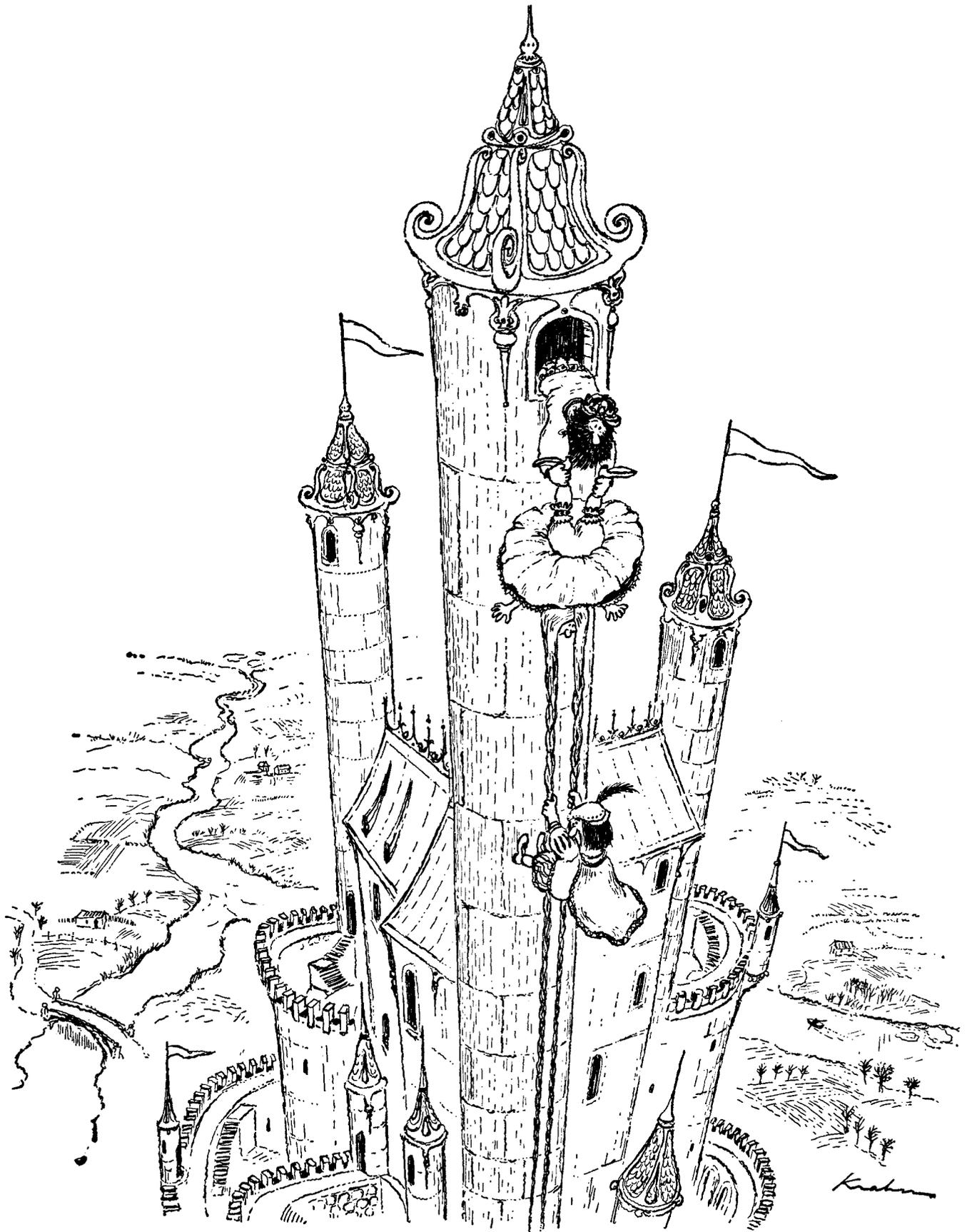
"It was so beautiful," he said. "I pushed back time and I pushed back space, and everything was filled with



love. You are part of this great love, part of everything. It was really a transfiguration, and it left me with an enormous sense of peace and unity. After it, I worked and thought better and more clearly than I ever had before."

Others agreed that it was a religious experience of a supreme order if you were prepared for it, if you wanted the right things from it.

Well and good, I thought. If a



By Fernando Krahn

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