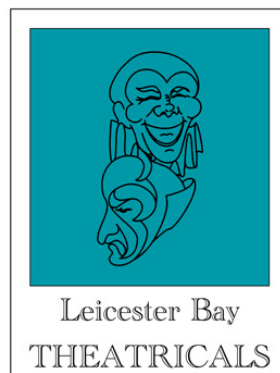


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Newport, Maine

© 1992 by Thomas F. Rogers
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that

Fréré Lawrence

being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States Of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion Of Canada, and the other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to royalty. Anyone presenting the play without the express written permission of the Copyright owners and/or their authorized agent will be liable to the penalties provided by law.

A requisite number of script and music copies must be purchased from the Publisher and Royalty must be paid to the publisher for each and every performance before an audience whether or not admission is charged. A performance license must first be obtained from the publisher prior to any performance(s).

Federal Copyright Law -- 17 U.S.C. section 504 -- allows for a recovery of a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$50,000 for each infringement, plus attorney fees.

The professional and amateur rights to the performance of this play along with the lecturing, recitation, and public reading rights, are administered exclusively through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be made. For all other rights inquiries may be made to the authors through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS Any adaptation or arrangement of this work without the author's written permission is an infringement of copyright. **Unauthorized duplication by any means is also an infringement.**

FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE RIGHTS YOU MUST APPLY TO THE PUBLISHER OR YOU ARE BREAKING THE LAW!

The possession of this SCRIPT whether bought or rented, does not constitute permission to perform the work herein contained, in public or in private, for gain or charity. Proper prior application must be made and license granted before a performance may be given. Copies of this SCRIPT and all other rehearsal materials may be bought and/or rented from:

LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS
PO Box 536 Newport, Maine 04953-0536
www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com
Printed in the United States Of America

Whenever this play is produced the following notice should appear in the program and on all advertisements under the producer's control: "Produced by special arrangement with Leicester Bay Theatricals, Newport, ME" In all programs and posters and in all advertisements under the producers control, the author's name shall be prominently featured under the title.

NOTE: Your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals limits you to making copies of this document for persons directly connected with your production. Do not distribute outside of your cast and crew. Following your performance run you must destroy all photocopies, preferably by shredding them. If we sent you the document in printed format, you must return that document to us. if we provided you with an electronic PDF file, simply trash that on your computer so that it cannot be recovered. The electronic document may only be on ONE computer -- it may NOT be duplicated. This is also a part of your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals.

Frere LAWRENCE

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

T.E. Lawrence, retired corporal, British Royal Air Force--in his late forties

Hainsworth (also plays: Australian Major, Other Enlistee, Bey & R.A.F. Seargent)--middle aged

Charlotte Shaw, wife of George Bernard Shaw--middle aged

Davis (also plays Young Arab Daud & Young R.A.F. Enlistee)

Finley (also plays Young Arab Farraj, Other Enlistee & Young R.A.F. Enlistee)

Madge, Finley's girlfriend

Nora, Davis' girlfriend

Policeman

VOICES

Mullah's Voice

Voice (Arab)

2nd Voice (Arab)

3rd Voice (Arab)

Turkish Voice

Voices

Voice

Austrian Voice

Voice (Turkish)

2nd Voice (Turkish)

3rd Voice (Turkish)

Mullah's Voice (different from Mullah's Voice, above)

FRERE LAWRENCE by Thomas F. Rogers.

17M 3F. (can be doubled) 1 Unit Set. 2hrs.

The late private life of T. E. Lawrence derives from Lawrence's posthumously published autobiography, *The Mint*. A military hero of mythic proportions after WW I and dutifully subject to his society's stringent Victorian mores -- so antithetical to his true nature -- he later adopts the surname Shaw and chooses anonymity as a noncommissioned serviceman, thus totally expunging his former identity, a kind of suicide. The noble, neurotic Lawrence evokes our nearly insatiable and often frustrated yearning for intimacy, or as Freud titled it, the "discontent" of "civilization" -- the perhaps most fundamental sociobiological root of everyone's 'double bind,' for which talent and prominence are ultimately no sublimation and often the catalytic source of a deep seated loneliness. Both with a mix of present tense and flashback (derived from Lawrence's classic memoir, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, and through the eyes of so-called intimates, the story unfolds as a nightmare of images and aural effects that weave the fabric of the "genius" known as "Lawrence of Arabia." Contains adult language and situations. **ORDER #3058.**

Thomas F. Rogers –

A former director of the BYU Honors Program, Thomas F. Rogers was a professor of Russian language and literature at Brigham Young University, now retired, and the author of more than a dozen plays, many on Mormon subjects. Four of these have been published in *God's Fools* (Signature Books, 1983), which also received the Association of Mormon Letters Drama Prize that same year. Those titles are **HUEBENER, GOD'S FOOLS** (or **JOURNEY TO GOLGOTHA**), **FIRE IN THE BONES**, and **REUNION**. Other titles include: **THE SECOND PRIEST, THE SEAGULL** (Adapted from the Chekov play), **GENTLE BARBARIAN, FRERE LAWRENCE, CHARADES**, were published in a second anthology entitled *'Huebener' and Other Plays by Thomas F. Rogers*, in 1992. Then **THE ANOINTED**. He has also penned stage adaptations of Dostoevsky's novels, *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*. The former received a BYU production, directed by Tad Danielewski, in which Tom played the role of Marmeladov. In 1995–1996 *God's Fools* was produced (in translation) by a professional repertory theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia. (While Tom was serving as an LDS mission president. He also played the role of the American double spy, Cooper in that production. Later on that mission he directed a Russian language version of *Huebener* in St. Petersburg.

He directed the premiere productions of Robert Vincek's *For the Lions to Win*, Thom Duncan's *Matters of the Heart* and Eric Samuselsen's *Accommodations* as well as States-side productions of *Huebener*. He's also directed Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* (in German) for Deutsches Teater Salt Lake City and Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*, Pirandello's *It Is So If You Think So* and Pinter's *The Caretaker* for the BYU Department of Theatre.

Cited by Eugene England as "undoubtedly the father of modern Mormon drama," he received the Mormon Arts Festival's Distinguished Achievement Award in 1998 and in 2002 a Lifetime Service Award from the Association of Mormon Letters.

His latest published stories appeared in the Summer 1991 issue of *Dialogue* (receiving an annual *Dialogue* fiction award) and in the collection *Christmas for the World*. Rogers was once the editor of *Encyclia*, journal of the Utah Academy, and author of a critical monograph, *Myth and Symbol in Soviet Fiction* (The Edwin Mellen Press). He studied at the Yale School of Drama and holds degrees from the University of Utah, Yale, and Georgetown. He has also studied theater in Poland and Russian at Moscow State University and taught at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and the University of Utah. Rogers' theatrical activity includes acting and directing in addition to writing plays. He has traveled extensively in Russia, Eastern Europe, and India. He and his wife Merriam are the parents of seven children, thirty-eight grandchildren and, so far, three great-grandchildren. They reside in Bountiful, Utah.

Frere Lawrence

ACT ONE

Scene One -- May 10, 1935. Clouds Hill, Bovington, England. While the stage is still dark, a repeated swishing sound is heard—the sound of a leather lash or whip on bare flesh, which will recur, where indicated, throughout the play. The swishing sound, accompanied by a man's faint moans and stifled cry, continues as the lights rise on the study of a pleasant English cottage. The room's furnishings include a mounted display of Middle Eastern swords; a low but large circular table surrounded by ornate hassocks that serve as chairs; and a long, elevated pillow-laden window seat with the view behind it of a country garden. On the table are balls of cotton and a bottle of wood alcohol. The entire set rests on a two-step high level, whose downstage edge also serves as a kind of low, open porch. A walkway fronts the set at stage level and continues around it to a pair of steps which are used to enter the study from outside. In each case, those coming to the cottage cross before the set on the walkway from an offstage lane. Lawrence's flashback reveries of Arabia take place in the area of the porch and walkway. When actors become the personae of these reveries, they move directly to this area from the study, ignoring the convention of a downstage wall. The bedroom from which Lawrence and Hainsworth first appear is offstage, at the same level as the study.

(After several beats the swishing abruptly stops and, with it, the cries and moans. After several more beats, Lawrence, shirtless, limps onstage from the interior entrance, buckling his belt. He is forty-seven, short, thin, frail in build and prematurely grey. He wears slippers and khaki trousers. His bare back displays a number of fresh, raw welts. He kneels on a hassock and, with outstretched arms, supports himself against the table, breathing heavily and wincing with pain. Throughout the scene, he continues to wince and move stiffly whenever he changes position.)

Lawrence: You can come in now.

(Hainsworth, taller and slightly younger than Lawrence but the latter's approximate age, enters the room, carrying a riding crop. He wears the blue fatigue uniform of a noncommissioned officer in the R.A.F. with stripes representing years of service.)

Hainsworth: Are you all right?

Lawrence: *(irritably)* Of course I'm all right. You can see I'm not unconscious.

Hainsworth: Did I hurt you...badly, I mean?

Lawrence: Of course you did. That's what you're hired to do, isn't it? Hurt me as badly as you can without killing me or rendering permanent injury?

Hainsworth: *(moving to behind Lawrence and tenderly touching a spot on his back)* I cut you badly there.

Lawrence: *(catching his breath and involuntarily shuddering)* Yes.... Now try this other spot—on the opposite shoulder.

(HAINSWORTH touches another spot. Again, LAWRENCE shudders.)

Not there. Farther down.

Hainsworth: *(Touching him again)* There?

Frere Lawrence by *Thomas F. Rogers*

Lawrence: Yes...yes...oww!!

Hainsworth: (*Taking the alcohol and cotton and beginning to dab Lawrence's back*) If this doesn't staunch the bleeding, I'll have to dress it....

Lawrence: (*as Hainsworth continues to treat him*) Why do you do this? That's what I'd like to know. What could ever induce a man to torture another man so?

Hainsworth: That's simple. It's the twenty pence a whack your uncle sends me through the post. And because you let me.

Lawrence: (*angry*) I only let you because I have to, don't you understand? Because my uncle requires it.

Hainsworth: But why?

Lawrence: Because he thinks I deserve the punishment.

Hainsworth: Do you?

Lawrence: Of course, I don't!

Hainsworth: Then why do you permit it?

Lawrence: Because he's my uncle. I've told you that already—my late father's brother. He's my judge. He has charge of me.

Hainsworth: At your age, man? You're retired already!

Lawrence: That's how it is in families like mine.

Hainsworth: I'd rebel. I wouldn't put up with it.

Lawrence: There's that inheritance too, remember. My uncle wrote you all about that, didn't he?

Hainsworth: Yes, you have to please him to be eligible when he dies. When do you think he'll die?

Lawrence: I don't know. He's old but still healthy.

Hainsworth: Bad luck!

Lawrence: Yes.

Hainsworth: At this rate, he'll outlive you—what with all these beatings.

Lawrence: I know. How many was it today?

Hainsworth: He prescribed twenty-seven with the last payment. That's five shillings forty. Best wages I've ever earned for ten minutes' work.

Lawrence: You enjoy it, don't you?

Hainsworth: (*blinking his eyes*) I enjoy the money, that's all!

Lawrence: You enjoy beating me too—you lose yourself in the force of those lashes!

Hainsworth: (*flustered*) I just try to do my job as best I can. I've always tried to do the best job possible...be worthy of my pay.

Lawrence: You don't think about that when you beat me. I can tell. It gives you pleasure. It excites you, doesn't it? You'd do it now, without being paid to, wouldn't you? Well? You can't deny it, can you? So tell me why you do it. What gives a man such perverse pleasure? Why do you enjoy beating me?

Hainsworth: There's a question I should ask first: Why is it done?

Lawrence: I've told you a hundred times. My uncle, who made numerous inquiries before he found someone both willing and eager to fulfill his commission—

Hainsworth: You'd submit if there were no inheritance. I can tell. You would, wouldn't you? Well, where's your denial?

Lawrence: I...I...

Frere Lawrence by *Thomas F. Rogers*

(screaming)

Take your hands off me!! This is shameful! You're right! Why should I allow this? No inheritance was ever worth such degradation. And now I shall take this matter into my own hands. How dare my uncle. Family honor has its limits too. I see that. I was *used*. My respect for others.... And how did *you* ever dare touch me? What was wrong with me to allow it?

(Looking Hainsworth straight in the eye, matter-of-factly and utterly honest)

It's mad, isn't it?

Hainsworth: *(equally matter-of-fact, equally honest)* Yes, I believe it is.

Lawrence: We're both mad, aren't we?

Hainsworth: I suppose we are.

Lawrence: *(Turning on him)* You will leave this cottage at once and never again darken my threshold.

Hainsworth: All right.

Lawrence: And you will tell my uncle—

Hainsworth: I don't know your uncle. I've never met him.

Lawrence: You will *write* my uncle to the effect that—

Hainsworth: *(moving to the exit)* You can write your uncle yourself. Goodbye!

Lawrence: *(as Hainsworth descends the outer steps)* Wait!!

(Hainsworth hesitates.)

Please!!

(Hainsworth slowly turns back, facing Lawrence in the doorway.)

I...I don't want to keep you from the extra income.

Hainsworth: It's not worth it, if you insult me like this.

Lawrence: I'm sorry.

Hainsworth: Are you sure?

Lawrence: *(almost weeping)* Yes, I'm sorry. Very sorry.

Hainsworth: It's not the first time you've had to tell me that.

Lawrence: I know. Forgive me. Please....

Hainsworth: All right. I forgive you.

Lawrence: When will you be back?

Hainsworth: I'll be back soon. With a couple of recruits. They want to do some fishing. Is that all right?

Lawrence: Yes.

Hainsworth: I'll tend to you again while they're at the brook.

Lawrence: All right. Before you go, could you help settle me...

(Gesturing toward the window seat)

...over there on those pillows?

(Hainsworth goes to him, assisting him to the window seat.)

I'm too sore down below to sit anywhere else.

Hainsworth: *(with sudden tenderness)* Are you all right now?

Lawrence: Yes...I'll be all right.

Hainsworth: I'll be going then.

Lawrence: *(as Hainsworth reaches the doorway)* Hainsworth!

Hainsworth: Yes?

Lawrence: (*also tenderly*) Thank you—for all you do for me.

Hainsworth: (*staring at him, then softly*) Glad to be of help....

(Hainsworth abruptly turns and descends the steps. As he moves across the walkway and offstage, the lights fade, leaving a single spot on Lawrence, now seventeen years more youthful, in carriage and demeanor remarkably vital and self-confident, though throughout the scene he sits, immobile, his legs drawn into him on the seat, Buddha-like. The lighting of the scrim behind him has now changed to suggest the interior of an oriental tent. The speeches which henceforth interrupt Lawrence's lines and to which he responds appear to come from various persons in his immediate vicinity, invisible to the audience but whom he faces, each in turn, and to whom he gestures as he speaks with them. Their voices markedly contrast with his by their Middle Eastern accents. As Lawrence begins to speak, he picks up a light blanket, which lies, folded, among the pillows on the window seat. Without appearing to notice, he unfolds it and places it on his head and shoulders in a way that resembles an Arab headdress. This he continues to wear till the end of the scene.)

Lawrence: (*coming suddenly alive*) Yes. And now, my fellow chieftains, as deputy for the Sheik of all Sheiks, whom you each recognize as your chosen leader, King Feisal, I herewith depose as the self-appointed provisional leaders of the new Damascus city government the Algerian chieftains Abdel Kader and Mohammed Said—

(A dagger hurtles past Lawrence, embedding itself in a post behind him. Then coolly)

Arrest that man! In place of said usurpers I appoint King Feisal's fellow tribesman, Shukri Pasha Ayulu, as Military Governor and his cousin, Nuri Said, as Commandant of all Arab and Middle Eastern troops.

(Vociferous cheers from a score of men.)

Voice: (*confidentially, over the cheers*) Will the English and Australians not come then?

Lawrence: (*whispering back*) I fear not that the English might not come. I'm only sorry that afterwards they might not go. Meanwhile send to the Turkish barracks for their commander. Bring him back under guard.

(To the crowd)

Please, please calm yourselves. I share your joy that this day we entered the Turk's last stronghold, that he capitulated to us and is no more a menace to the brave nomad sons of Allah!

(Further cheers.)

Please. Please. We must immediately organize the affairs of this great city or be plagued with even worse ills than the Turks ever brought upon us. Please!... There. That's better. Take notes, Nasir.

Second Voice: With honor, most noble Urens!

Lawrence: There are complaints about the water supply. The conduit is fouled with dead men and animals.

Draft emergency regulations and appoint a labor corps to free the conduit. And, Nuri, recruit a fire brigade and prepare scavenger gangs to clear all pestilent streets. Also ration out your doctors among the hospitals. Distribute damaged food from the army storehouses.

Second Voice: It will be gone in two days, precious Urens. There are no more stocks in Damascus.

Lawrence: Get temporary supplies from the nearby villages. For routine feeding we need the railway. Re-engage drivers, firemen, mechanics, and traffic staff immediately—and linesmen to put the system in repair.

The shops must quickly reopen and resume trade with acceptable currency.

First Voice: The Australians have looted millions in Turkish notes, oh Urens.

Lawrence: Then design a new currency.

First Voice: According to thy will, mighty Urens.

Lawrence: Next appoint an engineer to superintend the powerhouse and charge him at all pains to illuminate the town by nightfall. Streetlights will insure relative order and quiet and be a signal proof of peace.

Third Voice: But what of the prisons, noble Urens? Both the inmates and their warders have altogether vanished.

Lawrence: Then make an amnesty of it. But all must be disarmed. When I leave here in another month the Syrians must have their own de facto government, free of foreign advisors like myself, though their land has been so long occupied and wasted by war.

(Meanwhile Hainsworth, now in the uniform of an Australian major, appears as before, from offstage, and approaches Lawrence.)

Hainsworth: *(in an Australian accent)* Do you think that possible, Sir?

Lawrence: Ah. The Australian commander. Possible or not, Sir, it's the only way.

Hainsworth: My troops are outside the gate, waiting for my order to enter. But before they do, I wish to register a complaint.

Lawrence: Complaint?

Hainsworth: Some of the Arab troops have been slack about saluting Australian officers.

Lawrence: You don't say!

Hainsworth: I also understand that, when I bring my troops in, they'll be passing in review before the town hall--

Lawrence: That's the principal route.

Hainsworth: And are expected to salute the Arab flag.

Lawrence: That would be quite proper.

Hainsworth: Sir, we are perhaps not so acclimatized as you in that womanish costume—

Lawrence: *(with sudden rage)* Sir?

Hainsworth: But that is neither here nor there. My point is that—speaking for myself and, I'm sure, for all *my* men—we would find it gravely difficult to salute any flag except the British.

Lawrence: *(regaining his composure)* Then as a compromise, dear Major, let's leave out the town hall and invent another route—say by the post office.

Hainsworth: The post office? But His Majesty's Imperial Australian Forces deserve full attendance during their march through. Incidentally, would you recommend that I and my driver appear at the head or in the middle of the formation?

Lawrence: Sir, I don't think it really matters.

Hainsworth: I beg your pardon, Sir. This is a most historic moment, and, for the historical record, His Majesty's protocol deserves the most impeccable care.

Lawrence: His Majesty's?

Hainsworth: Do you presume to disagree?

Lawrence: Sir, I really do not care if you crawl under or flow over your troops when they enter the city—or split yourself to march on both sides of them. I am here on His Majesty's loan, as it were, to our allies, the sovereign Arab sheiks, and have been so since the beginning of the war. I am presently charged with preserving public order, and I therefore suggest that, however you accompany them, you keep your troops

Frere Lawrence by *Thomas F. Rogers*

beyond the city walls tonight because tonight will see such a carnival as this town has not beheld for at least six hundred years, and its hospitality might disrupt your troops' discipline. There will not, I believe, be much saluting tonight on either side—at least not the kind you would recognize.

Hainsworth: This is an outrage! I'll—

Lawrence: Kindly stand aside, Sir. Make room for this runner....

Third Voice: The Algerians have gathered their forces and staged a rebellion.

Lawrence: I see. I was persuaded we should have seized and shot their arrogant leaders before they left us but could not make myself fear their mischief, nor set the new government an example of precautionary murder. They'll either lie low or be too distracted by the revelry till morning. Meanwhile, what preparations will you make, Nuri Said?

First Voice: When dawn first hints itself, oh clever Urens, we will move our men through the upper suburbs, driving the rioters toward the river where the streets cross bridges and are easy to control. These will be generously covered by machine-gunners.

Lawrence: You remember well.

First Voice: The Algerians need not concern us. Today they celebrate their victory. But by this time tomorrow they will be as repentant—those still alive—as our Turkish prisoners.

Lawrence: Expel with them the predatory Druse. Make sure they drop all their booty.

First Voice: Yes, fair Urens.

Third Voice: Majestic Urens, the Turkish commander.

Lawrence: Good. Please come forward. I have an urgent question.

Turkish Voice: Question?

Lawrence: What have you been doing today?

Turkish Voice: Today?

Lawrence: About your sick and dead?

Turkish Voice: They cannot help us now.

Lawrence: I see.... Well then, let me describe for you the experience I had this morning when I visited the Turkish hospital adjacent to your barracks: I was met by a putrid stench and as sickening a sight. The stone floor was covered with corpses, some in full uniform, some stark naked. The creeping rats had already gnawed wet galleries into them. Some were nearly fresh, others swollen twice life-width, their black mouths laughing across jaws harsh with stubble. A few had burst open and were liquescent with decay. Beyond was a great room, from which I thought there came a groan. I trod to it. The soft mat of bodies, yellow with dung, crackled dryly under me. Inside the ward the air was raw and still and the filled beds so quiet that I thought these too were dead, each man rigid on his stinking pallet, liquid muck dripping down to stiffen on the floor. Suddenly I heard a sigh and turned to meet the open beady eyes of an outstretched man. "Pity, pity," rustled from his twisted lips. Several more tried to lift their hands, which then fell back again upon their beds. By the count our doctors made later in the day, there are presently fifty-six dead, two hundred dying and seven hundred men dangerously ill but still lying in that contaminated, stench-filled hospital. Men no longer of any use to you, you say. But human beings nonetheless. Men we would have gladly shot at if we could until today, but who now deserve to live if they can or at least to have a burial. Just so the citizens of Damascus and all the rest of us deserve, if possible, not to be infected by the epidemic that will surely arise if they aren't tended to. And so, Commander, I am now issuing you an order, which your life depends

upon immediately fulfilling. Do you understand?

Turkish Voice: I understand.

Lawrence: There is a plot of land near the barracks which will shortly be occupied by the officers of our allied troops. You will form a labor party made up of the fifty most able-bodied prisoners. Under Arab escort, you and they will then construct stretchers, proceed to the hospital and remove the corpses. Some will lift easily. Others you may need to scrape up piecemeal with shovels. You will then dig a trench on that plot of land—

Hainsworth: I beg your pardon, Sir. My translator just explained to me, and—well, I must protest. We had foreseen that plot of land as a...well, as a place to promenade, as a kind of garden. And I'm afraid that, with what you have in mind, it would be a rather unfit place.

Lawrence: (*ignoring him*) You needn't make it too large. The mass will be fluid enough that each newcomer, when he's tipped in, will fill in any spaces and perfectly jelly-out the edges of the pile with his weight. Then we'll provide enough lime to do the rest before you cover them.

Hainsworth: I protest, Sir. The smell, even if they're well buried, might drive us from the place.

Lawrence: Major, I hope to Heaven it will!!

Hainsworth: Did I hear you right, Sir?

Lawrence: Please, Major, no more protestations. It's been a very long day. And it's time for prayer. We must be respectfully silent.

(Lawrence resumes his earlier immobile posture.)

Mulla's Voice: "Allah alone is great. There are no gods but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet. Come to prayer. Come to safety. Allah alone is great. There is no god but Allah."

(In a softer, more personal mood)

And He is very good to us this day, O people of Damascus.

(The lights dim.)

Scene Two -- May 10, 1935. *The same. An attractive, well-dressed woman, in her sixties but looking younger than her age, Charlotte Shaw, enters from outside, removes her coat and searches the room's surfaces—shelves, chests and tables—then, noticing a wastebasket, removes from it a crumpled sheet of paper and reads to herself, aloud.*

Charlotte: "The R.A.F. pays us for all twenty-four hours at three halfpence each. We are paid to work, to eat, to sleep. Impossible to dignify a job by doing it well. It must take as much time as it can, for afterwards there is no fireside waiting, but another job. The gods allow us in our hut just long enough to clean it, our brass, leather and cloth—and they make the hut bare and regimental so we will not want to linger there. Our days pass in dusty offices or squalid kitchens to and from which we hurry at a quick-step in fours through the verdant beauty of the park and its river valley: the stamp of our armored feet fighting down the thrushes' twitters and the calling of rooks in the high elms." ...Oh, Lawrence. The poet in you creeps through despite yourself. And such a good one. You insist on rejecting him, don't you?

(Charlotte reverently smooths out the paper, impulsively kisses it, then places it in her purse.

Looking about the room as before)

But where's the rest?

(She opens her purse again and removes the same crumpled piece of paper. As she does so, a receipt falls from her purse to the floor, which she fails to notice. She is about to bring the paper to her lips a second time when suddenly high-spirited voices are heard. Their accents are thick Cockney. Hainsworth, dressed as before in R.A.F. fatigues, and two couples, in their early twenties, Davis and Nora and Finley and Madge, appear from offstage. Davis and Finley carry fishing tackle and wear the blue fatigues of new recruits. Hainsworth carries the riding crop he did in ACT ONE, Scene One. Conversing, they proceed along the walkway. Overhearing them, Charlotte turns and faces the door.)

Finley: *(To Hainsworth and Davis)* So the corporal ordered Davis here to get a haircut.

Madge: *(To Nora)* He was no gain, Nora. Only eighteen-years-old. Still uncooked. With legs that curved like a seal's.

Finley: But Sergeant Taffy comes along just then an' orders him back in formation: "There's more cheese on your knob than hair on your block," says he. "So next time when the corporal countermands my orders, just drop your slacks and flash it." Did I laugh!

Madge: He'd powder his cheeks after scraping the thin down from them and perfume his hair an' teeth.

Davis: Till he saw you an' put you in punishment parade.

Madge: But he still stinks in the armpits and feet.

(They enter the cottage.)

Finley: It was worth it. Imagine, Davis the preacher, flashing his—
(seeing Charlotte for the first time)

Oh!

(Noticing Charlotte, all become momentarily silent.)

Madge: *(in a whispering tone, but loud enough to be overheard)* Finley, what a swell dame!

Finley: Bejeez!

Davis: Beg your pardon, Ma'am. We didn't know Mr. Shaw had company.

Charlotte: Mr. Shaw ?

Hainsworth: Lately of the R.A.F. Mechanic and company photographer. Retired three months back. You must know him to be in his house like this.

Charlotte: Oh, yes. Of course. It's just that you all startled me as much as I must have startled you. You must be friends of his—from the R.A.F. camp down the lane.

Hainsworth: We are. I am anyway. I'm Sergeant Hainsworth. This is Private Davis and Private Finley. And their lady friends.

Madge: I'm Madge. This is Nora.

Nora: Pleased to meet you.

Hainsworth: I come here twice a week to visit Corporal Shaw—ex-Corporal Shaw—and for the fishing.

Finley: According to Hainsworth the fishing's very good in that brook over there.

Madge: And we like to help the men fish.

(giggling)

Don't we, Nora?

Nora: *(coyly)* Speak for yourself, Madge.

Hainsworth: Davis and Finley wanted to try their luck.

Madge: (*giggling*) Hear that, Nora?

Nora: Hush!

Hainsworth: We're on Holiday. I thought Mr. Shaw wouldn't mind. He hasn't mixed with the troops for some time now.

Charlotte: I'm sure Mr. Shaw will gracefully receive them.

Finley: Who are you, might we be askin'? Didn't think the Sergeant an' his buddies had such high-toned friends.

Charlotte: Well, I...I represent a publishing house. I'm an agent. I'm assisting Mr. Shaw to publish his reminiscences, now that he's retired. They're about life in the R.A.F.—the experiences of enlisted men like yourselves.

Finley: Must be boring and sad, eh, Davis?

Davis: Does he write then?

Charlotte: Yes. In fact, he's quite a fine writer.

Nora: Has it a title?

Charlotte: He calls it *The Mint*.

Finley: That's a good one, all right—"mint." Like a "mold," you mean, where they press you into the same shape an' form as everyone else?

Charlotte: Yes, something like that.

Finley: An' make mincemeat of you if you let them!

Charlotte: I was just looking for the latest installment. But it doesn't seem to be anywhere at hand.

(*Taking her coat*)

tell you what—I have another errand to run nearby. And my driver's just outside the gate. I'll come back when Mr. Shaw is here. Was he expecting you?

Hainsworth: He was, Ma'am.

Charlotte: Then I'll return within the hour and pick up his writing. Would you tell him that for me?

Hainsworth: We will, Ma'am.

Charlotte: Well...goodbye then.

Hainsworth: Goodbye, Ma'am.

(*Charlotte leaves.*)

Madge: Some digs!

Finley: That's one nice cycle out there too.

Nora: He's just rentin' the place. Ain't that what you said, Sergeant?

Hainsworth: That's right.

Nora: (*noticing the fallen receipt*) What's this?

Davis: (*Taking it from her and reading*) Foyle's Book Store, London. Receipt for twelve pounds six, made out to Mrs. Charlotte Shaw.

Nora: *Shaw.*

Madge: *Missuz*, too. Did yuh catch that?

Finley: I thought your friend weren't married.

Hainsworth: He's not.

Madge: You mean he's keepin' this woman here, an' she's just pretendin' to be his wife? Why, Hainsworth, you

Frere Lawrence by Thomas F. Rogers

got some sportin' friends.

(Meanwhile Lawrence, in plain shirt and slacks, comes on to the walkway from offstage, fishing tackle and notebook in hand. He is about to ascend the steps when, hearing Madge's voice, he hesitates, then steps back to the porch corner, where he sits, listening to the others' conversation. He seems particularly attentive at the sound of Davis' and Finley's voices.)

Hainsworth: I don't believe Mr. Shaw was ever that interested in women—not that I could tell.

Madge: She looks too old to be his wife.

Nora: Maybe she's his sister or his cousin. That's the Christian way to view it—ain't it, Davis?

Davis: Why, yes, I'd say so.

Madge: She's some fancy woman.

(To Finley)

Glad she's not any younger or she'd turn your head twice around, wouldn't she, pigeon pie?

Finley: She's got too many manners. They'd get in the way.

(Again, the sounds of a lash on bare flesh. As Finley speaks, Lawrence stands and faces downstage. Immediately after he delivers his line, Finley and Davis gambol, like young boys, straight to the porch and face Lawrence. Their voices are suddenly more youthful and bear heavy Arabic accents.)

Davis: We're for your service.

Lawrence: I have no need of you. I'm a simple man and dislike servants.

(Davis turns away, tense and angry.)

Finley: *(kneeling, with longing, supplicating tones)* But you must have men, majestic Urens.

Lawrence: *(Turning, as if to one behind him)* What should I do?

Second Arab Voice: Take them.

Lawrence: Can I trust them?

Second Voice: Yes.

Lawrence: Have they vices?

Second Voice: No vices. They're still too young.

Lawrence: What are your names?

Finley: *(still kneeling)* Farraj.

Lawrence: And you there.... I say, I'm addressing you. Do you hear me?

Davis: *(slowly turning to face him, then almost inaudibly)* Daud....

Lawrence: What?

Finley: His name's Daud.

Lawrence: All right, Farraj, Daud. I'll take you as camel boys into my service.

(Davis and Finley abruptly break into gleeful smiles, embrace each other, twirl, then rush to Lawrence, kiss his hands and as quickly rush back to their previous positions with the others in the study.)

Finley: *(calling back to Lawrence)* You will not regret this, wonderful Urens!

(Meanwhile, Lawrence resumes his position on the porch, opening his notebook and writing in it, while still half listening to the others' conversation.)

Nora: Meself, I admire people with education, refined folk who have a way with words.

Davis: So long as they're not too proud and godless. Most get that way, best I can tell.

Nora: Oh, I agree.

Hainsworth: Shaw's not like that at all. If anything, he's too humble. And very polite.

Nora: Didn't you tell us ladies he wouldn't offend us with his language, Mr. Hainsworth—that he never swore?

Hainsworth: That's right. I never heard him.

Madge: Sounds prissy to me.

(Caressing Finley)

I like a man knows how to use naughty words. Don't you, Nora?

Nora: Course not.

Madge: Now don't be puttin' on airs yourself.

Nora: And don't you be embarrassin' me. I've reformed.

Madge: Since you met Davis, you mean? Mighty fast, I'd say.

Nora: Salvation is "instant" and "forever." Just ask Davis.

Finley: Only fun we get is practicin' semaphore with them flags an' sendin' dirty messages across the valley. Or when the chaplain reads us Saint Paul's catalogue, tickin' off on our fingers the things we still haven't tried. A man don't enjoy stuff like that—well, I think somethin's wrong with him.

Madge: I wouldn't want anythin' to do with him.

(Sound of lashing. Finley and Hainsworth move to the porch, as Davis and Finley did earlier. They play other enlistees during Lawrence's earlier days in the R.A.F.)

Hainsworth: Just three more weeks, McGuinness, an' they'll quit callin' us "new" recruits.

Finley: At least we get out weekends, Jonesy. I need a woman bad!

Hainsworth: An' I need a lot of drinks.

Finley: What's Mister doin' over there? Writin' in his damn book again?

Lawrence: *(oblivious, his back to them, reading from his notebook)* "The desert landscape would cleanse the mind with its superfluous greatness—not by addition of thought but by subtraction. Earth's weakness mirrors the strength of heaven—so vast, so beautiful, so strong...."

Hainsworth: Guess so.

Finley: That's a bunch of shit!

(To Lawrence)

Hey, Mister...!

Lawrence: *(Turning to the others, still seated)* Yes?

Finley: What time's it now, Mister?

Lawrence: *(checking his wristwatch)* Almost eight twenty-three.

Finley: Thank you, Mister. An' you know somethin' else?

Lawrence: What?

Finley: What them other blokes has started to say 'round here?

Lawrence: It doesn't matter.

Finley: *(going to him, threatening)* Not to you, maybe. But it matters to me. You see, there's this girl...

(Touching Lawrence, to make his point)

...hips like pendulums!

Lawrence: Don't touch me!!

Hainsworth: Settle down!

Frere Lawrence by *Thomas F. Rogers*

Finley: Them blokes is startin' to say things about us too. So you better come with us tonight when we go to the pub.

Hainsworth: Come on, Shaw. You won't have to touch one.

Lawrence: All right—but just for a drink.

Finley: *(moving away from LAWRENCE and becoming to HAINSWROTH, in a low voice)* That's right. We'll just get him there for a few drinks, then see if he'll go for somethin' else. Wanna make a bet?

Hainsworth: I'd rather not.

Finley: *(in a louder voice, audible to LAWRENCE)* Hell, I gotta look good to Claire with the company I keep. Been workin' on her two weeks now.

Hainsworth: You'll get her there.

Finley: Where?

Hainsworth: You know where!

(Guffawing, both men rejoin the others, as before, in the study.)

Finley: *(calling to Lawrence)* Hey, Shaw. That was a funny one. You're s'posed to be laughin' too.

(Meanwhile, still sitting on the porch, Lawrence has turned away and resumed writing in his notebook. He remains oblivious to the others' conversation, and they to him.)

Nora: Davis don't do any of them things. He never swears. An' he's as much a man as you, Finley. He makes me want to be me better self.

Davis: Praise God!

Madge: That's 'cause Davis intends to be a preacher. But you have to fight down that other too, don't you, Davis?

Davis: All men are evil. The Holy Word says so.

Nora: See how humble he is!

Finley: That's what I always believed too. So, if I can't help it, I might as well enjoy it.

Davis: Christ will save you if you just admit you're a sinner.

Finley: Oh, I do. I do.

Madge: I do too.

Davis: An' accept His holy grace.

Finley: Why not?

Madge: Oh, I want the dear Savior's grace. I'd never turn it down.

Davis: *(fervently)* Then it's yours.

Nora: Praise God! Davis, you were the instrument. Two more saved souls!!

Davis: How about you, Sergeant Hainsworth? Have you been saved yet?

Hainsworth: I was baptized once. Methodist.

Davis: Do you acknowledge your sins too?

Hainsworth: Of course.

Davis: Christ will save you then.

Nora: Praise God! Three in the same mornin'!! This is excitin'! Maybe Mr. Shaw needs savin' too.

Davis: There's no doubt *he* needs saving. The Spirit called us to come here today--an' Sergeant Hainsworth to invite us.

Hainsworth: Well, I don't know about that.

Nora: That's so. It was pure inspiration.

Madge: (*winking*) That'll depend on how good the fishin' is, won't it, Finley?

Hainsworth: I've never heard Shaw swear, but I've never heard him mention God either.

Finley: Then what makes him tick? If he's not afraid of hell fire, he oughta have somethin' to show for what's inside of him.

Madge: Unless there ain't anythin' there.

Finley: Yeah. Maybe he's like one of his fish that's been pulled out of the stream and already gutted.

Nora: There's that woman now, Charlotte Shaw.

Madge: Probably just his cousin, from what Hainsworth says.

Nora: Guess so.

Hainsworth: Shaw's a very good man. Generous. Hard worker. Real smart. Just...very quiet and to himself.

Madge: Shy type, huh?

Davis: But not religious?

Hainsworth: No. But, like I say, polite. Very polite.

Madge: You are too, Hainsworth. Polite an' kind of shy. I don't mind shy men neither. If you wasn't so much older, I'd have eyes for you too...

(Poking Finley in the ribs)

Just kiddin', pigeon!

Finley: (*winking back*) His ridin' crop is probably what excites yuh. That why you brought it, Sergeant? Never saw it before today.

Hainsworth: I only bring it with me when I come here.

Finley: To show off, eh?

Madge: It's cute.

(The sound of lashes begins and continues until the beginning of Lawrence's next reverie.)

Finley: I could take a little more politeness from them other sergeants.

Madge: Yes, you could, dovey.

Finley: In fact, I'm not right sure I'm going to make it through training.

Madge: Of course you are.

(Davis and Finley run again to the porch. Now they both cower in fright before Lawrence, who turns and stands over them. Their accents are again those of the camel boys, Farraj and Daud.)

Lawrence: What have you done this time?

Finley: (*whimpering*) In our frolic we burnt a tent.

Davis: Will they turn us out?

Finley: Will they first mutilate us?

(Lawrence walks to the corner of the porch where he sat previously. Facing downstage, he appears to lift the flap of a tent and to scan the horizon.)

Lawrence: I see the smoke. The sky seems black with it. The sun red as blood. Sandstorm coming.

Finley: Please save us, beloved Urens.

Davis: You must intervene for us, gracious Urens.

Finley: Just one word from you, kind Urens...

(Davis and Finley bend to the ground in supplication. Lawrence continues to stare into space, then

Frere Lawrence by Thomas F. Rogers

slowly turns toward Davis and Finley. He approaches them, as in a trance, kneels before them, then slowly lifts their heads, wipes their faces, and gently kisses their cheeks. Davis and Finley impulsively fall against Lawrence's chest and nestle their heads in his embrace. They hold this position for several beats—a kind of twin pieta. Then Lawrence releases his arms, and, while still facing him, Davis and Finley rise and return to their former places in the study. Meanwhile, Lawrence remains kneeling, his hands coming gradually to his sides as in prayer. He remains in this posture for several more speeches.)

Davis: It's a matter of faith, Finley.

Finley: Faith? Why, just yesterday Sergeant Taffy comes up to me, wrinkles his nose an' says, "When did you last have a bath?" "Yesterday, Sergeant," says I. An' that was the truth.

Madge: (*winking at Nora*) I'm glad.

Finley: "Open your collar," says he. He looks down my shirt. "The bloody man's lousy," he yells. Of course I was sweaty after all that drill. So was everyone. "You an' you"—him pointin' to others of his dislikes—"march the filthy scum to the washhouse an' scrub the 'you-know-what' out of him." I'd like to strangle that Sergeant Taffy in his sleep, I would. Why can't you be our drillmaster, Hainsworth? You're the only decent noncom around.

Madge: That's why they don't let him drill yuh, I bet.

Hainsworth: Now you've learned that your inspected part is from the hair on the neck to the edge of the gym vest. You need to wash that much every day—and clean and polish your brass. Hot baths don't count. They're a luxury.

(Lawrence has meanwhile stepped from the porch to the walkway and now proceeds to the steps.)

Finley: They inspect us closer than the airmen. And new equipment's harder to clean. They give us meaner tasks, treat us like stock.

Davis: They care at least about our material interests.

Nora: But shouldn't the men be more considered than their food or clothes?

Finley: There's no consideration when they drill us, I tell you.

Lawrence: (*appearing in the doorway*) It's to make you tough, young man.

Hainsworth: Shaw!

Lawrence: Brought new recruits, I see.

Hainsworth: And their lady friends.

Davis: Didn't think you'd mind.

Lawrence: Certainly not. Good luck with your fishing. I'll have some dinner for you later in the day.

Davis: Don't mean to impose on your hospitality.

Finley: I don't mind.

Nora: Shhh!

Lawrence: It's my pleasure.

Hainsworth: He's a dandy fine cook, I tell you.

Madge: Sounds all right to me.

Lawrence: You can contribute any fish you catch to the main course.

Davis: All right then.

Nora: So you're the man took all them pretty pictures. We saw some once that was on display.

Finley: Make me “tough,” eh? Mold and “mint” me—ain’t that your word for it?

Lawrence: The expression seems right.

Finley: Is that why they make us march one-third faster than trained men? Why we must bang our heels down sharp an’ at every turn about lift high and stamp, stamp, stamp three times before shootin’ the foot in a new direction? Each stamp jarrin’ the back bone right up to the brain? Your head aches for hours after, while your soles burn like fire.

Lawrence: Yes, I remember. I went through it when I was a dozen years older than you. My head still pounds when I think of it.

Finley: An’ if we displease them—which they make sure we will—it’s put on the “punishment kit.”

Madge: “Punishment kit”?

Finley: Drill packs an’ rifles. With sudden stops an’ starts. The cross-straps saw into your shoulders, the rifle bangs an’ bruises your hip till it’s bloody black an’ blue. I can walk fifty miles a day an’ still be fresh but am done in after twenty minutes’ marchin’.

Lawrence: Perfection of drill resides in knowing the man in front, and the man behind, and those on each side. All must bring down their left heels simultaneously, with a slightly marked beat to keep time with that metronome in the brain. This comes with time. It can only be done by a mind absolutely serene. It’s a matter of trust—

Nora: Like faith, you mean?

Lawrence: Then all feet clash as one, and the flight’s a flight and not fifty men. I was a recruit like you not many years back.

Davis: What did you do before that, Mr. Shaw?

Lawrence: I...I took pictures and was something of a drifter.

Nora: How come Davis here don’t complain like you, Finley?

Finley: Because he’s tryin’ to be some kind of saint an’, like he says, it’s all for the glory of God!

Davis: God an’ country.

Lawrence: It probably keeps you calmer than otherwise. When men are rattled they become easier victims. By straining we overshoot or undershoot the order.

Finley: What strain did you ever have takin’ pictures? Me—I’ll be regular infantry all the way. An’ you never had to drill under Sergeant Taffy, I’ll bet.

Lawrence: We are the officers’ beasts, and some will be bad riders.

Nora: Does anyone ever faint?

Davis: Yesterday seven men of the muster either fell out or fainted where they ran.

(Again the sound of lashes. Lawrence turns and moves directly to the porch.)

Lawrence: *(To himself)* Ominous land, incapable of life, hostile even to the passing of it. I fall asleep in the saddle, wakening seconds later and sickeningly, clutching at the saddle post and recovering my balance, thrown by some irregular stride of the animal. Then fall asleep again—nothing to stimulate a thought till afternoon or evening, the forms of the country too neutral to hold my heavy-lidded peering eyes.... The weak envy those tired enough to die. Success seems so remote and failure such certain release from toil....

(Meanwhile, Davis and Finley have followed Lawrence to the porch, where they lie, curled and huddled against each other, as if asleep. The sound of wind. Turning to them)

Boys, it’s time for another day’s ride. Boys, wake up!

Davis: *(half asleep)* Can't...

Finley: *(equally inert and sleepy)* Can't go on.

Lawrence: *(nudging them with his foot)* Get up, I say. The camels are leaving.

Davis: Can't.

Lawrence: It's time.

Finley: Time to die.

Lawrence: Look—I know it seems like madness to make a trek six hundred miles across the peninsula. Never been done, they said. Impossible. But that's why, if we can possibly make it, we'll take the Turk at Aqaba--unaware, with his back to us, his guns trained on the Red Sea—and give our ships access to the Suez Canal. A turning point in the war. Look, there is no going back now. We're two-thirds the way there. We can only go forward. Besides, a sandstorm's brewing. We've got to make it to the next oasis....

(Davis and Finley fail to stir.)

Look. Just get up. Just that much now....

Finley: We can't.

Lawrence: I'll help you....

(With great effort he raises Davis' and Finley's upper bodies until they are supported against his shoulders, much as in the previous tableau. He holds them so that they face each other.)

Now look.

(To Finley)

Look into his eyes.

(Finley looks at Davis.)

Now, you, look into *his* eyes.

(Davis follows suit.)

Now take his hand.

(Davis takes Finley's hand.)

And you his.

(Finley takes Davis' hand.)

Now lift each other.

(With great effort, they manage to do so.)

Keep looking into each other's eyes. That's it. Now follow me.

(Davis and Finley follow Lawrence to their previous positions in the study.)

Hainsworth: *(winking at Lawrence)* It's good luck to be behind a man who faints. With a great parade of effort you and the next fellow lift and carry him to the edge of the square. If he's decently slow in reviving, he'll save you from the rest of the drill.

Finley: Well, I haven't been that lucky yet. You don't know that Taffy. There's a glitter in his face when we sob for breath. His muscles go tight under his clothes, an' once I even saw the excitement rise where it oughtn't.

Madge: Finney, you don't mean it.

Lawrence: The orgasm of Man's vice. I've known other Taffys.

Davis: *(with special innuendo)* I believe you have, Mr. Shaw.

Finley: What? Takin' pictures?

Hainsworth: *(Trying to divert them)* There's only one thing the Air Force can't do, Private Finley.

Finley: What's that?

Hainsworth: Put you in the family way....

(All laugh).

Madge: Did you ever put someone in the family way, Mr. Shaw?

Lawrence: Do I have children, do you mean?

Madge: I guess that's what I mean.

Lawrence: No. I was never married.

Madge: Then that lady really ain't—

Finley: Shut your mouth, Madge.

Lawrence: *(still ignoring their innuendos)* I understand, Private Finley. The service is quite an adjustment. We no longer have standards of our own. Our decency is in the care of the officers and N.C.O.'s, when they remember it; and our honor is what they think good enough for us.

Finley: You talk pretty big, I'd say, Mr. Shaw—for a service photographer. Nobody's ever told you how to make people pose though, have they? You've been the one to give *them* orders.

Lawrence: That's true, I suppose.

Nora: *(noticing a book on one of Lawrence's shelves)* Lookie! Seven Pillars of Wisdom by Lawrence of Arabia. It's got all them stories about genies and magic lamps, don't it?

Davis: That's the Arabian Nights, dummy.

Madge: Now, preacher, that's no way to talk.

Davis: But everyone knows about Lawrence—if they only read the papers.

Nora: Tell me about him. I want to learn.

Davis: I can't believe you never heard of T. E. Lawrence.

Nora: You heard of him, Madge?

Madge: *(poking Finley)* He's just a Greek to me.

Nora: Finley?

Finley: Sure. He's the bloke who thought he was a Arab. Helped them beat the Turks years back. A real smart soldier.

Hainsworth: Probably the most brilliant military strategist of our century.

Nora: In the R.A.F.?

Hainsworth: In all the world.

Madge: Blimey!

Davis: He served in the regular army—but with the Arabs.

Madge: Was he young?

Hainsworth: Amazingly young for the de facto leader of a nation's entire army.

Madge: Must have been quite handsome too.

Hainsworth: I wouldn't rightly know.

Madge: Them Arab girls must have been crazy about him.

Finley: Not in Arabia. The Arabs keep their women wrapped in veils.

Davis: They never meet foreigners.

Madge: Too bad. I'd like to know more about that Lawrence. An' was he really a Englishman?

Davis: So they say.

Finley: What's your opinion, Mr. Shaw? You seem to have a opinion about everything.

Lawrence: Opinion?

Finley: Yeah. Why would a Englishman want to be a Arab?

Lawrence: I guess he was demented.

Finley: Was he really such a big hero—like the Sergeant says? I reckon his smells much the same as mine.

Nora: *(with mock embarrassment)* Gracious!

Lawrence: That's right. Besides, he was a fool.

Davis: Why is that?

Lawrence: He helped us dupe the Arabs. He made them think they'd win their independence. But they simply passed from the protectorate of the Turks to that of the Empire.

Hainsworth: He was innocent about that.

Lawrence: *(suddenly very intent)* He was a fool! It was an Arab war waged and led by Arabs for an Arab aim in Arabia.

(Getting 'carried away' in his thoughts)

We only had to gather them into our hands to oppose the Turks.

Davis: "We" ...?

Lawrence: The British. The Turkish occupation and their mode of war had sent a permanent shock across Arabia. The Turks never took prisoners by the way. They killed them horribly.

(Sounds of lashing.)

So, in mercy, we...

(Suddenly pained, appearing to catch his breath)

—the Arabs, I mean—would finish off the badly wounded they had to leave behind.

(Meanwhile, Finley has come to the porch and lain on his back. Lawrence now joins him, kneeling and cradling his head.)

Lawrence: Where do you hurt?

Finley: *(pointing to his abdomen)* Here.

Lawrence: Can't move, eh?

Finley: No.

Lawrence: Oh, Farraj, why did you ride so recklessly ahead of us? You didn't heed our warning shots either.

Save your breath. Don't bother to explain. You've never been the same since, during the campaign to Azrak, you saw Daud sucked into the quicksand, have you? In a sense you died then too. You were already old and leaden-eyed when you came to tell us. From that day you played no more pranks, made no more laughter.

Oh, you've taken punctilious care, greater than before, of my camel, my saddle and clothes. You never miss your three daily prayers, but otherwise you wander restless, grey, and silent, very much alone. I...I understand.... They say there are fifty Turks working their way up the line toward us. What...must I do?

Finley: *(clutching Lawrence's downstage hand)* You know.... Where's your pistol?

Lawrence: Here, in my other hand. Next to your head.

Finley: Is it loaded?

Lawrence: Of course.

Finley: *(smiling)* Daud will be angry with you.

Lawrence: Salute him for me.

Finley: May Allah give you peace.

(Finley closes his eyes. The sound of a shot. Finley's body jerks. Lawrence quickly turns his head, staring for several beats into space. He then rises and again rejoins the others in the study. Finley rises and does the same.)

Hainsworth: Maybe that made the Arabs fight so well.

Lawrence: Yes. But there's more to it than that: Arab lads take pleasure in subordination, in degrading the body to throw into greater relief their equality of mind. They freely consent to yield to their master the last degree of flesh and blood precisely because their spirits are equal with his and the contract voluntary. Fear, the strongest motive in slothful man, breaks down before love for a cause—or person. The ideal then transcends the personal, our normal measure of the world.

Madge: *(yawning)* What's he saying, lambkins?

Finley: I'm not exactly sure.

Lawrence: Forgive me.

Davis: I understand most Arab men degrade their bodies in other ways—with each other.

Lawrence: By segregating their women and denying equality of sex, the Arabs make love, companionship, and friendliness impossible between man and woman. Man's psychic side can be nurtured only among his peers. Such friendships often lead to loves of a depth and force beyond our flesh-steeped conceit. When innocent they are hot and unashamed. If sexuality enters, they pass into a give-and-take relation, like marriage. Some swear that friends quivering together in the dark, yielding sand find there a coefficient of the warrior passion which welds their spirits and souls into a single flaming effort.

Madge: I still don't follow him.

Nora: Nor me.

Davis: It's just as well.

Nora: Don't natives like that have a terrible smell? They never bathe.

Lawrence: Take your pick: the curdled sourness of dried sweaty cotton in Arab crowds *or* the feral smell of English soldiers—that hot pissy aura of thronged men in woolen clothes, the pungent smell of breath-catching, ammoniacal naphtha.

Finley: What makes you such an expert about Arabs an' all that history an' about who's a fool and who ain't, Mr. Shaw?

Lawrence: I've been one too.

Nora: A Arab?

Lawrence: A fool.

Davis: Well, don't be so foolish as to overlook God an' all He has in store for you, Mr. Shaw. The Lord can cure your bitterness.

Lawrence: You find me bitter?

Davis: Forgive me sayin' this, Mr. Shaw. But God has put the strength in me not to care what you may think of me. Even to be impolite if it can save you. Yes, I find you bitter and also perverted.

Lawrence: A hedonist, you mean?

Davis: An' then some.

Nora: *(carried away with Davis' words)* Give him a try, love.

Lawrence: Who, Private Davis?

Nora: Yes.

Davis: No. Not me!

(Bad-looking her)

God!!

Finley: Time's a wastin'. I'm goin' fishin'.

Madge: Me too.

Finley: You folks stay on this side. We'll take the opposite side of the creek, Madge an' me.

Madge: You have a good time fishin' too, Nora.

(Winking)

An' don't forget what to fish for besides fish.

Nora: Madge, for heaven's sakes!

(Madge giggles as she and Finley leave.)

Hainsworth: Shall we go then?

Davis: Just a minute, Sergeant. I don't want Mr. Shaw to miss the opportunity to be saved.

Hainsworth: The fishing won't be so good later on.

Davis: That's all right. Just now I'm a fisher of men.

Nora: Praise God!

Lawrence: I'm afraid *your* variety of deity doesn't much interest me.

Davis: You're sure?

Lawrence: I'm afraid so.

Davis: I thought as much.... You realize you're makin' a terrible and tragic mistake?

Lawrence: Am I?

Davis: I'm talkin' "powers and principalities."

Lawrence: **So am I.** That's from St. Paul, isn't it?

Davis: Yes. Another time then?

Lawrence: Maybe another time.

Davis: *(Taking Nora's arm)* All right then.

(Picking up Lawrence's copy of Seven Pillars of Wisdom)

I'll take this with me, if I may.

(Davis and Nora leave.)

Hainsworth: I'm sorry. I didn't think they'd—

Lawrence: Of course you didn't. And I got carried away again. It's all right. It's like old times back in the barracks. I've even kind of missed all the fury and bickering.

Hainsworth: Really?

Lawrence: It's company of a kind.

Hainsworth: I'll stay and talk if you like.

Lawrence: Go catch some fish. That's what you came for.

Hainsworth: For that...

(Uneasily)

...and the other business.

Lawrence: Of course. We'd better proceed, I suppose.

Hainsworth: A lady was here.

Lawrence: Oh?

Hainsworth: Said she'd return within the hour.

Lawrence: What lady?

Hainsworth: Said she was an agent for a publisher.

Lawrence: Oh, yes. Mrs. Shaw, I suppose.... No relation, mind you.

Hainsworth: No?

Lawrence: Better wait till after she's gone for your..."business."

Hainsworth: All right then.

Lawrence: I also need to think about some things before you...tend to it....

Hainsworth: (*awkwardly*) Till later then.

(He leaves. Lawrence lapses into reverie, moving about the room, suddenly seating himself, then standing to punctuate the events he describes. During his final lines, Charlotte returns, unnoticed, and observes him from the doorway.)

Lawrence: What's that in the culvert to my left? A lone Turkish soldier. Been sleeping there all day. He glances wildly at the pistol in my hand and then with sadness at his rifle against the abutment, yards beyond. He's young and sulky. We stare....

(softly)

"Allah is merciful." I press my camel's shoulder with my foot and leave him behind.

(sighing)

It's a safe distance now. The little Turk was man enough not to shoot me in the back.

(glancing behind him, chuckling)

He's thumbing his nose and twinkling his fingers at me.... Well, Farraj is no more. Buried yesterday. And these must be those fifty unsuspecting Turks who came up the line. Have you dead any clothing to spare? No. The Bedouin were here already and stripped you to the skin. You're much whiter than the Arabs. The night, shining gently down, has softened you into new ivory. But you're flung about so pitifully....

(Miming)

I'll put you in order, one by one.... I'm so weary myself. I long to be of you quiet ones, not of the noisy, restless, aching mob up the valley, boasting of their speed and strength to endure God knows how many toils and pains like this...

(Suddenly stopping and staring into space, then calling)

Daud! Farraj! Where are you? Why?

Charlotte: Forgive me—

Lawrence: (*quickly recovering himself*) What?

Charlotte: I didn't mean to intrude.

Lawrence: You know you're always welcome.

(He gestures for her to sit down. She does so at one end of the window seat. When Lawrence is not pacing and sits there, it is always at the other end. Despite their words, their postures remain formal and stiffly erect until toward the end of their conversation.)

Charlotte: I came back for the latest pages of The Mint. I can hardly wait to read what you write next. It's so vivid, so real.

Lawrence: For the airman it's all pretty oppressive—and monotonous.

Charlotte: But there's drama in that mundane life—for your readers anyway. It will be another great success.

Lawrence: Your liking it pleases me. It's deliberately raw. Everything in it's about the flesh, man as pure creature—

Charlotte: But therefore growing and also...innocent.

Lawrence: Yes.

(Looking in her eyes)

That's what I want from it.

Charlotte: *(returning his gaze)* I too.... It's splendid. I knew, after reading The Seven Pillars, that we had to have more from you.

Lawrence: It was good of you to read the proofs and catch its many errors.

Charlotte: And of you to provide me a specially bound copy.

Lawrence: I still have the proof copy your husband sent me of Saint Joan.

Charlotte: You don't know how much he thinks of Pillars. He says you pull his leg when you even question if it's a "great book." As for myself, I devoured it as soon as I got hold of it. I couldn't stop. I'm an old woman.

Lawrence: What?

Charlotte: Old enough at any rate to be your mother.

Lawrence: No. Please.

Charlotte: I've met all sorts of men and women of the kind we call distinguished. I've read and discussed their books with them. But I've never read anything like yours. It aroused in me...

Lawrence: Yes?

Charlotte: A...curious excitement, I was going to say. Here was a man far above the usual, and as I read on I knew he had written a remarkable work. More significant for me personally, here was a...

Lawrence: Yes?

Charlotte: *A kindred mind....* Will I ever forget the afternoon I first saw you in the garden at Ayot just after tea? There he stood—my idol.

Lawrence: How could you have thought that? You didn't even know me.

Charlotte: What draws one star into another's orbit?

Lawrence: I know nothing about galaxies and very little about human beings. All I know is that in the garden at Ayot I met a woman. And now I find a poet.

(Retrieving more pages from a drawer and handing them to her)

Here's my "poetry"—The Mint. Almost finished, thanks to you. After all, I'm not a professional writer. It's so hard to straddle both feeling and action. But accident cast me as a man of action in the Arab Revolt, a theme ready to both hand and eye.

Charlotte: In this otherwise mechanical age.

Lawrence: Yes, our 'civilized' century.

Charlotte: Is that why you became an Arab?

Lawrence: As a child I had two aunts. When I was naughty one gave me candy. The other...

(Sound of lashing.)

...beat me. Which did I love the most?

Frere Lawrence by *Thomas F. Rogers*

Charlotte: You put yourself down when you truly belong among the stars.

Lawrence: I lack the wings. Show me how.

Charlotte: Why does what happened in Arabia so embitter you?

Lawrence: You call me bitter too.

Charlotte: From the way you view yourself after all you did there.

Lawrence: It might have been heroic to offer my own life for a cause not mine, but it was a theft of souls to make others die sincerely for my graven image.

Charlotte: Didn't Mr. Churchill straighten the tangle and fulfill your promises to them?

Lawrence: Too late to earn their gratitude.

Charlotte: Is that why you joined the ranks afterward? And changed your name?

Lawrence: Yes. I'm also illegitimate, you know. I guess that worked on me. Accident, achievement, and rumor had built me such a shell as almost prompted me to forget the true shape of the worm inside.

Charlotte: Surely there's more to it than that.

Lawrence: Perhaps. Maybe the affair at Deraa.

Charlotte: It was good of you to write of that.

Lawrence: It was part of the history.

Charlotte: Surely you don't hold Deraa against yourself?

Lawrence: I have to.

Charlotte: You mustn't. That's criminal.

Lawrence: *(almost breaking into tears, then restraining himself)* I can't help it!

Charlotte: *(deliberately changing the subject)* Who else knows who this Mr. Shaw really is—besides GBS, myself and Mr. Churchill?

Lawrence: Mr. Thomas Hardy, whom you and your husband introduced me to. And his friend E.M. Forster. They visit me occasionally, bring me books and records. They're sworn to secrecy. I trust them.

(Smiling)

I used to worry at the barracks about what I'd said in my sleep. None of them would ever tell me. It might have been in Arabic, for all I know. In the morning I'd often get strange looks.

(They both smile.)

They also wondered about my several battle scars. Once my old parchment patent as Minister Plenipotentiary fell onto the floor—"George to his trusty and well-beloved..."—with a seal on it as red and nearly broad as my face. "What's that?" they asked. "My birth certificate," I thought to say, shoveling it out of sight. Another time someone put up a display of photographs: King George, Beatty, Haig, a destroyer at full speed, and a small picture of me from back then—a thing I later slyly conveyed to the incinerator.

Charlotte: Did the R.A.F. serve its purpose then?

Lawrence: Purpose?

Charlotte: Give you the fellowship you'd had with the Arabs?

Lawrence: I am odder here than in Arabia. Those seniors tell dirty stories with a mirthless laugh and the men must echo, mimicking their bully smile. That was always a problem for me. They talk of food and illness, games and pleasures, while with me to recognize our possession of bodies is degradation enough without enlarging upon their attributes. The monotony of their adjectives revolts me. Superlative for everything. Nothing's funny, or vivid or familiar unless it travesties our sexuality. My fastidious throat chokes on their

Frere Lawrence by *Thomas F. Rogers*

oaths and obscenities. My not answering them in kind debars them from cursing me. So in their small talk there's an artificial constraint between us. I could never quite settle for the happiness of those who find the elixir of life in the deep stirring of some seminal gland.

Charlotte: General rumor accuses the troops of common lechery. Is it true?

Lawrence: The troops are you and me, in uniform. Many boast of vice to cover innocence. It has a doggy sound. Whereas work and hard living so nearly exhaust the body that few temptations remain to be conquered. We're accused of sodomy, too: and anyone listening in to a hut of airmen would think it a den of infamy. Yet we are too intimate and too bodily soiled to attract one another. It's remarkable.

Charlotte: What is?

Lawrence: That I would speak this way with...a woman.

Charlotte: I know. And that I would listen. And not mind.

(Turning away)

Even be glad for it.

Lawrence: Is it as uncommon for you, being married, to talk this way?

Charlotte: *(almost in tears)* Maybe more.

(Changing the subject again)

Then has your "Mint" and all this anonymity done nothing for you?

Lawrence: Routine saves thought. I needed that. For those who understand engines, there's poetry in the smooth tick-over....

(Both laugh.)

Just as the clanging hangar is the airman's cathedral, so our day's work in it is our worship. We believe the job worth every last lift of our arms, though to outsiders our belief may well seem senseless as a Mass.

Charlotte: How do you like the machine GBS and I provided for you?

Lawrence: The motorbike? I love it. My surplus emotion vents itself these days on the road. So long as it's tarred blue and straight, I am rich. I call the machine Boanerges—Boa for short. It's a miracle that all that docile strength—fifty-two horsepower—waits behind one tiny lever for the pleasure of my hand. A skittish bike with a touch of blood in it is better than all the riding animals on earth. Because Boa loves me, he gives me five more miles of speed than he'd give a stranger.

(Charlotte laughs, almost giddily.)

He's a man-killer though.

Charlotte: At the speed you come to us on your flying visits—I'm not surprised. But don't you think it's time?

Lawrence: Time?

Charlotte: To come out of hiding. The government still needs you as an advisor.

Lawrence: To further its betrayals? No.... But what of you?

Charlotte: Me?

Lawrence: I know so little about you. Even when I'm with you and GBS, it's me talking about myself, responding to both your questions.

Charlotte: That's because we've not had your adventures—except as we read of or imagine them, as in GB's plays. Our actual existence is rather dull and terribly mundane.

Lawrence: Like mine now.

Charlotte: And always was.... Well, I'm of Irish stock.

Lawrence: So am I.

Charlotte: Perhaps that's why neither of us quite fits the mold—the “mint” I should say. I had a perfectly hellish childhood. I don't dislike children, but my own homelife made me firmly resolve never to be the mother of a child who might suffer as I did. Some said I was a remarkable person and should hand on my qualities. But the finest people come from the most unlikely and most unfortunate combinations. You and I and GBS are all instances. There! I feel so much better for saying that. I've never said it before.

Lawrence: Not even to your husband?

Charlotte: Not so...freely.

Lawrence: How, may I ask, did you happen to marry?

Charlotte: We'd known each other for two years. From the beginning, our courtship was full of uncertainties. We each had strong objections to the institution of marriage and had intended to remain single. I had already refused a number of suitors.

Lawrence: And still you married.

Charlotte: Yes. On June 1, 1898, at the West Strand Register Office, London, Charlotte Payne-Townsend married George Bernard Shaw.

Lawrence: I won't ask why.

Charlotte: And I'll cease asking why you changed your name and merged with the mass of far less accomplished persons.

Lawrence: That's fair. Though yours is viewed as the supreme example of married companionship—the ideal pair, devoted to the same causes and to one another.

Charlotte: We are least companionable intellectually. He has more than once said he should have remained a bachelor, that he's not the marrying kind, and that is true.

Lawrence: He was always courteous enough to me, but I've never felt he took the trouble to understand me. Is that what you mean?

Charlotte: Yes, he lacks enthusiasm for individual people. He's never been unkind, never “beats” me...

(Sound of lashing. Lawrence tenses.)

...except with his indifference. If I could only have strokes from him...

(More lashing. Lawrence barely shudders.)

...of any kind. So I reside with him at Ayot, which justifies Ayot to the world and allows it to lift its head.

Lawrence: Poor Ayot!

Charlotte: Yes, how I hate Ayot!

Lawrence: Are you deeply lonely?

Charlotte: I don't allow myself to consider it. Do you?

Lawrence: No. We resemble each other in that too. But that may be from fear, despite our words and our remarkable reputations. What do you think?

Charlotte: I think I have never shared my mind so completely with another soul.

Lawrence: Nor I. What does it mean?

Charlotte: It means a great deal. I suspect it doesn't involve anything physical.

Lawrence: I suspect not. Even in combat the disgust at being touched revolted me more than the thought of death. I've so revered my wits and despised my body that I would not be beholden to the second for the life of the first.

Charlotte: I understand.

Lawrence: I have feared animal spirits more than anything in the world. That's why I could never be obscene like the other airmen and what made them ill at ease for my little swearing. Their feelings are like skiffs that splash on a river but pass without a trace, leaving the surface clean, weedless, still purling over the sunlit stones. Whereas to root out my feelings—what upstirring of mud, what rending of dark fibre!

Charlotte: You remind me of Freré Lawrence.

Lawrence: Freré?

Charlotte: The seventeenth-century monk. He was the idol of my childhood. "Men amuse themselves with trivial devotions," he said, "which change daily." He was also long troubled by the belief he was damned, and no one could persuade him to the contrary. When the Inquisition finally burned him over a bonfire--like a piece of meat on a spit--he calmly petitioned his tormentors: "Turn me over, brothers. I'm already well done on this side...."

Lawrence: He wore a hair shirt, I suppose.

Charlotte: I suppose.

(Sound of lashing)

Lawrence: Did he also flagellate himself?

Charlotte: He may have. Why?

Lawrence: We are all monks or nuns in our bodies' cells--even when we claim not to be religious.

Charlotte: And obsessed still, despite our repugnance, with the other.

Lawrence: The flesh?

Charlotte: Yes.

Lawrence: I've always contended against the flesh. I suppose that's why I write about it—even the flesh of lower creatures. I tremble if one touches or takes too quick an interest in me. Maybe because, when I see a man fondling a dog or a soldier with a girl, my wish is to be as superficial, as perfected, while my jailer holds me back. Yet the sense of touch seems so treacherous and ultimately degrading. At Oxford once a preacher, speaking of venery, implored us, "not," as he put it, "to imperil your immortal souls upon a pleasure which, so I am credibly informed, lasts less than one and three-quarter minutes." Of direct experience I can't speak either, but if the perfect partnership with another living body is as brief as the solitary act, then the thrill is indeed no more than a convulsion, a razor-edge of time, which palls so on return that, for me at least, the temptation, when nature compels it, shades into weary disgust. That may just be the excuse of one who always so craved to be liked he never could open himself friendly to another.

Charlotte: Intimacy does seem shameful unless the other can make the perfect reply, in the same language, for the same reasons. I know.

Lawrence: There it is again: the conflict of mind and spirit. When he thinks, man breaks into little prisms.

Charlotte: You know something—in our relatively short life you've done some extraordinary and very good things. You've been a true Freré Lawrence. You've been kind and helpful to many. How many? You really deserve to feel good about yourself. You deserve that as much as anyone alive.

Lawrence: You think so? Forster claims that even when we write we are not happy: we only imagine happiness.

Charlotte: *(impatient)* But the world still needs you. Don't you know that? You're still a relatively young man. And you need the world.

Frere Lawrence by *Thomas F. Rogers*

(Lawrence fails to respond.)

Do you wish it were otherwise? With “touching,” say?

Lawrence: I almost do. But my brain discounts its value.

Charlotte: Mine too.... Though, could we awaken each other to what others share so simply, it might help.

Lawrence: Then I’d welcome it.

Charlotte: Would you?

Lawrence: In that case. Yes.

Charlotte: Tell me frankly. Does my age bother you?

Lawrence: No.

Charlotte: My gender?

Lawrence: Bother? No.

Charlotte: Attract you?

Lawrence: You attract me for who you are. Very much. Surely, you know that.

Charlotte: Were we then to attempt so much as a...kiss and after, if it disgusted you, would you think any the less of me?

Lawrence: I might, but I’d blame myself first. Even that might produce a further sympathy between us.

Charlotte: Would it be worth the risk then?

Lawrence: It might because...

Charlotte: Tell me...

Lawrence: I’m so very, very lonely. Oh, God, how lonely. I’ve always been so lonely.

Charlotte: And I no less.

Lawrence: Then I’ll come closer. For your sake. And hopefully for mine.

(Very slowly, with hesitant stops and starts, Lawrence shifts from his place at one end of the window seat in Charlotte’s direction.)

Can you help?

Charlotte: Help?

Lawrence: Come to me a little?

(She does so, eagerly, till they are next to each other but still not touching.)

Shall I embrace you?

Charlotte: Yes.

Lawrence: With one or both arms?

Charlotte: Yes.

Lawrence: Yes “one” or yes “both”?

Charlotte: Yes.

Lawrence: *(sensing what she wants, but manifestly frightened)* All right.... May I close my eyes first?

Charlotte: You may.

Lawrence: Will you also?

Charlotte: If you wish.

(She does so. Making sure Charlotte’s eyes are closed, Lawrence closes his, then cautiously, timidly places his arms about her waist, still avoiding her face.)

Lawrence: Are your eyes still closed?

Charlotte: Yes. Trust me. Now lean in to me.

Lawrence: “Lean”?

Charlotte: Yes. To make our kiss....

Lawrence: *(still hesitating)* Right.

(Meanwhile, riding crop in hand, Hainsworth has returned to the outer doorway and, seeing them, stands there, embarrassed, but too curious to turn and leave.)

Charlotte: Don’t purse your lips. Keep them relaxed. And later, if you wish, you may explore my mouth with your tongue as they say is done on the Continent.

Lawrence: Simulating, you mean—

Charlotte: Don’t think about it. Don’t analyze.

Lawrence: All right....

(Another few beats. He then cautiously brings his face to hers, eyes still closed. Their lips touch. Charlotte impulsively clasps him. His own embrace appears to tighten, to be less mechanical and more impulsive—perhaps only to reciprocate hers, perhaps not—but only for a beat before Lawrence pulls back, sensing Hainsworth’s presence.)

Lawrence: Who’s there?

(Both open their eyes. Hainsworth is more directly in Charlotte’s line of vision. Lawrence does not turn to face him.)

I said, “Who’s there?”

Hainsworth: Just me.

Charlotte: Your friend.

Hainsworth: Hainsworth.

Lawrence: No...!!

(Violently, Lawrence throws himself to the floor, still refusing to look at Hainsworth, then curling like a fetus and, with spasmodic jerking of limbs, hysterically weeping. Charlotte impulsively kneels by his side.)

Go! Go away!

Charlotte: *(To Hainsworth)* Please do. I’ll look after him.

Lawrence: *(still coiled and weeping)* Not him! You...!

Charlotte: *(slowly)* What?

(A beat or two. She stands.)

All right then....

(She walks to the door, slowly, dejected, then turns to look at him.)

Lawrence: *(sensing her gaze on him but still looking away, in a sudden calm voice)* It’s this that’s mad!

Charlotte: Mad?

Lawrence: Yes, this. Really mad!! I’m sorry. But it wouldn’t have worked anyway.

Charlotte: How do you know?

Lawrence: Because I lost my innocence.

Charlotte: Back then?

Lawrence: Yes. And, if I am perfectly honest, long before then too.

Charlotte: You mustn’t think like that. You’re utterly innocent.

Lawrence: I betrayed—

Charlotte: Others betrayed you !

Lawrence: I violated—

Charlotte: You never violated anyone. You were violated. So why do you blame yourself this way?

Lawrence: Because I am guilty !!

Charlotte: Only in your mind.

Lawrence: (*adamant*) That is where guilt is most real.

Charlotte: Why?

Lawrence: Why what?

Charlotte: Why are you this way?

Lawrence: I don't know why I'm the way I am. You tell me if you think you know why. But you won't be able to because nobody knows why.

Charlotte: (*as if parting with one about to die*) My Freré Lawrence.... *Je t' 'aime*.
(*She leaves.*)

Lawrence: (*after several more beats, calmer, but still in a fetal position*) Has she gone?

Hainsworth: Yes.

Lawrence: Have you the crop?

Hainsworth: Yes.

Lawrence: Then let's proceed.

Hainsworth: Now?

Lawrence: Yes. I want it. I need it now.

Hainsworth: So you *do* want it after all!

Lawrence: (*looking at Hainsworth for the first time, quickly recovering himself and in his former collected tone of voice*) Before the others return, I mean.... You understand my meaning, don't you?

Hainsworth: Yes. Very well.

(*They stare at each other for several beats, neither giving in.*)

Lawrence: In that case...

(*standing and moving toward the inner door, unbuckling his belt as he does so*)

...I'll prepare myself.

(*Hainsworth moves to a cupboard, removes alcohol and balls of cotton, and places them on the low, round table as at the beginning of ACT ONE, Scene One, waits several beats, then walks determinedly into the inner room. Several more beats go by. Then the lashing sound is heard, as before—followed by stifled moans. After a beat or two, the sounds repeat themselves and continue thereafter, the moans becoming louder and less restrained....Madge, her clothes rumpled and holding her skirt tight to her body as if it were spilled on, appears in the outer door.*)

Madge: (*To herself*) Now where's his john? What a mess!

(*She goes toward the inner door, but, hearing the thrashing and the moans, stops, then moves slowly toward it on tiptoe and peers inside. As soon as she does, there is a sudden involuntary intake of breath, almost audible. She brings her hand to her mouth as if to quiet herself, then slowly backs to the center of the room, in obvious shock. A few beats, then she begins to giggle.*)

Bejeez! Oh, Lordy! What did I see? Wait till Finley hears about this! And Nora and her preacher! What a

Frere Lawrence by *Thomas F. Rogers*

look they'll have on their faces!!

(She rushes out the outer door, still clutching her skirt and losing control, her laughter becoming louder and sustaining itself outside. As the lights dim, the sounds of thrashing and moaning continue.)

10 pages in Act Two