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Young April

by Dorothy Chadwick

Ben jumped up from his desk and whirled on his father. "I think you're being damned harsh in this, Dad. But if you're set on carrying it through, I'll see Rosicki and try to let him down as gently as I can."

The farmhouse pecker was like an oven. Ben sat in the red plush chair, his broad shoulders massing the dolly on its wicker frame back, facing Mr. Rosicki and Ruth. And Mr. Rosicki sat hunched in his rocker, his kind face furrowed with bewilderment.

"But I do not understand this, Ben. Your Pa—he says I must go away from here?"

Ben nodded, starting down at the legal document in his hands. He had been preparing for a flood of protest, for pleading, for anger—for anything but this crushed, bewildered, weary, paid no rent for eight months, Mr. Rosicki, he explained again. "I'm sorry to say that my father has a right to do this according to the law."

"The law?" Ruth's father looked around the room. He shook his head. "I was born here, boy, and here, I grew up. This was the home of my father. This land I have worked on since a little fellow—I love this land. How can—"

"Maybe your Pa don't understand," he added hopefully. "Maybe I didn't explain good in my letters about the rent."

"Mr. Rosicki," Ben leaned forward earnestly, my father asked me to come to you, but I want you to feel that I am here as your friend, too. I did my best to make Dad change his mind and give you more time. But he's set on doing this—and if I hadn't come he would have sent the sheriff. Can't you raise the two hundred dollars before the end of next week?"

"Two hundred dollars—next week?" Mr. Rosicki shook his head. "I don't know where there's so much money as that."

Mr. Rosicki rose and walking to the window let a shade fly up to the top. The sun poured in; beyond the yard to the south stretched the standing corn. It was already turning brown; in another three weeks it would be ready to harvest and market for feed. Because of the size of his crop Mr. Rosicki found it convenient to let the ears dry on the stalk rather than in storage bins.

The farmer turned to Ben, waving a hand toward the window. "There's plenty of money out in those fields, Ben," he said. "The crop is good this time. Tell your Pa I can pay him what I owe next month."

"But I'm afraid that's not the point. The whole point is—Dad's got a buyer for this place and they want it September first, or not at all. I'm betraying confidence with Dad when I tell you that," he added, "but I've got to make you understand. I don't want you to lose your home, and if you're going to save it you've got to realize exactly how things stand."

"So. It is that way." Mr. Rosicki cried angrily. "It is not the money I owe—it is the money your Pa can get from somebody else. I remember now. I remember the rich people Mr. Prentice brings to the old house. He says, 'I want to show these friends the old homestead, Joe.' I am proud. Like a fool I show everything. I tell them my well has best water on Long Island. I tell them how fine my apples are, how the lilacs make it sweet in spring. I say, 'Look at my house. Some a nut after three hundred years. I take good care of her.'"

"The rich people look and look. The man smiles. She stands in kitchen door. 'How quaint,' she says—quaint—and tells how she would fix it up, with the old fireplace. He says, 'A beautiful place, Ed. Beautiful place. I'd give lots to have it for myself.' And like a fool I smile. But—" he raised an angry sullen face. "But they won't never get it," he said slowly.

Ben rose. "I don't want them to get it either." Mr. Rosicki. He pulled his pen and check book from his pocket and leaned over the parlor table. "I'll lend you the money myself. Here." He held out to the farmer his check for two hundred dollars.

Mr. Rosicki thrust Ben's hand holding the check roughly aside. "I don't want your money, boy. You're just a kid. You keep out of this. I'll talk to your Pa. But after he's in his chair and relapsed into brooding silence."

CHAPTER XIX
Saturday night. Ben and Phoebe were coming home from the movies. Ben at the wheel and Phoebe with her head resting against his shoulder. But for once Ben's thoughts were not for

her. He felt nothing but worry and dread.

This was Joe's last day of grace. In the morning Ben had driven down to the farm with the check, determined to make the farmer accept it. But the place seemed deserted. He thought he saw Joe out in the fields. But no one answered his shout and no one appeared. He had corrected his father at home and asked. The other farmhouse head swung, irritated. "You're acting like a child, Ben. Joe Rosicki isn't the first man to go into debt and lose his home. You seem to forget that he's nothing but a tenant who has failed to meet his obligations."

"What?" Ben asked vaguely, coming back to the present as Phoebe asked him some question. "I said, look at that glow in the sky. What do you suppose makes it?"

For the first time Ben noticed that the heavens above the pine barrens were lighted with a red glow. "That's fire," he said, increasing the speed of the car. "Quite near, too."

Ben sent the roadster reeling along the deep woods beyond the pine barrens. When they rounded the corner where the cement ended and the dirt road began he gave a shout. "It's the Rosicki place. Oh, go!"

"Ben, it's—the corn." He was already out of the car, running. Phoebe scrambled after him catching at his hand. She felt the heat on her face; the air was filled with the crackling of the fire.

"Stay here," Ben shouted. "I've got to get over there and find out what's happened."

"Ben you can't. Practically Phoebe stumbled after him, choking in the smoke that billowed back and forth over the road in the wind. Ben disappeared from sight and she began to sob. Suddenly her father was beside her. "Daddy, Ben's gone right into the fire," she sobbed.

"He'll take care of himself, dear. Don't worry." (To Be Continued)

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Moonshiners Active in Northern Ontario

TIMMINS, Ont., Nov. 2 (CP)—Moonshiners who distill alcohol with a wash tub, an old tar barrel and a few yards of copper tubing are reported doing big business in the mining areas of northern Ontario and raids of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, it was said tonight, have shown the ingenuity of some of the operators of illicit stills.

Some moonshiners in the rich Porcupine district around Timmins operate with converted household equipment. They produce a potent beverage from rotten potato peelings, dandelions, beets, turnips or onions.

The liquor runs as high as 80 to 85 per cent pure alcohol—powerful enough to make the toughest minor step dance down the main street.

It retails for as much as \$20 a gallon.

A commercial printing and publishing business will also be carried on.

All members of both newspaper staffs will be retained, it was stated.

J.C. Keating is president and general manager of the new company, and J.G. Cragner is vice-president and managing editor.

NOTRE DAME ACADEMY
Commercial Class: Anna Campbell, Margaret Curley, Audrey MacIntyre.

Grade VI: June Doyle, Nora Shaw, Betty Smith.
Grade V: Joan Aylward, Ellen Beth Coyte, Patricia Wynne.
Grade IV: Pauline Noonan, Margaret McGee, Teresa Howatt.
Grade III: Georgina Zakem, Patricia Doyle, Rita Shanahan.
Grade II: Bernard MacDonald, Doreen Bevan, Frances Ann Johnston.

BEER A MUST
SYDNEY, Australia — (CP) Nine ships have been held up in Australian ports because Greek seamen refuse to sail unless they are given beer with their meals.

FIT AT 107
WINCHESTER, England — (CP) Mrs. Sarah Olive Pitt, of Upland, Compton, near here, celebrated her 107th birthday recently.

Take Fertilizers EARLY!

Present forecasts indicate a very tight situation this Winter and next Spring in the transportation of fertilizer materials for factory or home mixing.

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QUICKIES

By Ken Reynolds



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