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Scenario of Novel

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Scenario of Mood:

A young New Englander, Henry Brown, is about to graduate from Houghton University, in Riverport, Mass., in the spring of 1893. He is the son of a country doctor in New Hampshire, who died when he was a child. His mother had died still earlier, and his education has been left to a doting spinster Aunt, who has forced into him ideas of family prestige. He has been a sickly boy, cut off from the usual sports which give a youngster prestige at school, and has been seeking to bolster up his ego by ambitions of a scholarly success, to be achieved in Europe. He is in love with his cousin Ethel, who however marries a scapegrace German singer, Joachim Haferkorn.

He is the particular protégé of Professor Kendall, a man with an ambition to further science, but neither the training nor the ability to develop this ambition in himself. Kendall secures him a travelling fellowship to Fürtlingen in Germany, under Justus Gross, the dean and pope of German mathematicians. Henry enters Fürtlingen, and is entranced with the personality and social and professional status of Gross, a man of aloof and slightly pompous but just and judicial character.

Henry shares in the student life of the foreign students at a German university. He makes friends - broader men than he, but men who understand his fundamental incompleteness. He makes his first big scientific contribution, and has the satisfaction of seeing himself accepted as a disciple by Gross. It becomes his great ambition to emulate in America the position of Gross, in a little Germany of his own making.

Henry meets Ethel, now hopelessly bogged down in a life of uncongenial botanicism, and already trying to make the best of a bad business by shabby tricks and turns. Her first child, Stella, is already born, and a son, Joachim Jr., is on the way.

On his return to Fürtlingen, through his lack of understanding of German customs, ^{Henry} finds himself ^{innocently} entangled with an attractive girl, ^{Kathy} the daughter of a neighbor. He does not try to solve the misunderstanding, but takes the opportunity and marries her. Soon after he hears of his aunt's death, and receives a call back to Houghton as Assistant Professor (about 1896).

In his home environment once more, he finds

his wife less able to adjust herself than he had expected. She turns out to be a person with a real social conscience, an excellent mother for his boy Kurt and his two girls, but slow to learn English, socially gauche, and less graceful in his eyes than the wives of most of his American colleagues. Indeed, almost her first act in coming to Houghton is to offend against the American code of decency in humor where it differs from the German code.

Brown proves to be a good administrator and lecturer, and a competent, if not inspired, research scholar. As yet he is not head of the department, and his superiors furnish the ^{human} element in which he is weak, and the judgment in acquiring new men. One important colleague who enters into the department is Khaimov. He is a temperamental ^{little} fellow, a Russian Jew, an intuitive worker, a ~~radical~~ ^{gradual}, and a man who has had an adventurous life in the West before settling down to a career of science. Brown had heard of him at Firtlinger, when Gross had ~~heard~~ ^{received} a report on his paper, and had ~~reported~~ ^{replied} unfavorably to it. The Khaimov paper did in fact contain a mistake, but a trivial one, which was later corrected, and was a paper with vital new ideas.

Brown meets Khaimov on a train, as they are both on their way to a scientific meeting. They get into a scientific discussion, in which they are (as always) in sharp conflict, for Khaimov takes the side of a freely intuitive method of work, while for ~~Khaimov~~ ^{Brown}, ~~the~~ ^{who follows Gross} any departure from a strict system of mathematical values is morally wrong. Later, at the wish of the Physics department, Khaimov is taken in to Houghton in a position somewhat ambiguously connected with both the mathematics and the Physics departments. He thinks Brown is responsible to his appointment, and is grateful to Brown.

This is the peak of Brown's career. Under the stimulus of Khaimov's criticism, he casts off a certain intellectual sluggishness, and outdoes himself. Khaimov too benefits from the more orderly nature of Brown. Between them they attract able graduate students; among them Edicott, an ambitious New England farm boy, married ^{to} a somewhat selfish and superficial spoiled daughter of the tycoon of a Vermont community.

Brown, however, resents Khaimov's superiority. A reactionary regime, headed by President Hampden, from a rich cotton-mill-boring family, comes into control at the university. Hampden is mildly anti-Semitic and thoroughly conformist, and quizzes Brown about Khaimov. Through faint praise and complaisance, Brown helps to shift Khaimov out of the mathematics department into the physics department, in an arrangement, which though financially advantageous for the time being, is meant to have the ultimate result of forcing Khaimov out of the university. Brown, whose duty it is to explain the matter to Khaimov, hasn't the guts to do this, and Khaimov, not understanding what is to come, overflows in his gratitude to Brown.

On the strength of the new grant, Khaimov writes his great work. He finds this a heart-breaking and discouraging business. At the end, thoroughly jaded, he goes to Brown for a little consolation. Brown, who can no longer put off coming to an understanding with Khaimov as to the termination of his job, is cold, courteous, and distant. Khaimov at last understands Brown's treachery, and commits suicide in a mood of despair.

Brown now finds that Gross has valued him largely as the protector of Khaimov. He finds that without Khaimov's stimulus, he can merely do pot-boilers. He is forced to realize, against his will, that in slaying Khaimov, he has slain himself.

In 1912, the Browns have an opportunity to visit Firtlingen once more. It is not a very satisfactory visit. Mrs. Brown is of too

Prussian an origin to fit well into faculty circles. Brown is not intellectual and musical enough to meet their tastes. Gross does not value Henry as highly as the latter has expected, and is always talking of Khaimow. Only in Gross's secretary and factotum, Protoschinski, does Henry find a sympathy — which, however, he sometimes suspects to be not altogether disinterested.

The Brown children go to school in Firtlingen. Kurt, the boy, who has early begun to rebel against his father, rebels still more against the Prussianism of the German school system. He sides with his mother in the family quarrels, which become more and more frequent.

Brown runs into Ethel and Joachim, and their daughter Stella. He sees very clearly that Ethel and Stella have been leading a half-disreputable, shabby-genteel life, but admires the style with which Ethel carries this life off, as contrasted with his own bread-and-butter wife.

The war ^{of 1914} comes, and catches Henry in Germany. While he has begun to distrust Germany, for he feels that Firtlingen and his wife have failed to bolster up his personality in the way he had expected of them, he is caught in the emotional surge which came over Germany at the beginning of the war. He comes back to America at an ardent champion of the German cause. He gradually finds himself on the unpopular side, and backs water. When the United States enters the war, Kurt enlists in the Navy, in a quarrel with his father. Henry now finds himself morally obliged to enter into war work, first as a dollar-a-year speaker in Bond Drives then as an organizer of the mathematical training of naval cadets. Meanwhile the best mathematical talents of the country, including Endicott, are engaged in ballistic work at Aberdeen Proving Ground, developing a new sense of their powers and a new community sense.

At the very end of the war, Henry learns that Kurt has been drowned off the Scottish coast in mine-sweeping operations. This still further alienates him from his wife and daughters, though they ~~still~~ continue to pity his emotional helplessness and isolation. About the same time, he hears from Ethel, whose husband has died, and who has been engaged in secretarial war work, first for the Germans, and then for the American conquerors of the Rheinland. With his wife's consent, he offers Ethel and her children a haven in the United States and helps them to reorient themselves. He rents them a small house

Ethel, who has no illusions left, wishes to secure her old age and the careers of her children by turning Henry against his wife and supplanting her. She is in no hurry, for she feels secure of her purpose. She tells him that Kathi is dragging him down and spoiling his health, that he is much too distinguished a man for such a wife, etc. He is glad to confide in her and to accept her sympathy at its face value.

He is by now an elder statesman of science. He is delighted when a great philanthropic institution picks him to inspect Fürtlingen as the possible beneficiary of a great gift. Kathi accompanies him to visit her ~~son's~~ grave in Scotland.

Krotoschinski is now the ruler of Fürtlingen mathematics. He finds a difficult situation to handle in Henry's coming; for Henry's war work has made him persona non grata with the American Institut and the German government. Henry makes the matter no easier by wishing to revive the old American colony club. ~~In this~~ This is really the idea of a petty administrative officer at the Quästur. The American students are not very fond of Krotoschinski, and are out of hand. Krotoschinski finds the situation difficult, but the intrigue to his liking. ~~However,~~ However, he overplays his hand with the petty official, who gives the game away to Henry. Henry consults with the American students, sees how he has been flattered and duped, and leaves, ~~thoroughly~~ thoroughly enraged at Germany, and at his wife, whom he unjustly

identifies with Germany.

Henry returns to a Houghton University riding the high tide of material prosperity and expansion. A "House Plan" is under way, and its pompousness just suits his own nature. He is disappointed by the fact that his wife sees the hollowness of the period, as exemplified by the Sacco-Vanzetti affair, which splits university opinion. Henry sides with a fascist-minded Russian émigré, whom Hampden has brought in as an economic philosopher, and who represents the voice of the new university of Bigger Business.

Then the crash comes, and the newly-rich professors find that they have been living on paper. A good many families break under the new economic burdens of the crash. The Endicotts — Sam, the climber, and his childish, pleasure-loving wife, ^{Christabel} who have been pulling against one another for a long time, ~~get~~ divorced. Henry tries to get Kathi to divorce him, but she will not; so he accuses her of mental cruelty and divorces her. What he does not know is that she is on the verge of apoplexy, from which she soon dies. This completes the estrangement of his daughters. Ethel is now sure of her prey.

Henry is at loose ends. A friend of Henry and of the Endicotts wishes to ^{try to} patch up the broken Endicott marriage, and takes Henry with him on a trip to visit Christabel, now at a Pacific Coast seaside resort. The trip fails, as Sam has no interest in renewing his marriage. Meanwhile Henry, free for the first time, falls in love with Christabel, thirty years his junior, and she prefers the undiluted attentions of an older man to Sam's ambitious selfishness.

Ethel feels Henry slipping out of her grasp, but does not understand the reason until almost the time of the marriage. After the marriage, Christabel intends to go in for entertaining in a big way, and to become the grande dame of the Houghton mathematics department. They prepare with a great housewarming, to which almost nobody comes. They have forgotten the swing of sympathy to Kathi after her death, as well as the gauche of trying to lead an important social life right under Sam's nose. Sam meanwhile accepts a call to another university.

On the first possible opportunity, President Hampden retires Henry with a coldly polite letter, entirely inadequate to cover the years of service which Henry has given the school. When he reads this, he sees clearly for the first time what he has done with his life. Christabel can only see in the letter a liberation, and the beginning of new adventures.

Henry receives an invitation for a year to California Coastal College. They spend this year in an agreeable but shallow social environment, but no permanent engagement is forthcoming, partly as it is too late for Henry to strike new roots at his age. At the end of the year, a new invitation is forthcoming for Henry - this time to a Chinese university, located in Peking. It comes from one of his former students, from the time when he was really forming young men.

They travel to China by way of Hawaii and Japan, where they are guided around by one of Henry's former students. They arrive in China Peking, where Henry is very successful in

his interpretation of Western mathematical work, though perhaps not very original in creating new work. Henry and Christabel fall into the hands of the ~~very~~ interesting Western society group of Peking. This contains able and respectable people, but takes its tone from a group of demi-reps, remittance-men, and shabby-genteel outcasts, who at that time could live cheaply and comfortably, without any authority to look too closely into their personal conduct. On the principle of the fox without a tail, these delight whenever some person of dignity or position has been brought down by some disgraceful conduct to become one of them. Accordingly they delight to honor Henry and Christabel, who are too naive to know why they are being honored, or just who it is who chooses to honor them.

Christabel is afraid of the entry of the Japanese and the danger of the sack of the city, but Henry, who is calmed for the time being by his Chinese colleagues, took took her. Indeed, he is over-calmed, for he comes to the conclusion that nothing catastrophic could ever happen to him and his. At the end of his work, and before his return in the Fall of 1937, he takes a villa in the Western Hills. The battle of the Marco Polo bridge finds him as host at a party in this villa, which is invaded by looting Japanese and Korean ruffians. They slay the entire party — Henry protesting in his dignity, and Christabel hysterical. As the story began with an American boy on

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his way to new studies in an unfamiliar Germany, so
it ends with a Chinese boy - a pupil of Henry - on
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Henry shares in the student life of the foreign students at a German university. He makes friends - broader men than he, but men who understand his fundamental incompleteness. He makes his first big scientific contribution, and has the satisfaction of seeing himself accepted as a disciple by Gross. It becomes his great ambition to emulate in America the position of Gross, in a little Germany of his own making.

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Christabel is afraid of the entry of the Japanese and the danger of the sack of the city, but Henry, who is calmed for the time being by his Chinese colleagues, pooch-poochs her. Indeed, he is over-calmed, for he comes to the conclusion that nothing catastrophic could ever happen to him and to his. At the end of his work, and before his return in the Fall of 1937, he takes a villa in the Western Hills. The battle of the Marco Polo bridge finds him as host at a party in this villa, which is invaded by looting Japanese and Korean ruffians. They

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