LILLIAN ROSS

THE ORDEAL OF DR. BLAUBERMAN

Psychotherapy: Portraits in Fiction

The Ordeal of Dr. Blauberman

Lillian Ross

e-Book 2015 International Psychotherapy Institute

From *Psychotherapy: Portraits in Fiction* by Jesse D. Geller, Ph.D. and Paul D. Spector, M.A.

Created in the United States of America

www.freepsychotherapybooks.org
ebooks@theipi.org

Introduction

"The Ordeal of Dr. Blauberman" by Lillian Ross

Lillian Ross's short story reveals a psychoanalyst's flaws and shortcomings. Dr. Blauberman's personal alienations and his envy of the patient result in controlling, judgmental, intrusive therapeutic work. Under the guise of meeting his patient's needs, Blauberman tries to gratify his own. He rationalizes his failures as a therapist by blaming the patient for being passive and resistant. This story highlights how difficult it is to extricate oneself from even a destructive therapeutic relationship. Dr. Blauberman's negative impact may be short-lived; his patient's capacity for love and creative work exceeds the therapist's, and the patient ends therapy.

The Ordeal of Dr. Blauberman

Lillian Ross

In Dr. Blauberman's office, on the seventeenth floor of a new Fifth Avenue apartment house facing Central Park, Ephraim Samuels was lying on the analytic couch, saying nothing. Dr. Blauberman sat near the head of the couch, where Ephraim could not see him, in a gigantic chair that tilted up at the feet and down at the back, to rest his heart and improve his general well-being. The chair was upholstered in cream-colored leather, and Dr. Blauberman, wearing a cream-colored jacket and a cream-and-red striped bow tie, blended right into it. He was a tall man, with coarse, black conspicuously barbered hair, a sharp nose, and a thin-lipped, dissatisfied mouth. He had deep lines at right angles to his mouth. His stomach, as he sat, protruded in a mediumsized paunch. He wore dark-horn-rimmed glasses. He was smoking a slim Dunhill pipe. In years gone by, at hotels and summer resorts, mothers with marriageable daughters had pointed him out to one another as "that gorgeous-looking fella." On the wall behind Dr. Blauberman's head was a Currier &. Ives print of a horse-drawn sleigh full of chubby, laughing, red-cheeked, mittened, mufflered, ear-muffed, healthy men, women and children. On the wall over the couch were framed diplomas, including one from the N.Y.U. College of Medicine, class of 1939. Waiting for Ephraim to speak, Dr.

Blauberman crossed and recrossed his legs. “So,” he said, finally. And when this produced nothing, he said, “You show your hostility with your silence. Mmmm? Because I say I cannot go on with you as a patient. Yes?”

Dr. Blauberman glanced with discouragement and distaste at the young man on the couch. This was their next-to-last session together. Deadwood. Uncooperative. Why struggle any more to help him? It was pointless. It was demoralizing, it was leading neither of them anywhere. There were too many sick people waiting to be helped who *wanted* to be helped, whose suitability for psychoanalysis was better. At first, Dr. Blauberman had thought that Ephraim, with his honesty and sincerity and intelligence and what Dr. Blauberman had hoped would turn out to be a classic symptom-neurosis, was extremely suitable. And Dr. Fifield, who had sent Ephraim to him, had thought so, too. But for a whole year now—you could, of course, call the period one of *trial* analysis—using all the technique he had accumulated in years of practice, Dr. Blauberman had been striving to give Ephraim Samuels an awareness of his masochistic self-victimization, and to show him how, by changing his outlook, he could realize himself fully in his music, with his composing and with his clarinet. But there had been no change. And neither had there been a successful transference. Not really. There was no free-associating, and Dr. Blauberman suspected considerable ego regression, reinstating Ephraim’s tie to his dead mother. For practically the entire year since his analysis had begun, the previous July, Ephraim had not touched the

clarinet, but no analyst would blame Dr. Blauberman for *that.*

He had wanted so much to help this boy, this promising musician, and to set him on the healthy path. He'd been so glad when he got Ephraim as a patient. Ephraim had been such a welcome relief, not only from the dull housewife patients but from the medical profession—the largest category of patients in analysis, according to a recent survey made of psychoanalytic education in the United States. All those doctors, surgeons, social workers, and psychologists. Here was a "gifted" patient. There had been a good deal of discussion lately among Dr. Blauberman's colleagues about "gifted" patients. Dr. Blauberman had never had a really "gifted" patient before. Here was a *musician.* And a musician, moreover, who moved—that is, if Dr. Blauberman could get him to move—in the interesting worlds of chamber music and jazz, night clubs and Broadway, as well as Carnegie Hall. Dr. Blauberman was so fascinated by these worlds that, listening to Ephraim, he sometimes forgot about free association and dream interpretation. No harm in that. It was all adding up. Ephraim had even inspired Dr. Blauberman with the idea for a paper to be read at a meeting of the New York Psychoanalytic Society. Dr. Blauberman had actually thought of two appropriate titles: "The Id, the Ego, and the Clarinet" and "An Inquiry Into the Meaning of the Psychodynamics of Musical Composition and the Application of Psychoanalysis to Chamber Music and Jazz, from Bach to Brubeck."

Well. So. Mmmm. That was in the early weeks. Now it was all one big

mess. Transference, that *sine qua non* of analyzability, was now kaput. True, Ephraim had formed a kind of attachment to him. And he had not always been silent, as he was now. He had talked about his relationships with various members of his family, and with various girls; had confided to Dr. Blauberman his modest estimates of his compositions and his involved plans for works he wanted to write in the future; had related all those cozy family anecdotes starring, nine times out of ten, his father, Joseph Samuels; had expressed his passionate enthusiasm for—and made clear his dependence on—his old clarinet teacher, Gustave Lefevre. But they had got nowhere. They hadn't worked a damn thing through. Dr. Blauberman had gone way beyond the call of duty for this boy, but Ephraim wanted to remain tied to his teacher, to his father, to his family. The more familiar and uninteresting it became—the very same sort of people, in fact, that Dr. Blauberman himself had managed to leave so far behind him. There was nothing he didn't know about that world, and he didn't want to be reminded of it any more than he wanted to be pushed back into it. Ephraim, it seemed, did want that very world. Naturally, the reasons were sick reasons, and all of Dr. Blauberman's ingenious ideas and devices for bringing him to act with drive and ambition and get somewhere with himself and with his music were rejected.

During his internship, in a small Jewish hospital in Brooklyn, not far from the Williamsburg section, where he grew up, Dr. Blauberman had decided he was as smart as the next guy. Maybe he couldn't get an internship

in one of the large, fancy hospitals in Manhattan, but he could measure up alongside any other hospital intern in town. And he knew exactly what he wanted out of life. He wasn't going to be pushed around in medicine as a lousy general practitioner. Not for Al Blauberman a lifelong dependence on the grudged pennies of the Jewish poor. While he was still interning, he divorced the wife he had taken right after he graduated from medical school; she had been nothing but a burden to him and a handicap. She went home to her family. For a while, he received wild telephone calls from her, until he told her family in no uncertain terms that if she continued to bother him he would turn her over to the police. Then he discovered psychiatry. In the veterans' hospitals after the war, he found his experience and tested his hand. This was more like it. No house calls in the middle of the night. No hordes of sufferers pulling and pushing at him. He worked for a while at Bellevue, where he continued to absorb experience; he learned what he could from the European refugees, the devoted disciples of Freud.

"Mmmm?" he said now, around his pipe. "I cannot help you if you don't want to be helped. Yes?"

Ephraim said nothing.

Dr. Blauberman sniffed noisily. What an analyst had to fight against! Nothing came out of this young man, who could have had the whole world if he had only listened to his analyst and let himself be helped. Instead, here he

was—sickly, pale, dressed like one of those young Greenwich Village tramps, with soiled, baggy trousers, cheap shoes, sweater, no necktie. The large mouth closed so stubbornly. The blue eyes, so clear, so light, their color undiminished by the dimly lit office. The matted brown hair in need of cutting. The thick, kinky, straw-colored eyebrows. Like his father's, Ephraim had boasted so many times-as though the straw-colored eyebrows were a heritage of great importance.

"Pop is the only man I know who can comb his hair with a towel," Ephraim could say. "He's got this thick hair, the same as mine, and these wild bushy eyebrows, and he never uses a comb—he just gets it fixed up with the towel. That's one thing I've never been able to do. He hates hats, but he's got this old cap he wears that he's had for years—it smells of gasoline. . . . Sometimes I wear a cap. It makes a big hit with girls."

Dr. Blauberman grunted. He himself went in for hats with fancy bands and feathers. As for that father, what he led the family to! The unhealthy sense of values. The denial of society. His children made overdependent. The retardation of Ephraim's emotional development. The lack of drive and ambition to carry the music to fulfillment. They had spent three weeks—fifteen sessions—on Lefevre alone, as Dr. Blauberman demonstrated one way and another how Ephraim was held to the teacher by immature dependence. The running back to the old man, instead of breaking into new territory on his own. And still Ephraim was stubborn. He rejected everything. Negative.

Negative. Dr. Blauberman was tired of it. After all, it was only human to want a little reward for your efforts. The analyst's narcissistic gratifications were important, too. Why give and give and give and get nothing, not even a sign of recognition? It wasn't healthy. It wasn't healthy for *anybody.* You had to do what was right for yourself at all times, and in that way you did what was right for the patients. If asked, all his colleagues would agree.

Just the other night, after a meeting of the New York Psychoanalytic Society, he had stood around waiting impatiently for Harold Seltzer to finish discussing with other colleagues Norman Reider's paper on "Chess, Oedipus, and the Mater Dolorosa." Dr. Blauberman had walked home with Seltzer, who lived near Dr. Blauberman's office, where Dr. Blauberman slept on meeting nights instead of going all the way home to Scarsdale. Seltzer owned a beautiful town house on a side street. Seltzer was no fool. He knew his business. At fifty, Seltzer looked ten years younger. Sailboat Seltzer, he was called, even by patients, who knew he was crazy about sailing. Seltzer escaped from the telephone by the simple expedient of spending long weekends and long vacations on his boat. He always had a tan. He always looked relaxed and happy. He was very popular with the older European analysts and went to all their parties. He was a tremendous rumba dancer and he knew a lot of sailing songs, which he sang in a near-professional baritone voice. He also played the banjo. The Europeans considered him the typical healthy American. He had presented half a dozen papers already at Psychoanlaytic Society meetings, on

such subjects as “The Id, the Ego, and the Sea” and “Columbus, Narcissism, and the Discovery of America.” Seltzer’s name was appearing regularly in the indexes of leading psychoanalytic journals. Dr. Blauberman’s name had never appeared there even once. Seltzer looked his patients over carefully, and managed to select the ones who could afford to pay thirty-five dollars an hour and up, and give him the least possible inconvenience and bother, as well as a classic and analyzable neurosis. It was important to get patients who came to you five or even six times a week, nicely, quietly, cooperatively, without making a mess, so that from hour to hour you knew where you were. It was important to have patients who were comfortably analyzable from session to session. Dr. Blauberman admired the way Seltzer got the most, in every way, out of his practice.

“Listen, Sailboat, hmmm?” Dr. Blauberman had said. “I’ve been doing a lot of thinking about criteria for suitability for psychoanalysis. It’s a very important question.”

“Of course,” Seltzer said. “So?”

“I’m thinking of doing a paper on it.”

“Blauberman, you know Waldhorn? Mmmm? Waldhorn just *did* a paper on it.”

Dr. Blauberman sniffed deeply. “I’ll have to read it,” he said. “It’s a very important question in our work. Do you accept Fenichel’s criteria for

suitability?"

"Fenichel's. And Freud's."

"How do *you* tell, Sailboat?" Dr. Blauberman said. "About suitability? Mmmm?"

"It ain't so difficult," Seltzer said. "Stay away from the narcissistic neuroses and perverse characters, Blauberman. As you well know, Freud always said they lent themselves poorly to analysis. Yes?"

Dr. Blauberman sighed.

"Don't take it so hard, Blauberman," Seltzer said, laughing. "Hmmm!"

Laughing boy. It was easy enough for him to laugh. Him and his year-round sun tan. "What about Freud's contra-indications to suitability, enlarged by Fenichel?" Dr. Blauberman asked.

"Ha!" Seltzer said. "Lack of a reasonable and cooperative ego! Stay away from it! Never take such a case. You have to protect yourself in our work. You know what we mean by ego strength. Right away I spot rigid defenses, I won't even start with them. I should say not. Listen to me, Blauberman. Develop an attitude and stick to it firmly. Remember that Fenichel holds that the crucial factor in determining accessibility is really the dynamic relationship between resistance and the wish for recovery."

"So how do you tell who's suitable for analysis when you don't know

them yet?" Dr. Blauberman asked. "Who decides?"

"You do, Blauberman."

"Mmmm," Dr. Blauberman said. "After a trial analysis, who is to say suitable or unsuitable? Mmmm?"

"Blauberman, *you* are, mmmm?" Seltzer said, and laughed.

What would Sailboat Seltzer have done with Ephraim, Dr. Blauberman wondered. How would he have dealt with Ephraim's unshakable involvement with his old teacher, Gustave Lefevre?

"I just love the old guy," Ephraim had said. "I'd rather spend a day playing duets with Gus than almost anything."

"So. Mmmm. Two clarinets. Just the two of you. Yes?"

"Oh, man, you just ought to hear the tone Gus gets, even now! At his age!"

Two clarinets. Dr. Blauberman patiently tried to elicit something, anything, from Ephraim on the symbolic significance of the two clarinets. Silence. Nothing. Nowhere. Impossible. If just once he could get Ephraim to react emotionally. The emotion was there, all right. No mistake about it. But Dr. Blauberman couldn't get at it. He tried charm. He tried sympathy. He tried anger. He tried sarcasm. He tried coldness. He tried silence, and usually it was Dr. Blauberman who spoke first. It was very disheartening.

Dr. Blauberman couldn't find anything particularly helpful in his reading. In the hope of getting some elucidation, he looked up an old paper that he recalled his own analyst's having once made a big fuss over—Franz S. Cohn's "Practical Approach to the Problem of Narcis- sistic Neuroses," written over twenty years ago. And he read, "There is dull but agitated talking, very rapid without pause, or else scarcely any talk, with long intervals of silence. There is no important difference between these types. In both, thoughts are drifting like a cork on a deep sea of narcissistic libido that presently is going to wash away the analyst." Mmmm? Ephraim Samuels wanted to wash Blauberman away? Very disheartening.

In the beginning, Dr. Blauberman reported enthusiastically to Dr. Fifield during *his* analytic hour (Vertical Position) that Ephraim had a-lot-to-give and could achieve get-well, and that he thought he'd make out satisfactorily with Ephraim—better than he had done with Dr. Fifield's boyhood friend Lester Greenthal. Lester Greenthal's progress, after eight years in analysis with Dr. Blauberman, had been very slight. Lester Greenthal now accused Dr. Blauberman of loving Spencer Fifield more than Lester Greenthal. On the other hand, Marvin Krakower, the pathologist, had made terrific progress. In less than four years, after Marvin Krakower had come to him via Spencer Fifield, the pathologist had married Sally Mandel, the girl Spencer Fifield had been going around with. "Look at Marvin Krakower," Dr. Blauberman was able to tell Spencer Fifield when Fifield was lying on the couch. "Married to

Sally. Two lovely children. If you get well, you might have all that." Spencer Fifield, unfortunately, still had a long way to go—chronically intellectualizing patients were, after all, reluctant even to go through the motions of acting on their newly acquired awareness— but he, unlike the deadwood, was working *with* Dr. Blauberman.

Together, Dr. Blauberman and Dr. Fifield had kept Joan Stone, the daughter of Dr. Fifield's wealthiest patient, Hiram Stone, from eloping with the manager of a neighborhood Christian Science Reading Room. Dr. Fifield had steered her into getting engaged to Barry Rosenblatt, another pathologist Spencer Fifield knew, whose ambition—and he was absolutely unneurotic and open about it—was to marry a rich girl, somebody who would make it economically possible for him to devote his attention fully to science. It had taken plenty out of Dr. Blauberman, the analyst frequently reminded Spencer Fifield, to put Barry Rosenblatt over. That one had been exhausting.

Dr. Blauberman had, in spite of himself, a kind of wistful admiration for some of the older psychoanalysts—especially the Europeans. But they were clannish and snobbish, and tended to treat him in a patronizing manner. They made jokes about life in the suburbs. They occupied prewar-rental apartments on Central Park West—office and home on a single rental—that were filled with the dark-brown, dreary, heavy furniture they had brought with them from Europe. They talked with fervor about "our work." They could afford to make their scholarly, erudite studies in a vacuum. They always

seemed to be so lighthearted, so full of humor. They had good appetites. And they were highly sociable, always giving parties. For each other. Dr. Blauberman would hear them talking about their parties at the Psychoanalytic Institute, where he put in his voluntary work with the rest of them. He wasn't invited to their parties, and they seemed to look right through him in the corridors at the Institute or at conventions and conferences. It was apparently simple enough for them to resist being drawn into their patients' neuroses. The analytic discipline they talked so much about was also, it seemed, easy for them. Dr. Blauberman didn't find it easy. Nothing was easy for him. He had to watch his own strength, his own energies, how *much* he gave. If you let them, patients would eat you up. All of you. "Let's face it," Dr. Blauberman said to himself and to his patients. "The neurotic patient is hungry. Mmmm?" And what was the point of letting yourself be eaten up? That was right neither for you nor for your patients. It was debilitating. And the frustration of getting nowhere with a patient was debilitating. After all, Dr. Blauberman was a family man. He had a wife and two children. The children were very popular in their school. His son had just been elected president of his seventh-grade class. Dr. Blauberman worked hard for his living. He wanted something to show for it. He had a lovely sixty-thousand-dollar split-level house in Scarsdale. That was something. This summer, he was going to send both children to one of the finest camps in Vermont. That was something. And he and his wife were going to Spain. That

would be something. His father-in-law owned one of the largest laundry chains in the city, and Dr. Blauberman admired him very much. He never saw his own father, who still lived in the section of Brooklyn where Dr. Blauberman had grown up. He didn't bother his father and his father didn't bother him. Like all accredited psychoanalysts, Dr. Blauberman had been psychoanalyzed himself. He was *free* of his father. And of the bitterness and the meanness his father represented. That was something, too.

After disposing of Ephraim Samuels, Dr. Blauberman would be in a position to tackle the problem of what to do about Lester Greenthal. Other Fifield-recommended patients had come and gone, including a young painter who had quit after having tried and failed to commit suicide, and a young strip-teaser who had tried and succeeded. Dr. Blauberman had made his mistakes, but he had learned from them, as he often told his patients, and never made the same mistake twice. His only mistake with Ephraim Samuels had been taking him on in the first place. Still, in the early days things had looked promising.

"And this music you compose," Dr. Blauberman had said at one session. "You will give it to some conductor? Yes? Maybe to Lenny Bernstein?" Dr. Blauberman liked being on a familiar basis with celebrated people his patients talked about.

Ephraim smiled at the ceiling. "I told you, Dr. Blauberman. I'm not

ambitious-not that way. Not everybody can be a great man. But I've got a little stuff that's my own. For the time being, I just like to write these little pieces to see what comes out."

"You are afraid of a rejection. Mmmm?"

"You don't follow, Dr. Blauberman. I just don't want to—"

"I follow more than you think. Why don't you go to this party you are invited to for Lenny?"

"Well, I just don't enjoy those big parties. They're too confusing." "Are you afraid Lenny or Adolph will reject you?"

"Gosh, no. I like them. They're a lot of fun. But hanging around with them can use up all your time."

"You back away *before* you are rejected. You feel inadequate."

"If I wanted to, I could run around from one party to another, trying to make it with television producers and all that junk. But that isn't what I want."

"Lenny Bernstein is on television. Television is good enough for Lenny Bernstein to show millions of people what he can do. Television is a healthy outlet. No?"

"It depends on what you want," Ephraim said.

"Maybe there is something missing in your sense of values about what

you want," Dr. Blauberman said.

"Well—" Ephraim began. Then he stopped. As though inspired, he continued, "Here's the way it is, Dr. Blauberman. Last week, I went over to my sister Leah's house for dinner. She's married to Vic, you know, and they have this four-year-old kid, Eugene, named after Eugene Victor Debs—"

"I know, I know," Dr. Blauberman said, impatient with Ephraim's way of breaking into laughter over the child's name.

"I still get a blast out of it, after all these years."

"Mmmm," Dr. Blauberman said, making noises of dissatisfaction. "What I wanted to tell you," Ephriam went on, "my father was there, too, and Eugene comes over to him and says, 'Grampa, guess the name of a delicious Jewish drink beginning with the letter A.' "

Dr. Blauberman made further sounds of dissatisfaction. How he loathed these homey stories of the family's self-appreciation.

"So Pop says he gives up, and Eugene screams, 'Ah-malted!' " Ephraim put on an exaggerated Jewish accent. "It turns out that Vic rehearses him in the accent. Vic says he's going to put Eugene on television someday, with Pop's collie, in a new gimmick—a Jewish 'Lassie' program, with Eugene sitting on the dog, relaxed, and telling Jewish jokes. Isn't that wild?" He stopped, realizing that he was getting no response.

"You are not a child," Dr. Blauberman said. "For you, work in television would be a healthy outlet. You are afraid to engage yourself in the competitive activities in television? Even to the extent of going to a social party?"

"No. You don't get the message, Dr. Blauberman," Ephraim said, in a low voice. "You don't understand. I like to see those people once in a while, but I don't like to run with anybody. I get more pleasure out of talking to my father."

"You go only where it is safe, where you won't be rejected. Yes?" "Oh, God!" Ephraim said, "I told you. My father is an original, unusual man. I don't know anybody else like him."

Dr. Blauberman made loud sounds of disapproval. "So. At your age. You feel safe only with Papa. You still insist on living with your father. No?"

"Well, sure. Why not? It's not just that he'd be all alone. I *like* being with him. Do you know how he escaped from Siberia? He was—"

"Don't start telling me all that heroic garbage about the Socialists." Dr. Blauberman's anger cut through Ephraim with terrible force. "You won't face the truth about your real feeling about your father. You refuse to admit your hostility to him."

"Well, I've got my beefs and all, but—"

"Why are you so lacking in drive? Why? You don't think it's because of

your father? You refuse to admit there is something basically unhealthy about your home situation? *Why* do you stay with him?"

"Pop makes terrific coffee," Ephraim said softly, with a laugh.

"You're twenty-eight. At your age, you should have your own apartment."

"Well, I guess you're right, Dr. Blauberman. And, naturally, when I get married I'll have my own home. But right now I sort of like it where I am. And I can save money. It leaves me free to do my work or anything I please."

"And it gives you an excuse not to compete in the world? To risk letting people hear your music. To sell it. To make some decent money. To be a man. Mmmm?"

"Well—" Ephraim said, and stopped.

One day, Dr. Blauberman had wanted to know why Ephraim played the clarinet in the first place. "The clarinet is basically a symbol, no?" he said. "You prefer an inanimate symbol to real satisfaction. Hmmm. Yes?"

Ephraim laughed. "I like them *both,* Dr. Blauberman. But I do love the clarinet sound. No question about that. It sounds good to me. Of all the musical instruments, the clarinet is closest to nature. It's the tree itself, hollowed out. The sound is *natural.*"

"So. You refuse to face the meaning of the symbolism?"

"Well—" Once more, Ephraim stopped talking.

As time went on, it became clear to Dr. Blauberman that the depression in Ephraim was growing deeper. He evidently felt dissatisfied with himself. He lost interest in the clarinet. After awhile, he told Dr. Blauberman he could not enjoy what had been the simple pleasure of sitting down to a quiet supper with his father, or of amusing his small nephews with jazzy tunes on his clarinet. Everything seemed to drop away. So many things had been stirred up into one big hodgepodge in his head. He didn't know where he was. He questioned everything he was and everything he had been doing. He complained to Dr. Blauberman that he couldn't sleep at night. Dr. Blauberman gave him prescriptions for Seconal, to help him sleep. When a single capsule didn't work, he took increasingly large dosages, and showed up at Dr. Blauberman's office still groggy from the effects of Seconal. One day, Dr. Blauberman announced that there would be no more prescriptions.

"What'll I do, Dr. Blauberman? I can't sleep without it."

"Get it from a physical doctor."

"Dr. Fifield?"

"If he chooses to give it to you."

"But if he doesn't?"

"I can't be responsible for what Dr. Fifield gives you. That is his

business. Physical medicine is another department. So."

So. Ephraim went to see Spencer and said he needed Seconal or something to help him sleep. After a few months of giving Ephraim prescriptions for sleeping pills, Spencer, during his analytic hour with Dr. Blauberman, expressed interest over the large amounts of Seconal that Ephraim was consuming. "Frankly, I think he's overintellectualizing, about women and everything, and that's why he can't sleep." Spencer was fresh from the analyst's consideration of Spencer's own tendency to overintellectualize. "Although he denies it, of course, he seems to be opening up. He seems to have made a lot of progress in treatment since that first time I saw him. He had hepatitis, and that leaves you feeling depressed for weeks afterward, but there was more to it than that. Frankly, he needed help if anybody did."

"You really think he is opening up?" Dr. Blauberman said.

"Definitely! He told me he hasn't been able to bring himself to touch the clarinet for months. He says he just doesn't have the wind to blow, and when he tries to play, it makes him feel physically sick. That must show, frankly, that the deep disturbances are rising to the surface. Frankly, I'm sure you're getting somewhere with him."

Dr. Blauberman looked pleased. "So," he said, in a mock-fatherly reproach. "My siblings are talking about me."

Spencer gave a happy laugh.

"See you tomorrow, mmmm?" Dr. Blauberman said.

And a couple of weeks later Spencer again expressed concern over the sleeping pills Ephraim asked for. "This time, I questioned him about his emotional involvements. I asked him whether he brings up material for you to work with."

"Mmmm," Dr. Blauberman said.

"I asked him whether he had a real relationship with a girl," Spencer went on. He had been chewing over with the analyst his own impoverished relationships with girls. "I really pinned him down and asked him whether his physical needs were being satisfied. I told him he shouldn't be avoiding sexual involvements with emotional content. Mmmm?" he said, giving Dr. Blauberman back his own. "He became upset, very disturbed. He said, 'Who's *avoiding* anything?' Classical defense-mechanism anger."

Dr. Blauberman sighed.

"I told him psychoanalysis has been extremely helpful to me in my own work," Spencer said stiffly. "Then he asked me whether he ought to have a consultation with Dr. Hans Radelsheim. And I told him he had to bring up *that* question with you. I told him, frankly, it's not a good idea for us in sibling relationships to talk about you with each other."

"I am a psychoanalyst," Dr. Blauberman said to Ephraim at the next-to-last session as Ephraim lay, still not speaking, on the couch. "I don't know how to break you of the Seconal addiction. It is not in my field. You need to go where you can be helped in that respect now." "Would it be a good idea to have a consultation about what I should do?" Ephraim said, finally talking. "I mean, what I've been trying to figure out is why I got into analysis in the first place. Nothing ever seemed right—now that I think about it—that I tried to do here."

"And whose fault is that?"

"Mine, I guess. But, anyway, my friend Charlie Donato—the bassoonist?—says I ought to have a consultation with this Dr. Hans Radelsheim, you know?"

"Why Radelsheim, hmmm?"

"I don't know. Just because Charlie says he's good, that he knows a lot."

"So. I *don't* know a lot?"

"Well, no. It's just that all I want is to get back to my music. I don't really have a good idea of what's happened to me this past year, and what I should do."

"I am telling you what you should do. You should go to Dr. Fifield and ask him what to do, where to go to be cured of your addiction to Seconal."

"But if I feel worse, should I go to a different *kind* of analyst?"

"If *this* analyst couldn't analyze you at this point, *no* analyst can analyze you," Dr. Blauberman said. "We found that out. At least, not in your present state. Mmmm?"

"Would it hurt just to ask this Dr. Radelsheim about me?"

"There is no reason to call Radelsheim. I have nothing to ask Radelsheim." He stood up from his chair. "See you tomorrow."

That night, at another meeting of the Psychoanalytic Society, Dr. Blauberman sat next to Sailboat Seltzer, who was sitting next to Dr. Abe Letkin, one of the old-timers—one of the oldest practitioners of analysis in town, as a matter of fact. Letkin didn't let anybody ever forget it, either. He always irritated Dr. Blauberman, with all his *gemutlich,* good-natured, relaxed ways—the Middle European Barry Fitzgerald of psychoanalysis. Once, Dr. Blauberman telephoned Letkin about a clinic patient, and Letkin took the opportunity to make one of his speeches, lecturing Dr. Blauberman about how Freud was a saint, a poet, and a philosopher, not a scientist. When Dr. Blauberman tried to get a word in edgewise, Letkin said he had to go, and cut him off with a "Lotsa luck." Letkin's signoff was always "Lotsa luck." Some dignified way for one of the elders of psychoanalysis to speak! But, for reasons Dr. Blauberman could not understand, Letkin was admired and respected by all the big wheels in the Psychoanalytic Society. Why? All he did

was make cracks about the stuffiness, the narrowmindedness, the limitations, the godlike pretensions, the short-com- ings of analysts—particularly some of the younger analysts, who, according to Letkin, were constitutionally unfitted for the work they tried to do. In the discussion that followed the reading of a paper at a meeting, Letkin would get up and try to turn it into philosophical channels. Philosophical channels bored Dr. Blauberman. And it wasn't as though Letkin's views came as a surprise to his listeners. Every time he got up to talk about Freud's really *significant* qualities, his *spiritual* qualities, he would be received with affectionate groans. "Leanness," Letkin would say, with the kind of inflection Dr. Blauberman always found so embarrassing. "Leanness and asceticism constituted Freud's ego-ideal." And everybody would look at Letkin as though he were *the* father symbol. It was infuriating. Dr. Blauberman sometimes wished he had the nerve to get up and say something about it.

Before the meeting was called to order, Letkin was talking, in a conspiratorial, laughing manner, to Sailboat Seltzer. Letkin was saying what a terrible collection of paintings had been donated to the Psychoanalytic Society for its art show to raise money for the Psychoanalytic Institute. "I tell you, Sellbought, instead of throwing out these lousy paintings by name painters, they give them to *psychoanalysts* to sell. That is what they think of psychoanalysts."

And Seltzer said, putting the Letkinese on thick, "A rummage sale is a

rummage sale by anybody, no?"

It happened that Dr. Blauberman and his wife had picked up an Abstract Expressionist painting by a well-known painter for only three hundred and ninety-five dollars at the art show, and it was now hanging in their living room in Scarsdale. Dr. Blauberman started to tell them about it, but Letkin was inviting Seltzer to come to a party. Letkin was saying, "Sellbought, don't forget to bring your banjo. The food will be good, and we have lotsa whiskey."

"Letkin, by me you are the A No. 1 host among analysts," Seltzer said. That Seltzer! What he wouldn't do to make himself popular with Letkin and the other old-timers!

Letkin clapped Seltzer on the back. "Let me tell you a new Myron Cohen joke I just heard from one of my patients," he said to Seltzer, extending his attention to Dr. Blauberman with one brief eyewink and then turning back to Seltzer.

"So tell me already," Seltzer said, still putting on the schmalzy act to ingratiate himself with Letkin.

"So," Letkin began. "This patient comes to the analyst and lies down on the couch, and the analyst says to him, 'You've got to stop smoking.' 'That'll help me?' the patient asks. And the analyst says, 'Yes, you're burning the couch.' "

Letkin and Seltzer killed themselves laughing. Two laughing boys.

The meeting was called to order. There was a long paper read by Kurt Eissler and entitled "Notes on the Environment of a Genius." It was about Goethe and Goethe's loving father. Just what Dr. Blauberman needed! Not only another of those esoteric studies but one about loving fathers. At the meeting before, it was Radelsheim—one of those self-appointed saints regarded with awe by so many of the other analysts—on the psychic function of artistic compulsion. Tonight, Dr. Blauberman noticed Radelsheim sitting at the other side of the room, absorbed, rapt, listening attentively to Eissler. Radelsheim and his original theories. But it was Blauberman who had to deal with the environmental setup of an Ephraim Samuels. In the discussion that followed the presentation of the paper, Eissler said that analysts possibly are not too well prepared to deal psychoanalytically with situations in which parents might have a good effect on their children rather than the opposite. That was a big help. Everybody gave one of those arrogantly humble laughs of self-understanding. The hypocrites! Tomorrow morning, most of them would be struggling, like him, against resistance reinforced from the outside.

This time, Letkin, thank God, didn't make his usual speech. He was too busy laughing it up with Seltzer. Dr. Blauberman hung around with them, listening glumly to Letkin make disrespectful cracks about Goethe.

"Eissler should have explained why Goethe didn't know how to laugh at

himself," Letkin was saying. "Goethe had no humor. Tell me, Sellbought. What kind of father gives issue to a son who does not know how to laugh at himself?"

Seltzer gave a chuckle instead of an opinion. Sailboat Seltzer always played it safe.

Dr. Blauberman tried to get in on the amusement. "Eissler you couldn't call exactly a Myron Cohen, mmmm?"

Letkin gave him a cool look and said, "I thought Eissler brought out some brilliant points, Blauberman."

"On the question of neutralized energy," Seltzer said. "For Goethe, creating, Eissler pointed out, was one of the deepest instinctual processes, mmmm?"

And Letkin said, "The environment that was beneficial for Goethe could, with someone else, have led to vastly different results, possibly delinquency or psychosis? I agree with Eissler."

"Mmmm?" Dr. Blauberman said. "Mmmm." He wanted to ask Letkin what he thought about an Ephraim Samuels. What about the resistance of an Ephraim Samuels, thanks to one of those loving fathers? But the hell with it. All these people were too busy becoming saints, developing original theories, writing papers. Dr. Blauberman thought fleetingly about "The Id, the Ego, and

the Clarinet." The hell with that, too. There were more important things.

The next morning, Dr. Blauberman had two very difficult sessions in a row—first with Joan Stone, who tried to pull a sudden flip-flop in her somewhat unstable feelings about Barry Rosenblatt, and then with Lester Greenthal, who decided that day to spring on Dr. Blauberman the idea that *he* should have a consultation with some other analyst. Dr. Blauberman got Lester Greenthal quieted down. After Lester Greenthal had left, Dr. Blauberman picked up his telephone and called Mr. Samuels at his place of business, a one-man autorepair shop in Long Island City.

"Mr. Samuels?"

"Yes, *sir."* The father had a slight Eastern European accent, and his "sir" was used not as a respectful salutation but as a form of emphasis.

"Mr. Joseph Samuels?"

"Yes, *sir*."

"Dr. Blauberman here. I'm informing you of the termination on my treatment of your son. . .. Did you hear?" Dr. Blauberman asked impatiently. "I'm discharging my obligations with this telephone call. Your son's last appointment with me will be today."

"Dr. Blauberman?" Mr. Samuels asked nervously, uncertainly, as though he were surprised to have proof suddenly that there *was* a Dr. Blauberman.

"Is Ephraim all right, Dr. Blauberman?" He enunciated his words with care.

"He's supposed to be here for his last hour this afternoon—if he shows up," Dr. Blauberman said. "I'm afraid I can't do anything any more for your son. I can't carry him any more. I've knocked myself out for him. He just refuses to work his problems out."

"But, Dr. Blau—"

"He refuses to let himself be helped. You can't help a patient who doesn't want to be helped."

"What's all it about?" Mr. Samuels sounded terrified. He couldn't get his words out in order.

"What-it-is-all-about," Dr. Blauberman said, demonstrating extreme patience, "is simply that your son is too sick to be treated by an analyst. . . . Look, I can't spend all this time talking on the telephone. I've got a lot of sick people to see."

"Ephraim thinks the world of you," Mr. Samuels said. "He hasn't taken an interest in anything else for a whole year. Does he want to stop seeing you?"

Irritability with this slow-talking, slow-thinking man began to grow in Dr. Blauberman, but he gave a laugh and said, "Does any patient want to stop seeing the *analyst*?"

The humor seemed to be lost on Mr. Samuels. “What is the matter with my son?” he was asking, in a quavery voice. “Can you tell me—”

“I’ve got to hang up,” Dr. Blauberman interrupted. “Sorry. If you insist on discussing this, I’ll give you an appointment. This afternoon? At two-fifty? Mmmmm?”

“Well—” Mr. Samuels began.

“It’s the hour following your son’s. Yes?”

“Yes.”

“Be here, please. Two-fifty.” Dr. Blauberman hung up.

How many times in the past had he tried to get Ephraim to face the reality of what Mr. Samuels was: a neurotic, frightened, dominating figure, hanging on to the past, keeping his son tied to his own self-limiting fears of society. Always, Ephraim had denied it.

Dr. Blauberman had finally said one day, “If your father is so wise, why don’t you go to *him* with your problems? Why do you come to me at all?”

“But Dr. Fifield said I needed treatment,” Ephraim said. “And you said I needed it, too. Pop doesn’t want to interfere with the analysis or anything else I’m trying to do for myself. But I can see he’s worrying about me. He can’t understand why I don’t play the clarinet any more or see any friends or girls. Not that he ever says anything.”

"Hmmmm. So you were so well adjusted and happy, and you were realizing yourself so fully, *before* you came to analysis, mmmm?" Dr. Blauberman asked.

"Well, no. I've always had this—this—nature, sort of quiet and sad," Ephraim said. "I told you, my mother was always that way, too."

"Mmmm," Dr. Blauberman said.

"I got hit with hepatitis just as I was starting on this project of transposing for clarinet the viola and violin parts of some Bach suites. I was working day and night on them with old Gus Lefevre. Did I tell you he wrote that basic book of instruction I began with as a kid?"

"Mmmmm." If it wasn't the father he was holding on to, it was the old teacher.

"It really got me down," Ephraim said, "having to give up working with Gus. That's when Dr. Fifield told me I ought to consult you." "So. Maybe it was a good thing you had to give up working with Gus," Dr. Blauberman said.

"Good!" Ephraim cried out in horror. "It wasn't *good,* man. You ought to see Gus. He's retired now, in his seventies, living with his wife in his little cottage deep in the woods, way out on Long Island. I used to get up at dawn to travel three hours each way on the Long Island Rail Road just for the privilege of playing duets with Gus. I used to get up before *Pop,* and he's been getting

up every morning at six. For the past fifty years. And I'm a guy who likes his sleep."

"And you stayed overnight at the teacher's house?" Dr. Blauber- man asked. "You looked there for another home. Yes?"

"Sure it's home!" Ephraim cried again. "You ought to hear Gus. We'd stay up until four in the morning playing Bach, with only his wife for an audience. We'd make tape recordings of two parts, and then play two other parts along with the tapes. You ought to hear that sound. Four clarinets. It was wild. Mrs. Lefevre couldn't make Gus go to bed. You ought to hear him blow. He's almost three times my age, and I could barely keep up with him."

Dr. Blauberman said, "Not two clarinets but *four.* Yes? Do you think you know what it means, the four?"

Ephraim looked puzzled, and uninterested in numbers. "Once, I brought the tapes back and played them for Pop," he went on. "You know what he said? He said, 'It's beautiful, Eephie; it does my heart good to listen.' That's the way he talks, you know? He's been so lost and miserable ever since my mother died, and yet he can get a blast out of hearing me play."

"Why four?" Dr. Blauberman said, trying to bring him back on the track. "You think you know why you like four?"

Another thing Dr. Blauberman had tried repeatedly to accomplish with

Ephraim was to make him aware of the deeper significance of his careless attitude toward money. He was so satisfied to drift along, making a few dollars here and there playing clarinet at school dances or trade-union parties, at resort hotels or small clubs in the Village. It was clear to Dr. Blauberman that the lack of drive to make money came directly from Mr. Samuels. Ephraim told him about it almost boastfully.

"Pop has just never been really *interested* in money, and he's always hated what so many other men have to do in order to earn big money," Ephraim told him. "When my mother was alive, she'd say how nice it would be to have a good set of dishes or stuff like that, but her heart wasn't really in it, either. You know what Pop always told us?" Dr. Blauberman was silent. He despised what Pop always told them.

"Pop always said, 'As long as I have these two hands, we will never go hungry. We will always make out.' And we always did make out." Ephraim held his own hands open before him, the fingers spread out. His hands were long, the fingers tapered, the skin rough and flat at the tips from years of pressing clarinet keys.

"You made out?" Dr. Blauberman said. "You think your father makes out?"

"Well, he misses my mother," Ephraim said slowly.

"If you know what I mean, Dr. Blauberman."

"No. What *do* you mean?"

"Well, he misses her deeply. And the way he says it—remembering her face still makes it impossible, after three years, for him to look fully into the face of any other woman."

"So. He holds on to you. Yes? He insists on living in the old apartment? With you?"

"He keeps his sorrow to himself," Ephraim said. "He doesn't try to put anything off on me."

"He sees other women now? He has friends? Mmmm?"

"Well, no. He never needed many people. He never did a lot of running around. My mother was the same way. He's got his dog," Ephraim said, his voice lifting in sudden delight. "This four-month-old collie. Silky. He's a beautiful puppy. The first dog he's had in ten years. We used to have a retriever—he died in Pop's arms at the age of *twenty.* It took Pop ten whole years before he could bring himself to get another dog. That's the way he is."

"And that's enough?" Dr. Blauberman said. "A dog?"

"The collie is this beautiful sable-and-white puppy, so affectionate and intelligent," Ephraim said. "Pop loves that puppy."

"So," Dr. Blauberman said. "Your father doesn't have a housekeeper for the apartment where you live—in—where is it, did you say?" "Jackson

Heights."

"Yes." Dr. Blauberman couldn't bring himself to pronounce the name. How he hated the thought of anyone's wanting to remain in Jackson Heights. He had the complete family picture by this time, and to him it was not exhilarating: The eldest child, Leah, married to the trade-union organizer Victor Fine, with their four-year old boy, Eugene Victor, named after Debs. The older son, Barney, married to Terry, with a fifteen-month-old baby, Jimmy. Mr. Samuels managing all his own housekeeping in the apartment he shared with Ephraim and the dog.

But Ephraim insisted on bringing the picture into sharper focus. Dr. Blauberman indulged him and listened.

"Pop gets up every morning at six o'clock sharp, without any assistance from any alarm clock. He always makes the same breakfast for himself. Freshly squeezed orange juice. It's got to be freshly squeezed. Two soft-boiled eggs. Percolated coffee, with heavy cream and four teaspoons of sugar. Four slices of white bread with sweet butter. To Pop, white bread is a delicacy. He was born in this muddy village in pre-Revolutionary Russia. When he was just a boy in his late teens, he was exiled to Siberia and escaped to America, and so white bread to him is very special, it sort of represents—"

"All right, all right, I know that," Dr. Blauberman interrupted. "He always leaves the white bread on the kitchen table for me," Ephraim continued, in a

lower voice. “He always squeezes enough orange juice for me and leaves a large glass of it for me next to the bread. He always leaves the coffeepot for me on the stove. Then he feeds Silky and sets out in this old Plymouth sedan of his for his auto- repair shop. And Silky goes along, sitting in the front seat with him, just as Blackie always used to do.”

“Yes, yes.” Dr. Blauberman said. “So?”

“So that’s the way he is, that’s all. He’s got this little yard behind his shop, for Silky to wander around in. He’s got this corny picture of Abraham Lincoln hanging over his desk, and right next to it a picture of Eugene Victor Debs. He’s got this big picture window in the front of his shop, that he installed with his own hands. He’s got this big collection of potted plants in front of the window, that he started with my mother before I was born. Our house is full of plants, and Leah’s whole living room is full of them, too. She keeps telling Pop the neighbors think she’s crazy.”

“So. The neighbors think she is neurotic, your sister?”

As though Dr. Blauberman had made a joke, Ephraim laughed. “Silky moseys about or sleeps near the plants at the shop,” he said. “Pop loves having Silky with him there. You know Pop offered the puppy to me the other day? He saw me feeling so low, I think he wanted to cheer me up or something.. . . It’s crazy, but Pop treats almost everything as though it were alive. You know, he really *loves* automobiles? You know, he always refers to a

car in the feminine gender?"

"Mmmm," Dr. Blauberman said.

"And what he loves to do especially, even when cars look alike or are built alike, is to discover their individual differences, as though they were alive."

"The automobile is inanimate," Dr. Blauberman said. "The clarinet is inanimate. Yes?"

At one point, Dr. Blauberman had tried to determine how the Samuels family felt about Ephraim's career. Nobody else in the family was musical. Nobody else in the family was "gifted."

"Pop loves to listen to me play," Ephraim had said. "That is, he *used* to love to listen to me play when I still played. You know, he really gets the message in jazz? He loved to hear me play Mozart, but, believe it or not, he really gets a blast out of jazz. He really swings. Once, he came down to this dump I played in, the Zero Inn, in the Village. It was wild. Pop had never seen anything like it, and he was blushing all over the place, seeing all the chicks in pants and stuff. You know the way they dress. Then I started playing with Josh Leonard, the pianist. And I was tossing a Monk thing back and forth with Josh, and then, while Josh laid down a foundation, I blew a brand-new melodic line about a mile long, and I could see Pop's face while I played. He was excited, and I could see him bouncing with the beat. Man, what a sight!"

"So. Your father holds on to you, lives through you?"

"You don't get the message, Dr. Blauberman. He just likes to listen to me play. One hot, sweltering Sunday, I felt like staying home to practice. Pop likes to read the Sunday *Times* or play with my nephews when they visit, while I practice runs or just test reeds. That's the way he is. This one hot Sunday, it was so damn hot I took off everything except my shorts and sat around barefoot, whittling down a reed. You know, he just sat there with me, watching until I got that reed down to the exact thickness I wanted. You know why? Because he was interested. And you should have seen his face when I got the damn reed done right."

"You feel separated from him? You feel you are an individual in your own right?"

"Well, Pop is a big lemonade drinker," Ephraim said. "So I got to be one, too. I guess that's a great example of how unseparated from him I am. Whenever I'm practicing, he always makes a large pitcher of cold lemonade and leaves it handy for me to get at. Then he'll retire and read a book and listen to me practice, while I try to perfect a single run or something like that. He likes to hear me do runs as much as anything else. Once, I went over to him after I had swabbed out the clarinet, and showed him my sore, bruised underlip. I did it because I knew he'd get such a blast out of it. And I said, 'It's the wound of battle. I'm winning. I'm beginning to feel like the boss.' And you

know what he said? He said, 'That's nice, Eephie,' and then he was so embarrassed and short of breath he stuck his head in the refrigerator pretending to look for something to eat for supper."

"So maybe your father should go to an analyst, to wean him away from *you,* yes?"

"Oh, God!" Ephraim said with a sigh.

" 'Oh, God,' but you don't do anything with your music. You don't realize yourself in any way. You don't play. You think that is healthy?"

"The way I feel lately, I don't want to play," Ephraim said.

"You do not face the reality of your relationship with your father. You resist the transference relationship with me. How can I help you if you do not want to be helped?"

"I just want to get back to the music," Ephraim said.

"And you will play at little Socialist meetings with your music?" Dr. Blauberman said sarcastically. "You will bury yourself in obscurity? Yes?"

"I told you, Pop was a Socialist when we were kids," Ephraim said. "But even then he always argued with the Socialists, too; he said they were too narrow-minded. He's never been able to go with any single group."

"He is too good for society, mmmmm?" Dr. Blauberman said.

"He's in a class by himself," Ephraim said. "There's always been some idea or some feeling that would make him hold to himself, no matter what anybody else was saying or doing."

"He goes his own way and you want to follow?" Dr. Blauberman said. "The way of self-victimization."

Talk about environmental resistances. No analyst could work with a patient against such a neurotic, dominating father. In a way, though, he was glad he had telephoned Mr. Samuels. It was unorthodox, but it was a goddam generous, as well as smart, thing to do.

A few minutes before the beginning of Ephraim Samuels' last session, Dr. Blauberman received a telephone call from Dr. Hans Radelsheim.

"Oh, yes, I saw you at the meeting last night. I didn't have a chance to say hello. It was an interesting paper, I thought, Eissler's paper on—"

"Yes. Blauberman, I'm calling you about the boy Ephraim Samuels. You are discontinuing treatment of him?"

"Well, yes and no," Dr. Blauberman said. "As far as suitability for analysis goes—"

"But you are discontinuing? The boy says you do not wish to treat him any more."

"You know you can't get an objective picture from the patient," Dr.

Blauberman said with a little muffled laugh. “This boy is very disturbed, Radelsheim, mmmm? Narcissistic neurosis. The transference relationship—”

Again Radelsheim cut him off. “These cases are very difficult. But you have dismissed him as your patient?”

The superior bastard. Who did he think he was? Dr. Blauberman said angrily, “I have a session with him this afternoon. I’m seeing the father. The father is—”

“Yes, Blauberman. Could you tell me, please—did you terminate the treatment?”

“Yes, Radelsheim. I’ve decided to let the boy go, for the time being.”

“All right. I’ll see what I can do for him.”

“The boy is in subjection to his father and incapable of transferring his libido to a new sexual object,” Dr Blauberman said in a rush. “In a reaction to his infantile—”

“Thanks very much. I’ll see him.” And Radelsheim hung up.

“Why don’t you sit on the couch today?” Dr. Blauberman said when Ephraim showed up for his last session. “No need to lie down. We’re not going to be bringing up any material today. Yes?” He leaned back in his chair, and started to put fresh tobacco in his pipe. Ephraim sat on a corner of the couch. He had a self-conscious, uncomfortable smile on his face. Dr. Blauberman saw

resentment there, and accusation, and strain. He brushed the tobacco crumbs off his lap. Then he put a cigarette lighter to his pipe, and, after a brief struggle, gave it up in favor of a lighted match.

"Well," Ephraim said. "I guess you know I went to see Dr. Radelsheim."

"Hmmm." Dr. Blauberman, having successfully lit the pipe, puffed a lot of smoke.

"Didn't he call you?" Ephraim asked. "He said he was going to call you."

"He called, he called."

"He says he'll see me, if you're not going to treat me any more."

"If I couldn't analyze you, no analyst can analyze you," Dr. Blauberman said. "If you have so much of your own money to throw away finding out that another analyst can do nothing with you, that is up to you. Mmmm? But I have seen you for a year. I know what you should do."

"Well—" Ephraim said.

"You need to go somewhere for a rest."

"Well—" Ephraim said.

"Perhaps someday you may want to try analysis again," Dr. Blauberman said. "In that case"—Dr. Blauberman paused and gave what was meant to be a fatherly smile—"I'll be happy to talk things over with you again. Maybe in a

year or so. Mmmm?"

"I don't think so," Ephraim said, blushing. "As a matter of fact, Dr. Radelsheim said—"

"I don't need to hear what Dr. Radelsheim said," Dr. Blauberman said. "I have talked to Dr. Radelsheim myself. I don't think you are in a position to understand what Dr. Radelsheim is saying."

Ephraim looked astonished."Dr. Radelsheim was awfully nice to me," he said. "He talked to me for almost two hours."

Oh, that bastard and his big mouth! "You must realize that a person in your position will hear only what he *wants to* hear," Dr. Blauberman said. "Don't you think that I am a little better qualified to understand Dr. Radelsheim than you are? Mmmm?"

"But he didn't think I should—"

Dr. Blauberman sat forward and made impatient noises. "You went against my advice in going to see Dr. Radelsheim," he said. "I warned you that you would become confused."

Ephraim was silent for a few moments, and Dr. Blauberman relaxed in his chair and puffed.

"But he says it's important for me to get back to my music," Ephraim said. "And that's all I care about!"

"All?" Dr. Blauberman asked.

"I'm a musician, man!" Ephraim said.

"Of course," Dr. Blauberman said indulgently. "It is important at this point that you just rest, and then get back to your clarinet. And there is no need for you to go running around to any more analysts. Mmmm?"

"Well, I told Dr. Radelsheim I'd come to see him until I got going again with my music," Ephraim said. "That is, he said he would be available if I wanted him."

"There is no need to see Radelsheim any more," Dr. Blauberman said. He cleared his throat. "Your father wanted to come in to see me today. So I agreed to see him here. It's unusual procedure, but I thought you might like it."

"*Me*?"

"You talk so much about your father—you don't want him to meet your analyst?" Dr. Blauberman said.

"Are you still my analyst?"

"Of course. I will not be treating you for a while, but once you choose an analyst, there is something of the analyst that stays with you always." He smiled at the young man. "Your father should be here soon. I will be glad to meet him."

"What do you want to do, analyze Pop?"

Dr. Blauberman got up from his chair. "I'll just go out and see if your father is here," he said.

He opened the door of his inner office and went out to his spacious waiting room. Through the eighteen-foot unbroken spread of window facing the park, the sun was flooding into the room. It had taken years, years of hard work and effort and giving of himself to his patients, to get that room. The room had a brand-new Old American look. Thick hooked rugs, a ladder-back maple rocking chair with a calico cotton cushion tied onto the seat, a black Boston rocker, and half a dozen Currier & Ives prints on the walls. A very low lowboy held stocks of modern, shiny magazines, including *Realites.* The interior decorator had worked out every last little detail directly with him and Mrs. Blauberman until they had precisely what they wanted.

He pushed the magazines on the lowboy into two neat stacks. A vague sensation of fear touched at his stomach, as it always did when he looked around that room. Because he had such keen self-awareness, Dr. Blauberman was not surprised. He was, in fact, accustomed to this sensation. But someday that would be gone, too, and then he would be able to enjoy the room.

As he returned to the inner office and was about to close the door, he caught a glimpse of Mr. Samuels arriving, the soiled gray cap on his head. Exactly what Dr. Blauberman had expected! The dreariness of it all! Christ!

And the whole damn family seemed to have come along. Leah, the young woman must be; and her husband, Victor Fine; and the other son, Barney. Victor Fine wore a blue denim work shirt with a maroon knit tie. Nobody in the family knew how to dress! Barney, the good-natured one, who worked in the Washington produce market at night, had on brown corduroy slacks and a red-and- white checked gingham sports shirt open at the collar. The family neurosis in diagram! Dr. Blauberman left the door open a crack, and watched the father sit down in the Boston rocker, unrocking. The father took out a large steel pocket watch and nodded to the others; they had made it on time.

Opening the door all the way, his pipe between his teeth, Dr. Blauberman said, "Come in."

Mr. Samuels, his son, his daughter, and his son-in-law stood up.

"All of you?" Dr. Blauberman's smile was forgiving. He didn't move from the doorway as he looked the group over more closely: Leah, very serious and respectful, wearing wrinkled wool dress with an unfashionable hemline; her husband's obvious belligerence; the brother's open, untroubled face; Mr. Samuels in his badly fitting suit and curling collar, with his rough hands and paint-stained fingernails. "Ephraim?" Mr. Samuels asked. "Is Ephraim here?"

"Yes, he's here." Dr. Blauberman sighed. "In here." He led the way inside and, lowering the foot of his chair with a lever, sat down.

Ephraim looked embarrassed as his family trooped in. Mr. Samuels went

over to him and put a hand on his son's shoulder. "Hello, Eephie," he said.

"Hello, Pop. What you want to come way over here for?"

Mr. Samuels shrugged.

"Well, sit down, be seated," Dr. Blauberman said, with a kind of cozy cordiality. "You"—he nodded at Victor Fine and, taking the pipe from his mouth, pointed the stem at one of his slat-back armchairs—"sit there."

Vic sat there. Mr. Samuels sat down on the couch next to Ephraim, and the two others squeezed in alongside.

"Where'd you leave Silky, anyway, Pop?" Ephraim asked.

"He's right outside, Eeph!" Vic said quickly and in an unnaturally loud voice.

"Here?" Ephraim shouted. "*Here*?"

Mr. Samuels blushed. He looked at Dr. Blauberman and smiled.

"Tied to the umbrella stand outside, Eephie," Leah said.

"Oh, my God!" Ephraim said, and started to laugh. His father gave him a proud look and then turned expectantly to the Doctor.

"Pop didn't want to leave the puppy alone in the car," Leah said to Dr. Blauberman.

"The puppy is like a little baby," Mr. Samuels said. "Would you leave a baby alone? Somebody might break into the car and take him."

"I hope it doesn't look as though we do things neurotically," Leah said.

"It's not neurotically," her husband said.

"I mean, dragging a collie like that all over the city," Leah said. "That puppy is going to grow up to be a big dog. Normally, he'd be on a farm, out in the fields, minding the sheep or something. It might look neurotically to some people. Not to me. But that's the way we might look to other people."

"Leah's the expert on all this psychological stuff," Barney said to Dr. Blauberman.

Dr. Blauberman felt like rapping a gavel for order. "This shouldn't take too long," he began crisply. "Actually, meeting with you is a highly unusual procedure, but I happened to have the free hour"—he nodded graciously to Ephraim—"and your father wanted to come in, so"—he nodded graciously to Mr. Samuels—"here we are. I didn't know I was getting a delegation. Safety in numbers, mmmm? Well, you're all here. I've heard a lot about you." He looked from Mr. Samuels to his sons, to his daughter, to his son-in-law, and then singled Leah out to direct his remarks to. "The fact is that Ephraim and I have reached an impasse." These people wouldn't know what an impasse was, but let it go. "Our relationship just hasn't worked out. Perhaps it's my fault"—Dr. Blauberman gave a small, self-disparaging laugh—"and perhaps it's because

Ephraim refuses to do his part. He's wasting his time and mine. And he's wasting your money, Mr. Samuels."

Mr. Samuels half stood up from the couch and opened his mouth to say something. Ephraim pulled him down to the couch. Dr. Blauberman was still talking. "Frankly, Ephraim is lazy, yes? But that isn't what is our concern of the moment. That's neither here nor there." He paused and chewed on the stem of his pipe. "You must be aware," he went on, concentrating his attention on Leah, "that Ephraim is a disturbed young man. He has become—you might say—addicted to a powerful barbiturate. He takes tremendous quantities of Seconal every night. He has become stalemated. Unable to move in any direction." Dr. Blauberman looked straight into Mr. Samuels' face and pointed his pipestem at him. "After today, I cannot take any further responsibility in this case. I've tried and tried to help your son, Mr. Samuels. I've tried to get him to use his gifts to make something of himself in life, but I'm sorry to say he prefers to remain—a slob." He gave a kidding little laugh.

Mr. Samuels looked wildly at Ephraim, and then around at the members of his family. Ephraim smiled his self-conscious smile. Between great agitated gasps of breath, Mr. Samuels said, "He is an angel. Don't you know that this boy is an angel?"

"Take it easy, Pop," Ephraim said.

"Ephraim and I have been through all this over and over again," Dr.

Blauberman said. “Isn’t that right, Ephraim? So. We’re not here for a *Kaffeeklatsch* now, are we? Who has time to sit around chatting. I have a lot of sick people to see. Mmmm? Much as I’m flattered by this family committee visit.” He looked at his wristwatch. The faster he got these people out of his office, the better for everybody. He hadn’t gone into medicine to be surrounded by Joseph Samuels &. Co. What strength it took to maintain a casual, professional manner with them when all he wanted to do was to say please, just go away and don’t bother me! He wanted air. Air! People of this kind always seemed to be asking for help or sympathy or something, and they never had anything to offer in return. They all sat there, the bunch of them, with their irritating innocence, accusing him of God knows what. “We won’t consider this a regular hour,” he said pleasantly. “You people have paid out enough in medical bills already. Yes?” He tried to smile at Mr. Samuels. The smile worked at the corners of his mouth and died. “So. Ephraim will go to a little hospital for a while and get a nice long rest. Yes?”

“Rest?” Mr. Samuels cried. “You say *rest*? In a *hospital*?”

Dr. Blauberman smiled at Leah and said calmly, “Eephie needs to get over taking Seconal—sleeping pills. He can do that best in a hospital. A rest home, if you will.” He looked ostentatiously at his watch.

“Where do you want Eephie to go?” Leah asked. Her eyes filled with tears. She didn’t even have a decent handkerchief, Dr. Blauberman noticed;

she held a rolled-up ball of damp Kleenex to her face. If he let them, this family would eat him up. Oh, how Sailboat Seltzer, that bastard, would run!

"That I can't tell you," he said. "Eephie . . . Ephraim has his physical doctor, Dr. Fifield. Dr. Fifield will make arrangements for where Ephraim should go. . .. Well. That's it." Dr. Blauberman started to get out of his chair.

"No!" Mr. Samuels cried. "I say *no*! Eephie used to play the clarinet. The Doctor tells him he needs to go to a psychoanalyst, and all the trouble starts." Mr. Samuels was shouting. With the windows open, he was noisy enough to be heard by the doorman downstairs, or quite possibly by Sailboat Seltzer a couple of blocks away. Christ! This emotional old man! What a mistake! He'd never make a mistake like this one again!

"Eephie used to play—it was beautiful," Mr. Samuels said. "The Mozart. The Concerto for Clarinet. He was playing parts of it for my wife and me when he was twelve."

"The trouble started when Eephie goes to Dr. Fifield for his hepatitis," Barney said. "Freddy—that concert pianist on the duo-piano team of Freddy and Eddy—sent him to Dr. Fifield."

"That was when the trouble started?" Dr. Blauberman said, but his sarcasm escaped Barney.

"Yes," Barney said earnestly. "Dr. Fifield wanted to go to concerts with

Eephie and stuff. And before we knew it, he was sending Eephie to a psychoanalyst—the same one he goes to himself."

"So." Dr. Blauberman said, and sniffed. This simple-minded brother was a real prize.

"Eephie used to play all the time!" Mr. Samuels shouted. "Now there's nothing!"

"He was terrific on all that chamber music," Barney said.

"Eephie sounds as good as Benny Goodman," Leah said.

"Nobody sounds as good as Benny Goodman," Vic said, "but if anybody sounds as good as Benny Goodman it's Eephie."

"Look—" Dr. Blauberman said. "I would do anything I could to help your boy. But I've tried. He doesn't want to cooperate. I'm afraid there's nothing I *can* do. I'm really sorry."

"You told Eephie he had to be more aggressive. Why? Why does Eephie have to be more aggressive?" Mr. Samuels went on, still shouting. "Nobody ever thought he had to be more aggressive."

"Pop never pushed us to do anything we didn't want to do," Barney said. He, too, was speaking at the top of his voice. "Pop doesn't believe in that."

Dr. Blauberman tried to remember whether he had ever called his own

father “Pop,” even when he was a boy, but he couldn’t remember.

“I know a patient sometimes has to be set back before he can move forward,” Leah said. “But we don’t care about those other things—about whether or not he should be more aggressive and all that. We just like Eephie the way he is. We just want him to be happy.” “Eeph was making out,” Barney said. “He belonged to the musicians’ union and played for union rates. He was playing jazz in some of those Village places. He put a lot of effort into his composing.”

“Ladies and gentlemen!” Dr. Blauberman said. “I can’t sit around with you, arguing this way. All I’m trying to tell you, Mr. Samuels, is that-”

“What will Eephie do in a hospital?” Barney asked. “What will happen to him there?”

“He will rest,” Dr. Blauberman said edgily. “I know it must come as a surprise,” he said, turning to Leah. “But we must face facts. Mmmm? It will be like going to a good, comfortable, quiet hotel for a few weeks.”

“I don’t like the word ‘hospital,’ ” Mr. Samuels said stubbornly.

“There’s no proof anywhere that psychoanalysis is scientific,” Victor said.

“I know you’re a qualified doctor,” Leah said. “I looked you up in the medical directory.”

Thanks. Dr. Blauberman let out a thick, impatient sigh. Thanks a lot. So what did she want him to do?

"And you belong to the most reliable analytic organization. You wouldn't belong if you weren't a good doctor." She stopped.

How many of these gratuitous progress reports on himself was he supposed to sit here and listen to?

"The doctor sees inside," Leah went on. "The doctor has scientific knowledge."

Thanks an *awful* lot.

"Leah is the expert on all this stuff," Barney said to Dr. Blauberman.

"You went to C.C.N.Y. and to N.Y.U. Medical School," Leah said. "And you interned—"

"Yes, I know," Dr. Blauberman interrupted. This girl seemed to be hypnotizing herself with the recitation of his academic history. Who the hell asked her to bring all that up?

"I want to know about my son!" Mr. Samuels shouted. "I want him to be all right!"

"So you get him to fight society," Dr. Blauberman said quickly. It was all he could do not to give way to the temptation to argue with this ignorant man.

"You mean Pop is no pinochle player?" Vic said, with heavy sarcasm.

"I always liked to stay home and not run around," Mr. Samuels said, in slightly lower tones.

"I'm like that, too," Ephraim said.

"Maybe Dr. Blauberman thinks you act neurotically because who else is still a Socialist?" Leah said to her father.

"Are *you* a Socialist?" Mr. Samuels said to his daughter. "Or Barney? If Vic wants to be a Socialist, he has the right. Or me."

"You told me you voted Democratic," Victor said to his father-in-law.

"So this year *you* are the only Socialist," Mr. Samuels said.

"I didn't mean that," Leah said. "I was trying to explain something that might give Dr. Blauberman the wrong idea about us. Sometimes this family doesn't communicate," she said to Dr. Blauberman.

Dr. Blauberman gave her a friendly "So."

"We communicate more than you think we communicate," Vic said. "We really communicate, so we don't have to waste time telling each other we're communicating."

"All I'm trying to tell Dr. Blauberman," Leah said, "is that nobody else waits forty years to name his son after Eugene Victor Debs. Things like that

might give him the wrong idea about us. The point is, Dr. Blauberman, we really *like* the name. Or take how I sit in the playground with the other mothers and listen to them tell about going out. They go to theatre parties. They go to affairs. We don't even attend the P.-T.A. But that doesn't mean—"

"I always say if she wants to go to the P.-T.A., let *her* go to the P.-T.A.," Victor said.

"I don't want to go to the P.-T.A.," Leah said.

"I hate the idea of sending my son Jimmy to school at all," Barney said.

"He doesn't mean it," Leah said. "He'll send Jimmy to school."

"I mean, school can kill the spirit of a kid, the way they run most schools. Pop always said it, and its true," Barney said.

"It's true," Mr. Samuels said, and the rest of the family gave strong signs of being with him all the way.

"If I may be allowed to say something—" Dr. Blauberman began.

"I want Jimmy to be free!" Barney said, as an afterthought, and again the whole family nodded with him.

And Vic had an afterthought, too, which he immediately passed along to Dr. Blauberman. "Those playground mothers!" he said, *"They* communicate. Yakkety-yakkety-yak. My-husband-made-a-million-dollars-yesterday.

Yakkety-yak."

"Who's fighting society?" Mr. Samuels said. "Because I don't push Eephie to be aggressive?"

"What for?" Vic said with a scornful laugh. "For what?"

"Dr. Blauberman wants Eephie to be more successful with the clarinet," Leah said. "And Dr. Fifield, too. Dr. Fifield told him he should be getting more out of it."

"Well, my idea of what to get out if it isn't the same as Dr. Blauberman's idea," Ephraim said.

"So maybe you're supposed to have big ambitions, like going on television," Victor said.

"And is that such an unhealthy ambition?" Dr. Blauberman found himself saying, and was surprised that he had actually got a word in.

"Aha! The cat is out of the bag!" Victor said, raising his voice. "What about having a consultation?" Barney asked. "With Dr. Radelsheim?"

"He's the European doctor Eephie heard about?" Leah said eagerly, and blew her nose.

"European doctor?" Mr. Samuels asked, turning to Ephraim.

"That bassoonist, Charlie," Barney said to Ephraim. "You know, he told

you you and Dr. Blauberman ought to have a real consultation with this Dr. Hans Radelsheim?"

"I saw Dr. Radelsheim this morning," Ephraim said. "He's a nice guy."

"Nobody told me about any Dr. Radelsheim!" Mr. Samuels said. "Why didn't you tell me before?"

"Eephie just happened to mention it once," Barney said.

"Charlie was begging Eephie to go to see him," Vic said.

The family discussion was off again. Dr. Blauberman felt himself sinking under Samuelses. Air! Air!

"Charlie is the good-natured, fat one, always making jokes!" Mr. Samuels was saying, with enthusiasm, with excitement.

"The one with the fat wife with freckles on her arms, like Terry's!" Barney said. "Terry is my wife," he said to Dr. Blauberman.

"I am happy to hear that," Dr. Blauberman said.

"Is Charlie the one who played with you at the Y, the Schoenberg?" Leah asked Ephraim.

"Wasn't that wild?" Ephraim said. "And the Mozart Divertimenti."

"You were going to get him started playing jazz," Barney said. "Isn't Charlie the one you were going to make one of the first jazz bassoonists in

history?" He laughed.

The whole damn family laughed. Killing themselves laughing on the Doctor's time. Christ!

"Charlie is a wild bassoonist!" Ephraim said. "He plays chamber music with Dr. Radelsheim. Dr. Radelsheim plays the oboe."

"So," Dr. Blauberman said. "The oboe plays with the bassoon, Mmmm?"

The family didn't seem to notice him. "Dr. Radelsheim plays the oboe?" Mr. Samuels was saying with delight.

"He knows a lot about music and about musicians," Ephraim said. "Charlie is crazy about him."

"Charlie!" Dr. Blauberman said. "Is Charlie a bassoonist or a doctor?"

"Thank God he's a bassoonist," Victor said.

"Be quiet!" Mr. Samuels said to Victor. "I want to know—" He turned to Dr. Blauberman. "Could you arrange for a consultation with Dr. Radelsheim?" He asked the question in a quiet, confident tone.

"There's no need for a consultation," Dr. Blauberman said. "Dr. Radelsheim called me, and I discussed Ephraim's case over the telephone. You must realize that doctors talk to each other in a way that they can't possibly discuss the case with the family of a patient. *You* understand, mmmm?" he

said specifically to Leah. She nodded.

"You mean you want Eephie to be shoved into a hospital just like that?" Victor said.

"Not shoved," Dr. Blauberman said. "He signs himself in, and he signs himself out. Now, you people don't have so much money you want to throw it away running from one doctor to another, do you? I advise, for Ephraim, rest in a hospital."

"I'm not signing myself into any hospital," Ephraim said to Dr. Blauberman. "You know that. Why are you making such a big issue of it with my family?"

"No hospital," Mr. Samuels said with determination. "He doesn't need a hospital."

"What the hell is the matter with you people?" Dr. Blauberman said.

"Is that how you talk to an older man?" Vic said.

Mr. Samuels blushed. "It doesn't matter," he said. "I am Eephie's father, and I know what he needs."

His pronunciation of "father" grated on Dr. Blauberman's nerves. "I don't know about psychoanalysis, but I know about my family, and I know about Eephie," Mr. Samuels was saying. "Eephie doesn't need a hospital."

The other members of the family nodded in agreement and looked at him with respect. They seemed to relax in unison.

"This is all theoretical, because I'm not *going* to any hospital," Ephraim said.

Dr. Blauberman dropped his pipe on the floor. He felt a surge of rage coming up in him. "I've been Ephraim's doctor for a year," he said. Now *he* was raising *his* voice. But maybe that was just what these thick-skulled people needed. Maybe that was something they could understand. "I know Ephraim! I've sat here patiently with you people, trying to give you some professional advice. If you want to disregard it, that is up to you." He paused. "All I can do is warn you."

Ephraim looked scared. "Dr. Radelsheim told me it's important for me to get back to my music," he said.

Dr. Blauberman made impatient noises. Oh, that big-mouth Radelsheim!

"Did you ask Dr. Radelsheim about the sleeping pills?" Mr. Samuels said to Ephraim.

"No, Pop," Ephraim said. "All he said was it was a shame I couldn't sleep, because musicians have to get their sleep."

Leah put her wet wad of Kleenex into her purse and smiled, first at Ephraim and then at Dr. Blauberman.

“Eephie will cut down gradually the way he takes the pills,” Mr. Samuels said. “He should never have started with the pills.” He no longer sounded angry. He said the last almost apologetically.

“I’ll stick with Pop,” Ephraim said.

“Pop,” Dr. Blauberman found himself saying aloud, as if he were trying the word out. “Pop. Pop.” He gave a nervous giggle. So. He wants Pop. Let Pop have him. But Dr. Blauberman felt a curious pang. The father’s straw-colored, kinky eyebrows *were,* he noticed, the original model for the boy’s. The way his deep lines alongside his mouth were like the lines his father had.

“We’ll make out at home,” Mr. Samuels said. ‘“What would Eephie do in a hospital?”

“People live in hospitals and die in hospitals, same as anywhere else,” Dr. Blauberman said wearily. He saw them all start and look toward their father. Again Dr. Blauberman felt the pang.

“I know what I am doing,” Mr. Samuels said. He stood up. Everybody else in the family stood up, too. At last. They were going.

They stood quietly for a moment, looking at him in silence. Then they started out of the office. Dr. Blauberman had meant to stay in his chair, but instead he got up and trailed the family out to the waiting room, expecting them to stop, to say they would do what he had advised. He wanted them to

get out of his sight, but he wanted, also, to hold on to them a little longer. “Mr. Samuels—” he said. They all stopped. They all looked around at him. He saw how like old Abe Letkin Ephraim’s father was. The same posture. The same inflection. The same. His own father had the inflection, too. But his father was not the same. His father was a cold-blooded son of a bitch. Dr. Blauberman sniffed. “I’ve given you some serious advice about how to help your son,” he said. But he was aware that all authority had gone out of his voice.

“I know, Doctor,” Mr. Samuels said. “You did what you thought was right.” He headed for the door and opened it. Dr. Blauberman followed him, and looked at the collie puppy tied to his umbrella stand on the thick salmon-pink carpet. Probably shedding.

Ephraim went over to the puppy and untied him. The puppy began licking his hand.

“Freud loved dogs,” Leah said to Dr. Blauberman. “Freud had several chows. He really loved dogs.”

“Our old dog, Blackie, who died—you should have seen him, Dr. Blauberman,” Mr. Samuels said. “When he died, it broke our hearts. It takes some people a long time to get over a thing like that.”

“This collie is a terrific puppy,” Ephraim said.

“Touch his head, Doctor,” Mr. Samuels said. “Feel how silky he is.”

Dr. Blauberman stared at Mr. Samuels, and then at Ephraim, and then at the dog. For a moment, he thought of giving them a real sendoff—of saying "Lotsa luck!" But he didn't. As he swung the door shut on the family, he heard Mr. Samuels say, "Come, children. Let's go home."