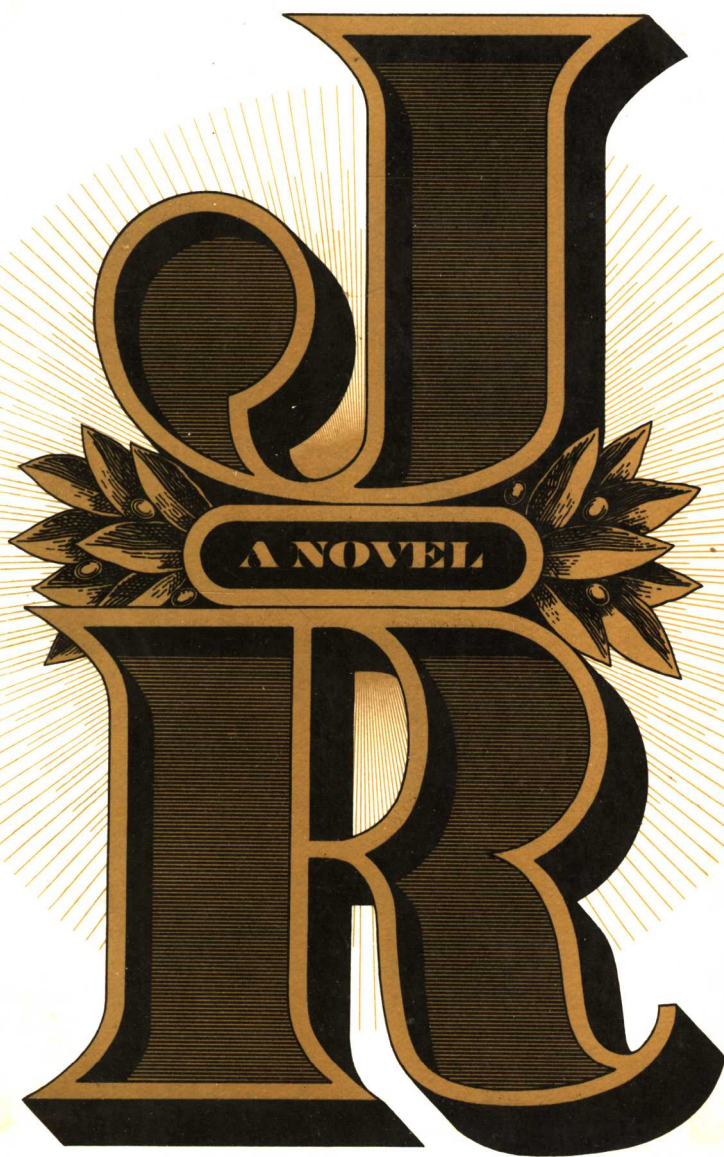
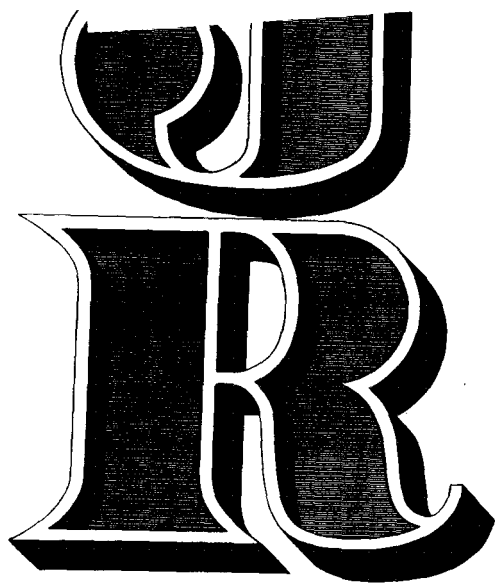


WILLIAM
GADDIS





BY
**WILLIAM
GADDIS**

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J R

—Money . . . ? in a voice that rustled.

—Paper, yes.

—And we'd never seen it. Paper money.

—We never saw paper money till we came east.

—It looked so strange the first time we saw it. Lifeless.

—You couldn't believe it was worth a thing.

—Not after Father jingling his change.

—Those were silver dollars.

—And silver halves, yes and quarters, Julia. The ones from his pupils.

I can hear him now . . .

Sunlight, pocketed in a cloud, spilled suddenly broken across the floor through the leaves of the trees outside.

—Coming up the veranda, how he jingled when he walked.

—He'd have his pupils rest the quarters that they brought him on the backs of their hands when they did their scales. He charged fifty cents a lesson, you see, Mister . . .

—Coen, without the h. Now if both you ladies . . .

—Why, it's just like that story about Father's dying wish to have his bust sunk in Vancouver harbor, and his ashes sprinkled on the water there, about James and Thomas out in the rowboat, and both of them hitting at the bust with their oars because it was hollow and wouldn't go down, and the storm coming up while they were out there, blowing his ashes back into their beards.

—There was never a bust of Father, Anne. And I don't recall his ever being in Australia.

—That's just what I mean, about stories getting started.

—Well, it can't help repeating them before a perfect stranger.

—I'd hardly call Mister Cohen a stranger, Julia. He knows more about our business than we do ourselves.

—Ladies, please. I haven't come out here simply to dig into your intimate affairs but since your brother died intestate, certain matters will have to be dealt with which otherwise might never come up at all. Now to return to this question of . . .

—I'm sure we have nothing to hide. Lots of brothers don't get on, after all.

—And do come and sit down, Mister Cohen.

—You might as well tell him the whole story, Julia.

—Well, Father was just sixteen years old. As I say, Ira Cobb owed him some money. It was for work that Father had done, probably repairing some farm machinery. Father was always good with his hands. And then this problem came up over money, instead of paying Father Ira gave him an old violin and he took it down to the barn to try to learn to play it. Well his father heard it and went right down, and broke the violin over Father's head. We were a Quaker family, after all, where you just didn't do things that didn't pay.

—Of course, Miss Bast, it's all . . . quite commendable. Now, returning to this question of property . . .

—That's what we're discussing, if you'll be a little patient. Why, Uncle Dick, Father's older brother, had walked all the way back to Indiana, every step of the way from the Andersonville prison.

—And after that business of the violin, Father left home and went to teaching school.

—The one thing he'd wanted, all his life, was to own as far as he could see in any direction. I hope we've cleared things up for you now.

—We might if he came back here and sat down. He won't find anything gazing out the window.

—I had hoped, said Mister Coen from the far end of the room, where he appeared to steady himself against the window frame, —I expected Mrs Angel to be with us here today, he went on in a tone as drained of hope as the gaze he had turned out through evergreen foundation planting just gone sunless with stifling the prospect of roses run riot only to be strangled by the honeysuckle which had long since overwhelmed the grape arbor at the back, where another building was being silently devoured by rhododendron before his eyes.

—Mrs Angel?

—The daughter of the decedent.

—Oh, that's Stella's married name isn't it. You remember, Julia, Father used to say . . .

—Why, Stella called earlier, you told me yourself Anne. To say she was taking a later train.

—That name was changed from Engels, somewhere along the way . . .

—I'm afraid I'll miss her then, I have to be in court . . .

—I scarcely see the need for that, Mister Cohen. If Stella's husband is so impatient he's hiring lawyers and running to court . . .

—You're losing a button here, Mister Cohen. Thomas had the same trouble when he got stout. He couldn't keep a crease in anything either.

—Miss . . . Bast. I'm afraid I haven't made myself clear. My court appearance today has nothing whatsoever to do with this matter. There is no reason for any of this to ever come into court. In fact, believe me Miss Bast . . . both of you ladies, the last thing I would wish would be to . . . to see you ladies in court. Now. You must understand that I am not

here simply as Mister Angel's attorney, I am here as counsel for General Roll . . .

—You remember back when Thomas started it, Julia? And we thought it was a military friend he'd made?

—Of course it was James who had friends in the military.

—Yes, he'd run off to war, you know, Mister Cohen. A drummer boy in the Spanish war.

—The . . . Spanish war? he murmured vaguely, braced against the back of the Queen Anne chair before the empty hearth.

—Yes. He was only a child.

—But . . . the Spanish war? That was 'thirty-seven, wasn't it? or 'thirty-eight?

—Oh, not so long ago as that. I think you mean 'ninety-seven, or 'ninety-eight was it, Anne? When they sank the Maine?

—Who? That's one I never heard. Do you feel unwell, Mister Cohen?

—Yes, Thomas ran off right after James did, but he was too small for the war of course. He joined a Tom show passing through town, playing clarinet in the entreact and they also let him look after the dogs, finding livery stables to put them up in. You might have noticed his scar, Mister Cohen, where one of the bloodhounds tore open his thumb. He carried it with him right into the grave, but you're not leaving us so soon, Mister Cohen? Of course if we've answered all your questions, I know you must be a busy man.

—Mister Cohen might like a nice glass of cold water.

—No, it isn't . . . water that I need. If you ladies, you . . . just for a moment, if you'll give me your undivided attention . . .

—We have no objection at all, Mister Cohen. We're telling you everything we can think of.

—Yes but, some of it is not precisely relevant . . .

—If you'll simply tell us what it is you want to know, instead of wandering around the room here waving your arms. We want to see this settled as much as anyone.

—Yes . . . thank you, Miss Bast. Precisely. Now. As we are all aware, the bulk of your brother's estate consists of his controlling share in the General Roll Corporation . . .

—Share! I think Thomas had at least forty shares, or forty-five was it Anne? Because we have . . .

—Precisely, Miss Bast. Since its founding, General Roll has been a closely held company owned by members of your family. Under the guidance of the decedent, and more recently that of his son-in-law Mister Angel, General Roll has prospered substantially . . .

—You certainly wouldn't know it from the dividends, Mister Cohen. There simply have not been any.

—Precisely. This is one of the difficulties we face now. Since your brother, and more recently his son-in-law, have wished to build the

company larger rather than simply extract profits from it, its net worth has grown considerably, and with that growth of course have come certain obligations which the company right now is being hard pressed to satisfy. Since no buy-sell arrangement had been made with the decedent prior to his death, no cross-purchase plan providing life insurance on each of the principals or an entity plan that would have allowed the company itself to buy up his interest, in the absence of any such arrangements as these, the money which will be required to pay the very substantial death taxes . . .

—Julia, I'm sure Mister Cohen only is complicating things unnecessarily . . .

—Crowned by the complications inherent in any situation in which the decedent dies intestate . . .

—Julia, can't you . . .

—Further complicated by certain unresolved and somewhat delicate aspects of the family situation which I have come out here today to discuss with . . .

—Mister Cohen, please! Do sit down and come to the point.

—Yes, after all Julia, you remember. Charlotte died without leaving a will and Father simply sat down and parceled things out. Of course I think that James always felt . . .

—Yes, James made it quite clear how he felt. Do sit down here, Mister Cohen, and stop waving that piece of paper around.

—It's . . . simply the waiver I mentioned, he said giving it up and seating himself in the Queen Anne chair whose arm came off in his hand.

—Julia? I thought Edward had fixed that.

—It was the side door latch he fixed, Anne.

—It didn't work when I let Mister Cohen in. He had to come round by the back.

—I thought you came in at the side, Mister Cohen.

—Well I let him in, Julia. After all.

—I thought Edward had . . .

—Let him in?

—No. Fixed the latch.

Mister Coen, finished fitting the arm of the chair back into place, leaned carefully away from it. —That is the waiver I brought out for your nephew Edward to sign, he said resting his elbows on the scarcely more firm support of his knees. —A, a mere formality in this case. Of course, where there's a will . . .

—There's a way. You're quite witty today Mister Cohen, but believe me Anne I think this is Thomas' will, the tangle things are in right now.

—Yes, just look at these obituaries, and why Mister Cohen ever brought them out unless to tangle things up still further. To read them it's hard even knowing who's dead. Did you see this one? It's all about James. James, and no mention of Thomas at all.

—I simply included it because . . . he began in a tone that seemed

to echo the deep, as he fixed the newspaper streamer flown before his glazed eyes. —Word comes in to a newspaper of a death, if someone there is in a hurry and just hears the last name, he might grab the obituary that's already written on someone like your brother James, as prominent as your brother James, they keep one written and up to date against the day . . .

—But James isn't dead! he's just away . . .

—Abroad, accepting some sort of award.

—Yes, yes in fact, I think if you'll read that clipping . . .

—That seems to be about all James does now, going about to accept awards.

—It's not as though he didn't deserve them, Julia. Don't give Mister Cohen the wrong idea, there's no telling the stories he'll carry back with him.

—I . . . ladies I assure you, all I wish to carry back is this waiver with your nephew's signature. Since your brothers were not, ahm, especially close, and the decedent died intestate, the cooperation of the survivors is . . .

—You make us sound like a shipwreck, Mister Cohen.

—Well now that you speak of it, Miss Bast . . .

—I think I know what he's trying to say. He's going to drag up those old stories about James and Thomas not getting on.

—I don't think he could sit there and name two brothers who went out of their way for one another as often as James and Thomas did. Neither of them had a single job that the other didn't claim to have got for him.

—The Russian Symphony . . .

—And Sousa's Band? Of course there was a certain competitive spirit between the boys. No one denies that, Mister Cohen. We had a family orchestra, you know, and they practiced three and four hours a day. Every week Father gave a dime to the one who showed the most improvement. From the time they were six, until they left home . . .

—Yes, Julia played the . . . where are you going now, Mister Cohen? If you'll just sit still for a minute, I'm sure we can find some black thread. I can sew that button back on while we're chatting.

—While I wait to talk with your nephew Edward . . .

—Whatever that paper is you've brought there, I don't think he'll be in any hurry to sign it.

—Yes, I remember Father telling us to never sign anything we didn't read carefully.

—But . . . ladies! I want him to read it, I urge him to read it. I urge you to read it! It's only a few lines, the merest formality, a waiver to permit the appointment of the decedent's daughter, one Stella, Mrs Angel, as administrator of her father's estate, so that we may submit to the court . . .

—Mister Cohen, you distinctly said that you hoped to keep us all out of court. Didn't you hear him say that, Anne?

—Yes, I certainly did. And I'm not at all sure what James will say about these goings on.

—James has a great instinct for justice, Mister Cohen, and in spite of his being a composer he knows more than a little about the law. If we're all obliged to end up in court in order to settle what's right and wrong here . . .

—Madam, Miss Bast, please I . . . I implore you, there is no such issue at stake, and there is no reason there ever should be. The law, Miss Bast, let me tell you, the law . . .

—Do be careful of that lamp, Mister Cohen.

—There's no question of justice, or right and wrong. The law seeks order, Miss Bast. Order!

—Now Mister Cohen, if you'll just sit still. I've found some black thread right here in the basket.

—And an agreement within a legal framework is made for the protection of all concerned. Now . . .

—Perhaps you would like to take off your jacket. I'm just afraid you will spill those papers.

—Yes. Thank you. No. Now . . .

—It's carpet thread, and should hold quite well. It will probably outlast the suit itself.

—Let me assure you that signing this waiver will not in any way affect any claim your nephew may have upon the estate of the decedent. But because of his somewhat equivocal position . . .

—I got it for Father's overcoat buttons. It always outlasted the coats themselves.

—I don't know what you're inferring, Mister Cohen, but . . .

—This is as I understand it, Miss Bast, your nephew Edward's position in the family. His mother, who was known as Nellie . . .

—She wasn't simply known as Nellie. That was Nellie's Christian name, even though a lot of people thought it was a nickname. But I see no reason to start prying . . .

—I think when James is done his memoirs, can you raise your arm a little Mister Cohen? A lot of prying people will have surprises, and after all the gossip that followed . . .

—Ladies, I am not here to pry! But in the legal disposition of your brother's estate, his relationship to Nellie and your nephew Edward is extremely pertinent. Now as I understand it, your brother Thomas had one child, Stella, by his first wife, who then died . . .

—I wouldn't really say who then died, Mister Cohen. Why, she was still alive when . . .

—Of course, forgive me. At any rate Thomas remarried, one Nellie, who in due course appears to have separated from him, in order to cohabit . . . ahm, to . . .

—Yes, to marry James. Precisely. But I would hardly say in due course, Mister Cohen. I think we were all really quite surprised.

—I don't know, Anne. Nellie was flighty.

—I remember James using that word, now that you say it. It was when Rachmaninoff was visiting, I remember because he'd just had his fingers insured. Hand me those scissors please, Mister Cohen?

—However, yes, thank you, here . . . now, however, in the absence of any record of legally contracted marriage between the said Nellie and James . . .

—My dear Mister Cohen . . .

—Or indeed any evidence of legal and binding divorce between the aforesaid Nellie and the decedent . . .

—It scarcely seems necessary . . .

—And although it appears to have been known that this Nellie aforesaid was the, living as the, ahm, the wife of the decedent's brother James at the time she bore her son Edward, and had been so living for some indefinite time prior to that event, nonetheless in the continued absence of a birth certificate attesting to those circumstances of his, ahm, provenience, Edward is in a position to exert a substantial claim upon the estate in question, and therefore . . .

—I scarcely understand a word you've said, Mister Cohen, and where you got that piece of paper you're reading from . . .

—But I wrote it, Miss Bast, it's . . .

—His glasses are rather like the ones that James lost that summer up near Tannersville, aren't they Julia.

—And the idea of digging up all this gossip again. Why, Edward's been perfectly happy here, and James has been a fine father to him, there's never been any question at all, why . . .

—But I don't question that, Miss Bast. The point is simply that in regards to your brother's estate, until his position is clearly established, he . . . what . . .

—Just a little thread here still hanging, if you'll hold still . . .

—Yes, thank you again for the button, Miss Bast, but . . .

—Are you leaving so soon?

—No I simply hope I think may be . . . maybe think better on my feet . . .

—He's spilling those papers there, Julia.

—Miss Bast, and . . . yes, thank you Miss Bast, and therefore . . .

—After Nellie died, Mister Cohen.

—To the contrary notwithstanding . . .

—James brought him here then, you know, and we've practically brought him up ourselves. James' work has always made such demands. That's his studio there at the back, you can see it right out that side window, and we'd often miss him for days at a time . . .

—But the point, the point Miss Bast, the point of law at issue here is . . .

—Julia, I think I heard something, it sounded like hammering, someone hammering . . .

—The presumption, you see, the presumption of legitimacy while not conclusive and rebuttable in the first instance remains one of the strongest presumptions known to the law, and will not fail, Miss Bast, yes, where is it, Hubert versus Cloutier, it will not fail unless common sense and reason are outraged by a holding that it abides . . .

—There's no question that at the time, Julia, we all thought James' behavior outrageous . . .

—In general this presumption is not even overcome by evidence of the wife's adultery, in regard to your nephew's claim even when this adultery is established as of about the commencement of the usual period of gestation, as held in Bassel versus the Ford Motor Company . . .

—Mister Cohen please, Edward has nothing against the Ford Motor Company or anyone else, now . . .

—I am merely stating the legal position open to him, Miss Bast, in the event he should elect to pursue . . .

—Hammering, didn't you hear it?

—Possibly your testimony and that of your brother James regarding the period of his cohabitation with the said Nellie prior to Edward's birth, since there is merely a prima facie presumption that, just a moment, here, yes, that a child born in wedlock is legitimate where husband and wife had separated and the period of gestation required, in order that the husband may be the father, while a possible one, is exceptionally long and contrary to the usual course of nature, you see? Now in bringing a proceeding to establish the right to the property of a deceased person, the burden is on the claimant to show his kinship with the decedent, where kinship is an issue, of course, as in this instance of basing a claim on the alleged fact that claimant is decedent's child, and . . . yes, that while in the first instance, where is it yes, proof of filiation from which a presumption of legitimacy arises will sustain the burden and will establish the status of legitimacy and heirship if no evidence tending to show illegitimacy is introduced, the burden to establish legitimacy does not shift and claimant must establish his legitimacy where direct evidence, as well as evidence of potent . . . is this word potent? potent, yes potent circumstances, tending to disprove his claim of heirship, is introduced. Now, regarding competent evidence to prove filiation . . .

—Mister Cohen, I assure you there is no need to go on like this, if . . .

—Ladies, I have no choice. In settling an estate of these proportions and this complexity it is my duty to make every point which may bear upon your nephew's legal rights absolutely crystal clear to you and to him. Now.

—It's kind of him, Julia, but I must say . . .

—You understand that to proceed without taking into consideration your nephew's possible rights in this estate would be to jeopardize the

status of everyone concerned, since to hold a child a bastard is not permissible unless there is no judicial escape from that conclusion . . .

—Mister Cohen!

—And it is incumbent upon the party assuming the fact of illegitimacy to disprove every reasonable possibility to the contrary, and as apparently obtains here, in the case of a child conceived or born in wedlock, it must be shown that the husband of the mother could not possibly have been the father of the child.

—Crystal clear indeed Mister Cohen!

—Crystal clear, and while I am aware that you ladies may find certain legal terms somewhat obscure, nonetheless in pursuing other evidence tending to support illegitimacy, a declaration of the deceased mother, for example, might be admissible, or any similar characterizations of family relationships tending, as part of a series of *res gestae*, to throw light . . .

—Nellie was never one to write letters.

—Or photographs, he came on in a flourish of papers at the wall behind him—for the purpose of comparing the physical characteristics of the child with those of the husband and such other man . . .

—Just behind your left shoulder Mister Cohen, that's always been my favorite picture of James. There, the two men sitting in the tree, the other one was Maurice Ravel. It shows James' profile off so nicely, though he always felt that our Indian blood . . .

—I don't think that's anything to get into now, Anne.

—It's quite all right, ladies. I have it here somewhere . . .

—Really, Anne . . .

—Yes, here, even where territorial statute provides for the legitimacy of the issue of marriages null in law, the issue of a white man and Indian woman has been held illegitimate . . .

—It is Cherokee blood you understand, Mister Cohen. They were the only tribe to have their own alphabet.

—Notwithstanding that the alleged marriage may have been conducted in accordance with the customs of the Indians on an Indian reservation within the territory and that, I think, should settle that. It's not an area to meddle in, Miss Bast.

—He might like to see that picture of Charlotte in the headdress, when she was touring with . . .

—Now. There appears to be another sister somewhere. Carlotta.

—That's precisely who Anne is talking about. She's right behind you there, Mister Cohen.

—She what? who . . . ?

—Do be careful, you're going to break something. She's there, just above the building with the dome. That's one of James' Masonic lodges. Charlotte's wearing a green felt hat, but of course the color doesn't show in the picture. She bought it to get married in.

—She did this place over you know, Mister Cohen. After her stroke,

which was why she left the stage. She made quite a name on the Keith Circuit where she introduced . . . what was that song, Julia. I know the sheet music is around somewhere, probably over in James' studio. She's wearing a hat made to look like a daisy. That was why she took the name Carlotta, of course.

—And she died of the stroke?

—Why, certainly not. She carried right on, with a beaded bag on her withered arm, and except for a slight limp when she was tired you'd never know what she had gone through. She spent most of her winters in Cairo.

—Cai . . . ro? that . . . that would be, Egypt? Perhaps . . . The tremor seemed to pass through his voice right out his arm snagged in mid-air upon his wristwatch, —when I've talked with your nephew Edward, will he be down . . .

—If Mister Cohen would just come to the point here, we might not need to bother Edward at all.

—Yes, Mister Cohen. If you'll just tell us how we can work things out for him . . .

—Work things out for him? He's not an infant, is he?

—Infant! He's bigger than you are, Mister Cohen, and you scarcely need shout.

—Taller, Julia, but I wouldn't say bigger. I just took in the waist on those gray trousers . . .

—By . . . by infant I meant merely a, an infant in law, a, someone under the age of twenty-one.

—Edward? Let me think, Julia. Nellie died the year that James finished his opera, and . . .

—No, she died the year he started it, Anne. Or rather he started it the year she died, and so that would make . . .

—His opera Philoctetes. Maybe you know it, Mister Cohen?

—There's no way he could, Anne. It's never performed.

—Well, there was the winter when James was in Zurich. Perhaps Mister Cohen has . . .

—Ope! dropped his glasses . . .

—I hope they didn't break? That's a good way to take off weight, Mister Cohen. Bending up and down from the floor like that. I met the woman who told me about it in the ladies' room at A and S's. She was doing it with a deck of cards. She threw the whole deck out on the floor, and then stooped to pick them up one by one. I'm sure some of the weight goes in perspiration, but perhaps Mister Cohen . . .

—Mister Cohen seems to perspire quite freely . . .

—If we're patient with him a little bit longer, I think that all he really is after is Edward to sign this piece of paper.

—You have nothing else up your sleeve, Mister Cohen?

—I . . . thank you for your patience, yes all I need is a copy of his birth certificate.

—There. You see, Anne?

—To establish his parenthood and his age. I had, I assumed he had passed his majority and fervently hope so, so, so that I won't have to deal . . . to inconvenience you ladies further, the validity of his signature, you see, of course, on this waiver, depending upon his legal capacity to contract, although of course a minor may be emancipated . . .

—Emancipated! I assure you Mister Cohen . . .

—Which entitles him to keep his own earnings, but . . .

—Every penny that Edward earns . . .

—In no way enlarges his capacity to contract, as in *Mason versus Wright*, yes, the contracts of an infant being voidable by him but not void, though this may not apply to necessities, these however being relative. Now, comparing the voidable contract which is in itself not void to that of a lunatic, when of course his contract is made before he has been judicially declared incompetent, you ladies deserve . . .

—Oh Julia.

—Poor Edward.

—You see? You ladies deserve every protection, because the infant himself is the only one who can take advantage of infancy. The defense of infancy is not available to the adult, and this infant may disaffirm any time he likes. His mere intention to disaffirm is sufficient. In an action brought against him by creditors, assignees by purchase or in bankruptcy, sureties, or anyone else with a collateral interest in the contract, the mere setting up of infancy as a defense is sufficient, and none of them has available the defense of the infant, which is that of infancy.

—As far as his age goes, Edward himself . . .

—For your own protection, ladies. This birth certificate. Because this infant, ladies, this infant may disaffirm any time he wishes to, even if he has misrepresented his age in the first place in order to get the other party to contract with him, remember that ladies. Remember *Danziger versus the Iron Clad Realty Company*.

—I think he's going for a glass of water, Julia.

—That door, Mister Cohen.

—Failing any adoption papers, which could of course change the picture substantially, since the adopted child has the same legal rights as the blood child. Therefore if the child were the natural child of the decedent's brother but had been adopted by the decedent, he would of course have every right to participate in this estate. If on the other hand he . . .

—He's going to get into Reuben, Julia.

—James never really adopted Reuben.

—In the distribution of this estate that is to say, since in order to satisfy taxes part of this estate will have to be sold . . .

—They're after our trees right now.

—I suppose it does look like an estate to them, Julia, stuck in their tiny pasteboard houses on little shirttails of land.

—Forcing your holdings to go public . . .

—They take for granted everything's for sale.

—Proper evaluation will have to be made, of course, in terms of the prevailing market . . .

—That's what the water people said, when they went into court and swore up and down that back in our trees was the only place they could possibly put up their pumping station.

—Since no part of the estate involved has ever been offered publicly before.

—I heard hammering out there last night, Julia.

—I thought I heard the sound of a truck myself.

—Or a tractor, the kind they knock down trees with.

—Would they do that? even the water people? come in knocking down our trees at night?

—They were there this morning.

—The water people? Why didn't you call me!

—No the trees Anne, the trees.

—I'm glad you saw them. I didn't really look.

—I can't say I did either. But I know that passing the kitchen window I would have missed them if they'd been gone.

—Perhaps Mister Cohen looked when he came in.

—The oaks, Mister Cohen?

—And some locust?

—It's the oaks, though, Anne, that really stand out.

—Before the advent of such a sale, you would, of course, receive adequate notice.

—What Mister Cohen considers adequate, I can't even read them without a glass, Anne? have you seen the latest one? I had it here just a moment ago.

—It's right there on the mantel, a picture of a castle? James' hand has never been easy Mister Cohen, and he tries to get so much on one postcard . . .

—Anne I'm talking about the local paper, Mister Cohen means these legal notices they tuck off in the back in type so small that no one can read it, in language no one can understand. In fact if he has a moment now, he might be willing to translate something . . .

—But Julia he's just broken his glasses.

—Here it is yes, yes this second column here Mister Cohen. No, right down here. It looks to me like they're up to something with the old Lemp home.

—Do they have a picture of it there? It was always the grandest house in town, and when we were just girls Mister Cohen . . .

—This is simply a legal notice, Anne. They don't print pictures in a legal notice. Can you see through the breakage, Mister Cohen?