

The Little Dream

by

John Galsworthy

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The Little Dream

CHARACTERS

SEELCHEN, a mountain girl

LAMOND, a climber

FELSMAN, a glide

CHARACTERS IN THE DREAM

THE GREAT HORN		
THE COW HORN		mountains
THE WINE HORN		

THE EDELWEISS		
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THE ALPENROSE		flowers
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THE GENTIAN		
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THE MOUNTAIN DANDELION		
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VOICES AND FIGURES IN THE DREAM

COWBELLS

MOUNTAIN AIR

FAR VIEW OF ITALY

DISTANT FLUME OF STEAM

THINGS IN BOOKS

MOTH CHILDREN

THREE DANCING YOUTHS

THREE DANCING GIRLS

THE FORMS OF WORKERS

THE FORMS OF WHAT IS MADE BY WORK

DEATH BY SLUMBER

DEATH BY DROWNING

FLOWER CHILDREN

GOATHERD

GOAT BOYS

GOAT GOD
THE FORMS OF SLEEP

SCENE I

It is just after sunset of an August evening. The scene is a room in a mountain hut, furnished only with a table, benches. and a low broad window seat. Through this window three rocky peaks are seen by the light of a moon which is slowly whitening the last hues of sunset. An oil lamp is burning. SEELCHEN, a mountain girl, eighteen years old, is humming a folk-song, and putting away in a cupboard freshly washed soup-bowls and glasses. She is dressed in a tight-fitting black velvet bodice. square-cut at the neck and partly filled in with a gay handkerchief, coloured rose-pink, blue, and golden, like the alpen-rose, the gentian, and the mountain dandelion; alabaster beads, pale as edelweiss, are round her throat; her stiffened. white linen sleeves finish at the elbow; and her full well-worn skirt is of gentian blue. The two thick plaits of her hair are crossed, and turned round her head. As she puts away the last bowl, there is a knock; and LAMOND opens the outer door. He is young, tanned, and good-looking, dressed like a climber, and carries a plaid, a ruck-sack, and an ice-axe.

LAMOND. Good evening!

SEELCHEN. Good evening, gentle Sir!

LAMOND. My name is Lamond. I'm very late I fear.

SEELCHEN. Do you wish to sleep here?

LAMOND. Please.

SEELCHEN. All the beds are full--it is a pity. I will call Mother.

LAMOND. I've come to go up the Great Horn at sunrise.

SEELCHEN. [Awed] The Great Horn! But he is impossible.

LAMOND. I am going to try that.

SEELCHEN. There is the Wine Horn, and the Cow Horn.

LAMOND. I have climbed them.

SEELCHEN. But he is so dangerous--it is perhaps--death.

LAMOND. Oh! that's all right! One must take one's chance.

SEELCHEN. And father has hurt his foot. For guide, there is only Mans Felsman.

LAMOND. The celebrated Felsman?

SEELCHEN. [Nodding; then looking at him with admiration] Are you that Herr Lamond who has climbed all our little mountains this year?

LAMOND. All but that big fellow.

SEELCHEN. We have heard of you. Will you not wait a day for father's foot?

LAMOND. Ah! no. I must go back home to-morrow.

SEELCHEN. The gracious Sir is in a hurry.

LAMOND. [Looking at her intently] Alas!

SEELCHEN. Are you from London? Is it very big?

LAMOND. Six million souls.

SEELCHEN. Oh! [After a little pause] I have seen Cortina twice.

LAMOND. Do you live here all the year?

SEELCHEN. In winter in the valley.

LAMOND. And don't you want to see the world?

SEELCHEN. Sometimes. [Going to a door, she calls softly] Hans! [Then pointing to another door] There are seven German gentlemen asleep in there!

LAMOND. Oh God!

SEELCHEN. Please? They are here to see the sunrise. [She picks up a little book that has dropped from LAMOND'S pocket] I have read several books.

LAMOND. This is by the great English poet. Do you never make poetry here, and dream dreams, among your mountains?

SEELCHEN. [Slowly shaking her head] See! It is the full moon.

[While they stand at the window looking at the moon, there enters a lean, well-built, taciturn young man dressed in Loden.]

SEELCHEN. Hans!

FELSMAN. [In a deep voice] The gentleman wishes me?

SEELCHEN. [Awed] The Great Horn for to-morrow! [Whispering to him] It is the celebrated London one.

FELSMAN. The Great Horn is not possible.

LAMOND. You say that? And you're the famous Felsman?

FELSMAN. [Grimly] We start at dawn.

SEELCHEN. It is the first time for years!

LAMOND. [Placing his plaid and rucksack on the window bench] Can I sleep here?

SEELCHEN. I will see; perhaps--

[She runs out up some stairs]

FELSMAN. [Taking blankets from the cupboard and spreading them on the window seat] So!

[As he goes out into the air. SEELCHEN comes slipping in again with a lighted candle.]

SEELCHEN. There is still one bed. This is too hard for you.

LAMOND. Oh! thanks; but that's all right.

SEELCHEN. To please me!

LAMOND. May I ask your name?

SEELCHEN. Seelchen.

LAMOND. Little soul, that means--doesn't it? To please you I would sleep with seven German gentlemen.

SEELCHEN. Oh! no; it is not necessary.

LAMOND. [With a grave bow] At your service, then. [He prepares to go]

SEELCHEN. Is it very nice in towns, in the World, where you come from?

LAMOND. When I'm there I would be here; but when I'm here I would be there.

SEELCHEN. [Clasping her hands] That is like me but I am always here.

LAMOND. Ah! yes; there is no one like you in towns.

SEELCHEN. In two places one cannot be. [Suddenly] In the towns there are theatres, and there is beautiful fine work, and--dancing, and--churches--and trains--and all the things in books--and--

LAMOND. Misery.

SEELCHEN. But there is life.

LAMOND. And there is death.

SEELCHEN. To-morrow, when you have climbed--will you not come back?

LAMOND. No.

SEELCHEN. You have all the world; and I have nothing.

LAMOND. Except Felsman, and the mountains.

SEELCHEN. It is not good to eat only bread.

LAMOND. [Looking at her hard] I would like to eat you!

SEELCHEN. But I am not nice; I am full of big wants--like the cheese with holes.

LAMOND. I shall come again.

SEELCHEN. There will be no more hard mountains left to climb. And if it is not exciting, you do not care.

LAMOND. O wise little soul!

SEELCHEN. No. I am not wise. In here it is always aching.

LAMOND. For the moon?

SEELCHEN. Yes. [Then suddenly] From the big world you will remember?

LAMOND. [Taking her hand] There is nothing in the big world so sweet as this.

SEELCHEN. [Wisely] But there is the big world itself.

LAMOND. May I kiss you, for good-night?

[She puts her face forward; and he kisses her cheek, and, suddenly, her lips. Then as she draws away.]

LAMOND. I am sorry, little soul.

SEELCHEN. That's all right!

LAMOND. [Taking the candle] Dream well! Goodnight!

SEELCHEN. [Softly] Good-night!

FELSMAN. [Coming in from the air, and eyeing them] It is cold--it will be fine.

[LAMOND still looking back goes up the stairs; and FELSMAN waits for him to pass.]

SEELCHEN. [From the window seat] It was hard for him here. I thought.

[He goes up to her, stays a moment looking down then bends and kisses her hungrily.]

SEELCHEN. Art thou angry?

[He does not answer, but turning out the lamp, goes into an inner room.]

[SEELCHEN sits gazing through the window at the peaks bathed in full moonlight. Then, drawing the blankets about her, she snuggles down on the window seat.]

SEELCHEN. [In a sleepy voice] They kissed me--both. [She sleeps]

The scene falls quite dark

SCENE II

The scene is slowly illumined as by dawn. SEELCHEN is still lying on the window seat. She sits up, freeing her face and hands from the blankets, changing the swathings of deep sleep for the filmy coverings of a dream. The wall of the hut has vanished; there is nothing between her and the three mountains veiled in mist, save a through of darkness. There, as the peaks of the mountains brighten, they are seen to have great faces.

SEELCHEN. Oh! They have faces!

[The face of THE WINE HORN is the profile of a beardless youth. The face of THE COW HORN is that of a mountain shepherd. solemn, and broom, with fierce black eyes, and a black beard. Between them THE GREAT HORN, whose hair is of snow, has a high. beardless visage, as of carved bronze, like a male sphinx, serene, without cruelty. Far down below the faces of the peaks. above the trough of darkness, are peeping out the four little heads of the flowers of EDELWEISS, and GENTIAN, MOUNTAIN DANDELION, and ALPENROSE; on their heads are crowns made of their several flowers, all powdered with dewdrops; and when THE FLOWERS lift their child-faces little tinkling bells ring.]

All around the peaks there is nothing but blue sky.

EDELWEISS. [In a tiny voice] Would you? Would you? Would you? Ah! ha!

GENTIAN, M. DANDELION, ALPENROSE [With their bells ranging enviously] Oo-oo-oo!

[From behind the Cow HORN are heard the voices of **COWBELLS and MOUNTAIN AIR:**]

"Clinkel-clink! Clinkel-clink!"

"Mountain air! Mountain air!"

[From behind THE WINE HORN rise the rival voices Of **VIEW OF ITALY, FLUME OF STEAM, and THINGS IN BOOKS:**]

"I am Italy! Italy!"

"See me--steam in the distance!"

"O remember the things in books!"

[And all call out together, very softly, with THE FLOWERS ringing their bells. Then far away like an echo comes a sighing:]

"Mountain air! Mountain air!"

[And suddenly the Peak of THE COW HORN speaks in a voice as of one unaccustomed.]

THE COW HORN. Amongst kine and my black-brown sheep I Live; I am silence, and monotony; I am the solemn hills. I am fierceness, and the mountain wind; clean pasture, and wild rest. Look in my eyes. love me alone!

SEELCHEN. [Breathless] The Cow Horn! He is speaking for Felsman and the mountains. It is the half of my heart!

[THE FLOWERS laugh happily.]

THE COW HORN. I stalk the eternal hills--I drink the mountain snows. My eyes are the colour of burned wine; in them lives melancholy. The lowing of the kine, the wind, the sound of falling rocks, the running of the torrents; no other talk know I. Thoughts simple, and blood hot, strength huge--the cloak of gravity.

SEELCHEN. Yes. yes! I want him. He is strong!

[The voices of **COWBELLS** and **MOUNTAIN AIR** cry out together:]

"Clinkel-clink! Clinkel-clink!"

"Mountain air! Mountain air!"

THE COW HORN. Little soul! Hold to me! Love me! Live with me under the stars!

SEELCHEN. [Below her breath] I am afraid.

[And suddenly the Peak of **THE WINE HORN** speaks in a youth's voice.]

THE WINE HORN. I am the will o' the wisp that dances thro' the streets; I am the cooing dove of Towns, from the plane trees and the chestnuts' shade. From day to day all changes, where I burn my incense to my thousand little gods. In white palaces I dwell, and passionate dark alleys. The life of men in crowds is mine--of lamplight in the streets at dawn. [Softly] I have a thousand loves. and never one too long; for I am nimbler than your heifers playing in the sunshine.

[THE FLOWERS, ringing in alarm, cry:]

"We know them!"

THE WINE HORN. I hear the rustlings of the birth and death of pleasure; and the rattling of swift wheels. I hear the hungry oaths of men; and love kisses in the airless night. Without me, little soul, you starve and die,

SEELCHEN. He is speaking for the gentle Sir, and the big world of the Town. It pulls my heart.

THE WINE HORN. My thoughts surpass in number the flowers in your meadows; they fly more swiftly than your eagles on the wind. I drink the wine of aspiration, and the drug of disillusion. Thus am I never dull!

[The voices of **VIEW OF ITALY, FLUME OF STEAM, and THINGS IN BOOKS** are heard calling out together:]

"I am Italy, Italy!"

"See me--steam in the distance!"

"O remember, remember!"

THE WINE HORN. Love me, little soul! I paint life fifty colours. I make a thousand pretty things! I twine about your heart!

SEELCHEN. He is honey!

[THE FLOWERS ring their bells jealously and cry:]

"Bitter! Bitter!"

THE COW HORN. Stay with me, Seelchen! I wake thee with the crystal air.

[The voices of COWBELLS and MOUNTAIN AIR tiny out far away:]

"Clinkel-clink! Clinkel-clink!"

"Mountain air! Mountain air!"

[And THE FLOWERS laugh happily.]

THE WINE HORN. Come with me, Seelchen! My fan, Variety, shall wake you!

[The voices of VIEW OF ITALY, FLUME OF STEAM and THINGS IN BOOKS chant softly:]

"I am Italy! Italy!"

"See me--steam in the distance!"

"O remember, remember!"

[And THE FLOWERS moan.]

SEELCHEN. [In grief] My heart! It is torn!

THE WINE HORN. With me, little soul, you shall race in the streets. and peep at all secrets. We will hold hands, and fly like the thistle-down.

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