

"Government Goat"

By Susan Glaspell

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Joe Doane couldn't get to sleep. On one side of him a family were crying because their man was dead, and on the other side a man was celebrating because he was alive.

When he couldn't any longer stand the wails of the Cadaras, Joe moved from his bedroom to the lounge in the sitting-room. But the lounge in the sitting-room, beside making his neck go in a way no neck wants to go, brought him too close to Ignace Silva's rejoicings in not having been in one of the dories that turned over when the schooner Lillie-Bennie was caught in the squall last Tuesday afternoon and unable to gather all her men back from the dories before the sea gathered them. Joe Cadara was in a boat that hadn't made it--hence the wails to the left of the Doanes, for Joe Cadara left a wife and four children and they had plenty of friends who could cry, too. But Ignace Silva--more's the pity, for at two o'clock in the morning you like to wish the person who is keeping you awake was dead--got back to the vessel. So to-night his friends were there with bottles, for when a man might be dead certainly the least you can do is to take notice of him by getting him drunk.

People weren't sleeping in Cape's End that night. Those who were neither mourning nor rejoicing were being kept awake by mourners or rejoicers. All the vile, diluted whisky that could be bought on the quiet was in use for the deadening or the heightening of emotion. Joe Doane found himself wishing he had a drink. He'd like to stop thinking about dead fishermen--and hearing live ones. Everybody had been all strung up for two days ever since word came from Boston that the Lillie-Bennie was one of the boats "caught."

They didn't know until the Lillie-Bennie came in that afternoon just how many of her men she was bringing back with her. They were all out on Long Wharf to watch her come in and to see who would come ashore--and who wouldn't. Women were there, and lots of children. Some of these sets of a woman and children went away with a man, holding on to him and laughing, or perhaps looking foolish to think they had ever supposed he could be dead. Others went away as they had come--maybe very still, maybe crying. There were old men who came away carrying things that had belonged to sons who weren't coming ashore. It was all a good deal like a movie--only it didn't rest you.

So he needed sleep, he petulantly told things as he rubbed the back of his neck, wondered why lounges were made like that, and turned over. But instead of sleeping, he thought about Joe Cadara. They were friendly thoughts he had about Joe Cadara; much more friendly than the thoughts he was having about Ignace Silva. For one thing, Joe wasn't making any noise. Even when he was alive, Joe had made little noise. He always had his job on a vessel; he'd come up the Front street in his oilskins, turn in at his little red house, come out after a while and hoe in his garden or patch his wood-shed, sit out on the wharf and listen to what Ignace Silva and other loud-mouthed Portuguese had to say--back to his little red house. He--well, he was a good deal like the sea. It came in, it went out. On Joe Cadara's last trip in, Joe Doane met him just as he was starting out. "Well, Joe," says Joe Doane, "off again?" "Off again," said Joe Cadara, and that was about all there seemed to be to it. He could see him going down the street--short, stocky, slow, dumb. By dumb he meant--oh, dumb like the sea was dumb--just going on doing it. And now--

All of a sudden he couldn't stand Ignace Silva. "Hell!" roared Joe Doane from the window, "don't you know a man's dead?" In an instant the only thing you could hear was the sea. In--Out--

Then he went back to his bedroom. "I'm not sleeping either," said his wife--the way people are quick to make it plain they're as bad off as the next one.

At first it seemed to be still at the Cadaras. The children had gone to sleep--so had the friends. Only one sound now where there had been many before. And that seemed to come out of the sea. You got it after a wave broke--as it was dying out. In that little let-up between an in, an out, you knew that Mrs. Cadara had not gone to sleep, you knew that Mrs. Cadara was crying because Joe Cadara was dead in the sea.

So Joe Doane and his wife Mary lay there and listened to Annie Cadara crying for her husband, Joe Cadara.

Finally Mrs. Doane raised on her pillow and sighed. "Well, I suppose she wonders what she'll do now--those four children."

He could see Joe Cadara's back going down the Front street--broad, slow, dumb. "And I suppose," he said, as if speaking for something that had perhaps never spoken for itself, "that she feels bad because she'll never see him again."

"Why, of course she does," said his wife impatiently, as if he had contradicted something she had said.

But after usurping his thought she went right back to her own. "I don't see how she will get along. I suppose we'll have to help them some."

Joe Doane lay there still. He couldn't help anybody much--more was the pity. He had his own three children--and you could be a Doane without having money to help with--though some people didn't get that through their heads. Things used to be different with the Doanes. When the tide's in and you awake at three in the morning it all gets a good deal like the sea--at least with Joe Doane it did now. His grandfather, Ebenezer Doane, the whaling captain--In--Out--Silas

Doane--a fleet of vessels off the Grand Banks--In--Out--All the Doanes. They had helped make the Cape, but--In--Out--Suddenly Joe laughed.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded his wife.

"I was just laughing," said Joe, "to think what those old Doanes would say if they could see us."

"Well, it's not anything to laugh at," said Mrs. Doane.

"Why, I think it is," good-humoredly insisted her husband, "it's such a joke on them."

"If it's a joke," said Mrs. Doane firmly, "it's not on them."

He wasn't sure just who the joke was on. He lay thinking about it. At three in the morning, when you can't sleep and the tide's in, you might get it mixed--who the joke was on.

But, no, the joke was on them, that they'd had their long slow deep In--Out--their whaling and their fleets, and that what came after was him--a tinkerer with other men's boats, a ship's carpenter who'd even work on houses. "Get Joe Doane to do it for you." And glad enough was Joe Doane to do it. And a Portagee livin' to either side of him!

He laughed. "You've got a funny idea of what's a joke," his wife said indignantly.

That seemed to be so. Things he saw as jokes weren't jokes to anybody else. Maybe that was why he sometimes seemed to be all by himself. He was beginning to get lost in an In--Out. Faintly he could hear Mrs. Cadara crying--Joe Cadara was in the sea, and faintly he heard his wife saying, "I suppose Agnes Cadara could wear Myrtie's

shoes, only--the way things are, seems Myrtie's got to wear out her own shoes."

Next day when he came home at noon--he was at work then helping Ed. Davis put a new coat on Still's store--he found his two boys--the boys were younger than Myrtie--pressed against the picket fence that separated Doanes from Cadaras.

"What those kids up to?" he asked his wife, while he washed up for dinner.

"Oh, they just want to see," she answered, speaking into the oven.

"See what?" he demanded; but this Mrs. Doane regarded as either too obvious or too difficult to answer, so he went to the door and called, "Joe! Edgar!"

"What you kids rubberin' at?" he demanded.

Young Joe dug with his toe. "The Cadaras have got a lot of company," said he.

"They're crying!" triumphantly announced the younger and more truthful Edgar.

"Well, suppose they are? They got a right to cry in their own house, ain't they? Let the Cadaras be. Find some fun at home."

The boys didn't seem to think this funny, nor did Mrs. Doane, but the father was chuckling to himself as they sat down to their baked flounder.

But to let the Cadaras be and find some fun at home became harder and harder to do. The Lillie-Bennie had lost her men in early Summer and the town was as full of Summer folk as the harbor was of whiting.

There had never been a great deal for Summer folk to do in Cape's End, and so the Disaster was no disaster to the Summer's entertainment. In other words, Summer folk called upon the Cadaras. The young Doanes spent much of their time against the picket fence; sometimes young Cadaras would come out and graciously enlighten them. "A woman she brought my mother a black dress." Or, "A lady and two little boys came in automobile and brought me kiddie-car and white pants." One day Joe Doane came home from work and found his youngest child crying because Tony Cadara wouldn't lend him the kiddie-car. This was a reversal of things; heretofore Cadaras had cried for the belongings of the Doanes. Joe laughed about it, and told Edgar to cheer up, and maybe he'd have a kiddie-car himself some day--and meanwhile he had a pa.

Agnes Cadara and Myrtie Doane were about of an age. They were in the same class in high school. One day when Joe Doane was pulling in his dory after being out doing some repairs on the Lillie-Bennie he saw a beautiful young lady standing on the Cadaras' bulkhead. Her back was to him, but you were sure she was beautiful. She had the look of some one from away, but not like the usual run of Summer folk. Myrtie was standing looking over at this distinguished person.

"Who's that?" Joe asked of her.

"Why," said Myrtie, in an awed whisper, "it's Agnes Cadara--in her mourning."

Until she turned around, he wouldn't believe it. "Well," said he to Myrtie, "it's a pity more women haven't got something to mourn about."

"Yes," breathed Myrtie, "isn't she wonderful?"

Agnes's mourning had been given her by young Mrs. MacCrea who lived up on the hill and was herself just finishing mourning. It seemed

Mrs. MacCrea and Agnes were built a good deal alike--though you never would have suspected it before Agnes began to mourn. Mrs. MacCrea was from New York, and these clothes had been made by a woman Mrs. MacCrea called by her first name. Well, maybe she was a woman you'd call by her first name, but she certainly did have a way of making you look as if you weren't native to the place you were born in. Before Agnes Cadara had anything to mourn about she was simply "one of those good-looking Portuguese girls." There were too many of them in Cape's End to get excited about any of them. One day he heard some women on the beach talking about how these clothes had "found" Agnes--as if she had been lost.

Mrs. MacCrea showed Agnes how to do her hair in a way that went with her clothes. One noon when Joe got home early because it rained and he couldn't paint, when he went up-stairs he saw Myrtie trying to do this to her hair. Well, it just couldn't be done to Myrtie's hair. Myrtie didn't have hair you could do what you pleased with. She was all red in the face with trying, and being upset because she couldn't do it. He had to laugh--and that didn't help things a bit. So he said:

"Never mind, Myrtie, we can't all go into mourning."

"Well, I don't care," said Myrtie, sniffing, "it's not fair."

He had to laugh again and as she didn't see what there was to laugh at, he had to try to console again. "Never mind, Myrt," said he, "you've got one thing Agnes Cadara's not got."

"I'd like to know what," said Myrtie, jerking at her hair.

He waited; funny she didn't think of it herself. "Why--a father," said he.

"Oh," said Myrtie--the way you do when you don't know what to say. And then, "Well,----"

Again he waited--then laughed; waited again, then turned away.

Somebody gave Mrs. Cadara a fireless cooker. Mrs. Doane had no fireless cooker. So she had to stand all day over her hot stove--and this she spoke of often. "My supper's in the fireless cooker," Mrs. Cadara would say, and stay out in the cool yard, weeding her flowerbed bed. "It certainly would be nice to have one of those fireless cookers," Mrs. Doane would say, as she put a meal on the table and wiped her brow with her apron.

"Well, why don't you kill your husband?" Joe Doane would retort. "Now, if only you didn't have a husband--you could have a fireless cooker."

Jovially he would put the question, "Which would you rather have, a husband or a fireless cooker?" He would argue it out--and he would sometimes get them all to laughing, only the argument was never a very long one. One day it occurred to him that the debates were short because the others didn't hold up their end. He was talking for the fireless cooker--if it was going to be a real debate, they ought to speak up for the husband. But there seemed to be so much less to be said for a husband than there was for a fireless cooker. This struck him as really quite funny, but it seemed it was a joke he had to enjoy by himself. Sometimes when he came home pretty tired--for you could get as tired at odd jobs as at jobs that weren't odd--and heard all about what the Cadaras were that night to eat out of their fireless cooker, he would wish that some one else would do the joking. It was kind of tiresome doing it all by yourself--and kind of lonesome.

One morning he woke up feeling particularly rested and lively. He was going out to work on the Lillie-Bennie, and he always felt in better spirits when he was working on a boat.

It was a cool, fresh, sunny morning. He began a song--he had a way of making up songs. It was, "I'd rather be alive than dead." He didn't think of any more lines, so while he was getting into his clothes he kept singing this one, to a tune which became more and more stirring. He went over to the window by the looking-glass. From this window you looked over to the Cadaras. And then he saw that from the Cadaras a new arrival looked at him.

He stared. Then loud and long he laughed. He threw up the window and called, "Hello, there!"

The new arrival made no reply, unless a slight droop of the head could be called a reply.

"Well, you cap the climax!" called Joe Doane.

Young Doanes had discovered the addition to the Cadara family and came running out of the house.

"Pa!" Edgar called up to him, "the Cadaras have got a Goat!"

"Well, do you know," said his father, "I kind of suspected that was a goat."

Young Cadaras came out of the house to let young Doanes know just what their privileges were to be with the goat--and what they weren't. They could walk around and look at her; they were not to lead her by her rope.

"There's no hope now," said Joe, darkly shaking his head. "No man in his senses would buck up against a goat."

The little Doanes wouldn't come in and eat their breakfast. They'd rather stay out and walk round the goat.

"I think it's too bad," their mother sighed, "the kiddie-car and the ball-suit and the sail-boat were enough for the children to bear--without this goat. It seems our children haven't got any of the things the Cadaras have got."

"Except--" said Joe, and waited for some one to fill it in. But no one did, so he filled it in with a laugh--a rather short laugh.

"Look out they don't put you in the fireless cooker!" he called to the goat as he went off to work.

But he wasn't joking when he came home at noon. He turned in at the front gate and the goat blocked his passage. The Cadaras had been willing to let the goat call upon the Doanes and graze while calling. "Get out of my way!" called Joe Doane in a surly way not like Joe Doane.

"Pa!" said young Joe in an awed whisper, "it's a government goat."

"What do I care if it is?" retorted his father. "Damn the government goat!"

Every one fell back, as when blasphemy--as when treason--have been uttered. These Portuguese kids looking at him like that--as if they were part of the government and he outside. He was so mad that he bawled at Tony Cadara, "To hell with your government goat!"

From her side of the fence, Mrs. Cadara called, "Tony, you bring the goat right home," as one who calls her child--and her goat--away from evil.

"And keep her there!" finished Joe Doane.

The Doanes ate their meal in stricken silence. Finally Doane burst out, "What's the matter with you all? Such a fuss about the orderin' off of a goat."

"It's a government goat," lisped Edgar.

"It's a government goat," repeated his wife in a tense voice.

"What do you mean--government goat? There's no such animal."

But it seemed there was, the Cadaras had, not only the goat, but a book about the goat. The book was from the government. The government had raised the goat and had singled the Cadaras out as a family upon whom a government goat should be conferred. The Cadaras held her in trust for the government. Meanwhile they drank her milk.

"Tony Cadara said, if I'd dig clams for him this afternoon he'd let me help milk her to-night," said young Joe.

This was too much. "Ain't you kids got no spine? Kowtowing to them Portuguese because a few folks that's sorry for them have made them presents. They're ginnies. You're Doanes."

"I want a goat!" wailed Edgar. His father got up from the table.

"The children are all right," said his wife, in her patient voice that made you impatient. "It's natural for them to want a few of the things they see other children having."

He'd get away! As he went through the shed he saw his line and picked it up. He'd go out on the breakwater--maybe he'd get some fish, at least have some peace.

The breakwater wasn't very far down the beach from his house. He used to go out there every once in a while. Every once in a while he had a feeling he had to get by himself. It was half a mile long and of big rocks that had big gaps. You had to do some climbing--you could imagine you were in the mountains--and that made you feel far off and different. Only when the tide came in, the sea filled the gaps--then you had to "watch your step."

He went way out and turned his back on the town and fished. He wasn't to finish the work on the Lillie-Bennie. They said that morning they thought they'd have to send down the Cape for an "expert." So he would probably go to work at the new cold storage--working with a lot of Portagee laborers. He wondered why things were this way with him. They seemed to have just happened so. When you should have had some money it didn't come natural to do the things of people who have no money. The money went out of the "Bank" fishing about three years before his father sold his vessels. During those last three years Captain Silas Doane had spent all the money he had to keep things going, refusing to believe that the way of handling fish had changed and that the fishing between Cape's End and the Grand Banks would no longer be what it had been. When he sold he kept one vessel, and the next Winter she went ashore right across there on the northeast arm of the Cape. Joe Doane was aboard her that night. Myrtie was a baby then. It was of little Myrtie he thought when it seemed the vessel would pound herself to pieces before they could get off. He couldn't be lost! He had to live and work so his little girl could have everything she wanted--After that the Doanes were without a vessel--and Doanes without a vessel were fish out of sea. They had never been folks to work on another man's boat. He supposed he had never started any big new thing because it had always seemed he was just filling in between trips. A good many years had slipped by and he was still just putting in time. And it began to look as if there wasn't going to be another trip.

Suddenly he had to laugh. Some joke on Joe Cadara! He could see him going down the Front street--broad, slow, dumb. Why, Joe Cadara thought his family needed him. He thought they got along because he made those trips. But had Joe Cadara ever been able to give his wife a fireless cooker? Had the government presented a goat to the Cadaras when Joe was there? Joe Doane sat out on the breakwater and laughed at the joke on Joe Cadara. When Agnes Cadara was a little girl she would run to meet her father when he came in from a trip. Joe Doane used to like to see the dash she made. But Agnes was just tickled to death with her mourning!

He sat there a long time--sat there until he didn't know whether it was a joke or not. But he got two haddock and more whiting than he wanted to carry home. So he felt better. A man sometimes needed to get off by himself.

As he was turning in at home he saw Ignace Silva about to start out on a trip with Captain Gorspie. Silva thought he had to go. But Silva had been saved--and had his wife a fireless cooker? Suddenly Joe Doane called.

"Hey! Silva! You're the government goat!"

The way Doane laughed made Silva know this was a joke; not having a joke of his own he just turned this one around and sent it back. "Government goat yourself!"

"Shouldn't wonder," returned Joe jovially.

He had every Doane laughing at supper that night. "Bear up! Bear up! True, you've got a father instead of a goat--but we've all got our cross! We all have our cross to bear!"

"Say!" said he after supper, "every woman, every kid, puts on a hat, and up we go to see if Ed. Smith might happen to have a soda."

As they were starting out, he peered over at the Cadaras in mock surprise. "Why, what's the matter with that goat? That goat don't seem to be takin' the Cadaras out for a soda."

Next day he started to make a kiddie-car for Edgar. He promised Joe he'd make him a sail-boat. But it was up-hill work. The Cape's End Summer folk gave a "Streets of Bagdad" and the "disaster families" got the proceeds. Then when the Summer folk began to go away it was quite natural to give what they didn't want to take with them to a family that had had a disaster. The Doanes had had no disaster; anyway, the Doanes weren't the kind of people you'd think of giving things to. True, Mr. Doane would sometimes come and put on your screen-doors for you, but it was as if a neighbor had come in to lend a hand. A man who lives beside the sea and works on the land is not a picturesque figure. Then, in addition to being alive, Joe Doane wasn't Portuguese. So the Cadaras got the underwear and the bats and preserves that weren't to be taken back to town. No one father--certainly not a father without a steady job--could hope to compete with all that wouldn't go into trunks.

Anyway, he couldn't possibly make a goat. No wit or no kindness which emanated from him could do for his boys what that goat did for the Cadaras. Joe Doane came to throw an awful hate on the government goat. Portagees were only Portagees--yet they had the government goat. Why, there had been Doanes on that Cape for more than a hundred years. There had been times when everybody round there worked for the Doanes, but now the closest his boys could come to the government was beddin' down the Cadaras' government goat! Twenty-five years ago Cadaras had huddled in a hut on the God-forsaken Azores! If they knew there was a United States government, all they knew was that there was one. And now it was these Cadara kids were putting on airs to him about the government. He knew there was a joke behind all this, behind his getting so wrought up about it, but he would sit and watch that goat eat leaves in the vacant lot across

from the Cadaras until the goat wasn't just a goat. It was the turn things had taken. One day as he was sitting watching Tony Cadara milking his goat--wistful boys standing by--Ignace Silva, just in from a trip, called out, "Government goat yourself!" and laughed at he knew not what.

By God!--'t was true! A Doane without a vessel. A native who had let himself be crowded out by ignorant upstarts from a filthy dot in the sea! A man who hadn't got his bearings in the turn things had taken. Of a family who had built up a place for other folks to grow fat in. Sure he was the government goat. By just being alive he kept his family from all the fancy things they might have if he was dead. Could you be more of a goat than that?

Agnes Cadara and Myrtie came up the street together. He had a feeling that Myrtie was set up because she was walking along with Agnes Cadara. Time had been when Agnes Cadara had hung around in order to go with Myrtie! Suddenly he thought of how his wife had said maybe Agnes Cadara could wear Myrtie's shoes. He looked at Agnes Cadara's feet--at Myrtie's. Why, Myrtie looked like a kid from an orphan asylum walking along with the daughter of the big man of the town!

He got up and started toward town. He wouldn't stand it! He'd show 'em! He'd buy Myrtie---- Why, he'd buy Myrtie----! He put his hand in his pocket. Change from a dollar. The rest of the week's pay had gone to Lou Hibbard for groceries. Well, he could hang it up at Wilkinson's. He'd buy Myrtie----!

He came to a millinery store. There was a lot of black ribbon strewn around in the window. He stood and looked at it. Then he laughed. Just the thing!

"Cheer up, Myrt," said he, when he got back home and presented it to her. "You can mourn a little. For that matter, you've got a little to mourn about."

Myrtie took it doubtfully--then wound it round her throat. She liked it, and this made her father laugh. He laughed a long time--it was as if he didn't want to be left without the sound of his laughing.

"There's nothing so silly as to laugh when there's nothing to laugh at," his wife said finally.

"Oh, I don't know about that," said Joe Doane.

"And while it's very nice to make the children presents, in our circumstances it would be better to give them useful presents."

"But what's so useful as mourning?" demanded Doane. "Think of all Myrtie has got to mourn about. Poor, poor Myrtie--she's got a father!"

You can say a thing until you think it's so. You can say a thing until you make other people think it's so. He joked about standing between them and a fireless cooker until he could see them thinking about it. All the time he hated his old job at the cold storage. A Doane had no business to be ashore freezing fish. It was the business of a Doane to go out to sea and come home with a full vessel.

One day he broke through that old notion that Doanes didn't work on other men's boats and half in a joke proposed to Captain Cook that he fire a ginnie or two and give him a berth on the Elizabeth. And Bill Cook was rattled. Finally he laughed and said, "Why, Joe, you ought to be on your own vessel"--which was a way of saying he didn't want him on his. Why didn't he? Did they think because he hadn't made a trip for so long that he wasn't good for one? Did they think a Doane couldn't take orders? Well, there weren't many boats he would go on. Most of them in the harbor now were owned by Portuguese. He

guessed it wouldn't come natural to him to take orders from a Portagee--not at sea. He was taking orders from one now at the cold storage--but as the cold storage wasn't where he belonged it didn't make so much difference who he took orders from.

At the close of that day Bill Cook told him he ought to be on his own vessel, Joe Doane sat at the top of those steps which led from his house down to the sea and his thoughts were like the sails coming round the Point--slowly, in a procession, and from a long way off. His father's boats used to come round that Point this same way. He was lonesome to-night. He felt half like an old man and half like a little boy.

Mrs. Cadara was standing over on the platform to the front of her house. She too was looking at the sails to the far side of the breakwater--sails coming home. He wondered if she was thinking about Joe Cadara--wishing he was on one of those boats. Did she ever think about Joe Cadara? Did she ever wish he would come home? He'd like to ask her. He'd like to know. When you went away and didn't come back home, was all they thought about how they'd get along? And if they were getting along all right, was it true they'd just as soon be without you?

He got up. He had a sudden crazy feeling he wanted to fight for Joe Cadara. He wanted to go over there and say to that fireless cooker woman, "Trip after trip he made, in the cold and in the storm. He kept you warm and safe here at home. It was for you he went; it was to you he came back. And you'll miss him yet. Think this is going to keep up? Think you're going to interest those rich folks as much next year as you did this? Five years from now you'll be on your knees with a brush to keep those kids warm and fed."

He'd like to get the truth out of her! Somehow things wouldn't seem so rotten if he could know that she sometimes lay in her bed at night and cried for Joe Cadara.

It was quiet to-night; all the Cadara children and all the Doanes were out looking for the government goat. The government goat was increasing her range. She seemed to know that, being a government goat, she was protected from harm. If a government goat comes in your yard, you are a little slow to fire a tin can at her--not knowing just how treasonous this may be. Nobody in Cape's End knew the exact status of a government goat, and each one hesitated to ask for the very good reason that the person asked might know and you would then be exposed as one who knew less than some one else. So the government goat went about where she pleased, and to-night she had pleased to go far. It left the neighborhood quiet--the government goat having many guardians.

Joe Doane felt like saying something to Mrs. Cadara. Not the rough, wild thing he had wanted to say a moment before, but just say something to her. He and she were the only people around--children all away and his wife up-stairs with a headache. He felt lonesome and he thought she looked that way--standing there against the sea in light that was getting dim. She and Joe Cadara used to sit out on that bulkhead. She moved toward him, as if she were lonesome and wanted to speak. On his side of the fence, he moved a little nearer her. She said,

"My, I hope the goat's not lost!"

He said nothing.

"That goat, she's so tame," went on Joe Cadara's wife with pride and affection, "she'll follow anybody around like a dog."

Joe Doane got up and went in the house.

It got so he didn't talk much to anybody. He sometimes had jokes, for he'd laugh, but they were jokes he had all to himself and his laughing

would come as a surprise and make others turn and stare at him. It made him seem off by himself, even when they were all sitting round the table. He laughed at things that weren't things to laugh at, as when Myrtie said, "Agnes Cadara had a letter from Mrs. MacCrea and a mourning handkerchief." And after he'd laughed at a thing like that which nobody else saw as a thing to laugh at, he'd sit and stare out at the water. "Do be cheerful," his wife would say. He'd laugh at that.

But one day he burst out and said things. It was a Sunday afternoon and the Cadaras were all going to the cemetery. Every Sunday afternoon they went and took flowers to the stone that said, "Lost at Sea." Agnes would call, "Come, Tony! We dress now for the cemetery," in a way that made the Doane children feel that they had nothing at all to do. They filed out at the gate dressed in the best the Summer folk had left them and it seemed as if there were a fair, or a circus, and all the Doanes had to stay at home.

This afternoon he didn't know they were going until he saw Myrtie at the window. He wondered what she could be looking at as if she wanted it so much. When he saw, he had to laugh.

"Why, Myrt," said he, "you can go to the cemetery if you want to. There are lots of Doanes there. Go on and pay them a visit.

"I'm sure they'd be real glad to see you," he went on, as she stood there doubtfully. "I doubt if anybody has visited them for a long time. You could visit your great-grandfather, Ebenezer Doane. Whales were so afraid of that man that they'd send word around from sea to sea that he was coming. And Lucy Doane is there--Ebenezer's wife. Lucy Doane was a woman who took what she wanted. Maybe the whales were afraid of Ebenezer--but Lucy wasn't. There was a dispute between her and her brother about a quilt of their mother's, and in the dead of night she went into his house and took it off him while he slept. Spunk up! Be like the old Doanes! Go to the cemetery and wander around from grave to grave while the Cadaras are standin' by

their one stone! My father--he'd be glad to see you. Why, if he was alive now--if Captain Silas Doane was here, he'd let the Cadaras know whether they could walk on the sidewalk or whether they were to go in the street!"

Myrtie was interested, but after a moment she turned away. "You only go for near relatives," she sighed.

He stood staring at the place where she had been. He laughed; stopped the laugh; stood there staring. "You only go for near relatives." Slowly he turned and walked out of the house. The government goat, left home alone, came up to him as if she thought she'd take a walk too.

"Go to hell!" said Joe Doane, and his voice showed that inside he was crying.

Head down, he walked along the beach as far as the breakwater. He started out on it, not thinking of what he was doing. So the only thing he could do for Myrtie was give her a reason for going to the cemetery. She wanted him in the cemetery--so she'd have some place to go on Sunday afternoons! She could wear black then--all black, not just a ribbon round her neck. Suddenly he stood still. Would she have any black to wear? He had thought of a joke before which all other jokes he had ever thought of were small and sick. Suppose he were to take himself out of the way and then they didn't get the things they thought they'd have in place of him? He walked on fast--fast and crafty, picking his way among the smaller stones in between the giant stones in a fast, sure way he never could have picked it had he been thinking of where he went. He went along like a cat who is going to get a mouse. And in him grew this giant joke. Who'd give them the fireless cooker? Would it come into anybody's head to give young Joe Doane a sail-boat just because his father was dead? They'd rather have a goat than a father. But suppose they were to lose the father and get no goat? Myrtie'd be a mourner without any mourning. She'd be ashamed to go to the cemetery.

He laughed so that he found himself down, sitting down on one of the smaller rocks between the giant rocks, on the side away from town, looking out to sea.

He forgot his joke and knew that he wanted to return to the sea. Doanes belonged at sea. Ashore things struck you funny--then, after they'd once got to you, hurt. He thought about how he used to come round this Point when Myrtie was a baby. As he passed this very spot and saw the town lying there in the sun he'd think about her, and how he'd see her now, and how she'd kick and crow. But now Myrtie wanted to go and visit him--in the cemetery. Oh, it was a joke all right. But he guessed he was tired of jokes. Except the one great joke--joke that seemed to slap the whole of life right smack in the face.

The tide was coming in. In--Out--Doanes and Doanes. In--Out--Him too. In--Out--He was getting wet. He'd have to move up higher. But--why move? Perhaps this was as near as he could come to getting back to sea. Caught in the breakwater. That was about it--wasn't it? Rocks were queer things. You could wedge yourself in where you couldn't get yourself out. He hardly had to move. If he'd picked a place he couldn't have picked a better one. Wedge himself in--tide almost in now--too hard to get out--pounded to pieces, like the last vessel Doanes had owned. Near as he could come to getting back to sea. Near as he deserved to come--him freezing fish with ginnies. And there'd be no fireless cooker!

He twisted his shoulders to wedge in where it wouldn't be easy to wedge out. Face turned up, he saw something move on the great flat rock above the jagged rocks. He pulled himself up a little; he rose; he swung up to the big rock above him. On one flat-topped boulder stood Joe Doane. On the other flat-topped boulder stood the government goat.

"Go to hell!" said Joe Doane, and he was sobbing. "Go to hell!"

The government goat nodded her head a little in a way that wagged her beard and shook her bag.

"Go home! Drown yourself! Let me be! Go 'way!" It was fast, and choked, and he was shaking.

The goat would do none of these things. He sat down, his back to the government goat, and tried to forget that she was there. But there are moments when a goat is not easy to forget. He was willing there should be some joke to his death--like caught in the breakwater, but he wasn't going to die before a goat. After all, he'd amounted to a little more than that. He'd look around to see if perhaps she had started home. But she was always standing right there looking at him.

Finally he jumped up in a fury. "What'd you come for? What do you want of me? How do you expect to get home?" Between each question he'd wait for an answer. None came.

He picked up a small rock and threw it at the government goat. She jumped, slipped, and would have fallen from the boulder if he hadn't caught at her hind legs. Having saved her, he yelled: "You needn't expect me to save you. Don't expect anything from me!"

He'd have new gusts of fury at her. "What you out here for? Think you was a mountain goat? Don't you know the tide's comin' in? Think you can get back easy as you got out?"

He kicked at her hind legs to make her move on. She stood and looked at the water which covered the in-between rocks on which she had picked her way out. "Course," said Joe Doane. "Tide's in--you fool! You damned goat!" With the strength of a man who is full of fury he picked her up and threw her to the next boulder. "Hope you kill yourself!" was his heartening word.

But the government goat did not kill herself. She only looked around for further help.

To get away from her, he had to get her ashore. He guided and lifted, planted fore legs and shoved at hind legs, all the time telling her he hoped she'd kill herself. Once he stood still and looked all around and thought. After that he gave the government goat a shove that sent her in water above her knees. Then he had to get in too and help her to a higher rock.

It was after he had thus saved the government goat from the sea out of which the government goat had cheated him that he looked ahead to see there were watchers on the shore. Cadaras had returned from the cemetery. Cadaras and Doanes were watching him bring home the government goat.

From time to time he'd look up at them. There seemed to be no little agitation among this group. They'd hold on to each other and jump up and down like watchers whose men are being brought in from a wreck. There was one place where again he had to lift the government goat. After this he heard shouts and looked ashore to see his boys dancing up and down like little Indians.

Finally they had made it. The watchers on the shore came running out to meet them.

"Oh, Mr. Doane!" cried Mrs. Cadara, hands out-stretched, "I am thankful to you! You saved my goat! I have no man myself to save my goat. I have no man. I have no man!"

Mrs. Cadara covered her face with her hands, swayed back and forth, and sobbed because her man was dead.

Young Cadaras gathered around her. They seemed of a sudden to know they had no father, and to realize that this was a thing to be deplored. Agnes even wet her mourning handkerchief.

Myrtie came up and took his arm. "Oh, Father," said she, "I was so 'fraid you'd hurt yourself!"

He looked down into his little girl's face. He realized that just a little while before he had expected never to look into her face again. He looked at the government goat, standing a little apart, benevolently regarding this humankind. Suddenly Joe Doane began to laugh. He laughed--laughed--and laughed. And it was a laugh.

"When I saw you lift that goat!" said his wife, in the voice of a woman who may not have a fireless cooker, but--!

Young Joe Doane, too long brow-beaten not to hold the moment of his advantage, began dancing round Tony Cadara with the taunting yell, "You ain't got no pa to save your goat!" And Edgar lispingly chimed in, "Ain't got no pa to save your goat!"

"Here!" cried their father, "Stop devilin' them kids about what they can't help. Come! Hats on! Every Doane, every Cadara, goes up to see if Ed. Smith might happen to have a soda."

But young Joe had suffered too long to be quickly silent. "You ain't got no pa to get you soda!" persisted he.

"Joe!" commanded his father, "stop pesterin' them kids or I'll lick you!"

And Joe, drunk with the joy of having what the Cadaras had not, shrieked, "You ain't got no pa to lick you! You ain't got no pa to lick you!"

