

MR. ANTROBUS, MRS. ANTROBUS

MRS ANTROBUS: George, you're limping.

MR ANTROBUS: Yes, a little. My old wound from the other war started smarting again. I can manager.

MRS ANTROBUS: Some lights are coming on, - the first in seven years. People are walking up and down looking at them. Over in Hawkins' open lot they've built a bonfire to celebrate the peace. They're dancing around it like scarecrows.

MR ANTROBUS: A bonfire! As though they hadn't seen enough things burning. Maggie, the dog died?

MRS ANTROBUS: Oh, yes. Long ago. There are no dogs left in Excelsior. You're back again. All these years. I gave up counting on letters. The few that arrived were anywhere from six months to a year late.

MR ANTROBUS: Yes, the ocean's full of letters, along with the other things.

MRS ANTROBUS: George, sit down, you're tired.

MR ANTROBUS: No, you sit down. I'm tired but I'm restless. Maggie! I've lost it. I've lost it.

MRS ANTROBUS: What, George? What have you lost?

MR ANTROBUS: The most important thing of all: The desire to begin again, to start building.

MRS ANTROBUS: Well, it will come back.

MR ANTROBUS: I've lost it. This minute I feel like all those people dancing around the bonfire – just relief. Just the desire to settle down; to slip into the old grooves and keep the neighbors from walking over my lawn. – Hm. But during the way, - in the middle of all that blood and dirt and hot, and cold-every day and night, I'd have moment, Maggie, when I saw the things that we could do when it was over. When you're at war you think about a better life; when you're at peace you think, about a more comfortable one. I've lost it. I feel sick and tired.

MRS ANTROBUS: Listen! The baby's crying. I hear Gladys talking. Probably she's quieting Henry again. George, while Gladys and I were living here – like moles, like rats, and when we were at our wits end to save the baby's life – the only thought we clung to was that you were going to bring something good out of this suffering. In the night, in the dark, we'd whisper about it, starving and sick. Oh, George, you'll have to get it back again. Think! What else kept us alive all these years? Even now, it's not comfort we want. We can suffer whatever's necessary; only give us back that promise.