War of 1812. He was a young man you might notice: tall and thin, with an unlined face and fair hair, and quick-moving, with a springy step. He put thought into his clothes. Mr. Bechtel remembers that on one occasion Roosevelt was especially proud of a chalk-striped flannel suit he had bought ready-made from Brooks, on Broadway at Twenty-third. "Some suit, eh?" he said when he showed up for work, and it was felt and duly admired. That morning he had to go to the County Court House and got caught in a heavy spring shower, and when he returned, the new suit was a mess. "That's what you get for taking pride in material things," he said. He smoked cigarettes, but without the holder, and in the summer wore a straw boater with the gay hatband of one of his undergraduate clubs.

On especially busy days, Roosevelt would lunch with his office friends at one of the Exchange Buffets. However hurried, he would have a real meal—soup, perhaps a roast-beef platter, dessert, and coffee. They'd talk about New York's first fleet of taxicabs, which had just appeared, or about the bachelor apartments Shanley had announced he would open over his restaurant. For more leisurely lunches, Roosevelt liked to go to one of the Spanish restaurants then to be found along Water and Pearl Streets, for *arroz con pollo*. The office closed at one o'clock on Saturdays, and he would often dragoon one of his friends into going up to Fourth Avenue to look for naval prints in Gottschalk's Old Print Shop. Mr. Bechtel wrote Roosevelt a note of congratulation after he was elected President and got an answering note that said, "Those were grand old days at 54 Wall—I often think that my Municipal Court work laid the foundation for politics better than any other factor in my life."

Roosevelt's political career was born at 54 Wall. John Mack, the Poughkeepsie lawyer, began paying visits to the office to persuade Franklin to run for the State Senate from the Twenty-sixth District. The two would sit there and talk about it as the stuffed seal glowered. When Roosevelt decided to risk politics, he told his fellow-clerks about it and said that he was going to campaign in an automobile. He was one of the first ever to use an automobile to campaign in; Mr. Bechtel thinks maybe *the* first.

Platform in Garrison

SUNDAY morning, at dawn, we were at the railroad station in the small town of Garrison, which lies across the Hudson from West Point. Only a railroad-crossing watchman and two fishermen were there when we arrived, but a moment later a man drove up and asked one of the fishermen, who double as ferrymen to the Point, to take him across. "The President's coming," the fisherman said. "You'll want to wait for that." We went along the track to the watchman's booth and asked him when he expected the funeral train. "Be here," he told us, "between seven-thirty and eight. First there'll be the train with the congressmen and then, maybe a quarter of an hour later, the President will go through." As we got back to the station, a man arrived with a shivering small son. "You've got to remember everything you see today," the man said. "It's awfully cold," the boy said.

In the next half hour or so, two or three dozen automobiles, of all makes and sizes, from Model A Fords on up, drove up, and the people who got out of them were of all makes and sizes, too. They seemed more excited than sad, and it occurred to us that perhaps this was right, that Franklin Roosevelt would have preferred to have left his world with more of a bang than a whimper.

Soon there were seventy or eighty people on the platform, and we listened to disjointed fragments of their conversation. "I couldn't tell old Mrs. Beldon on Friday. The shock would have been too much for her." "I wish to God he'd managed to hang on until Germany was licked." "I wish the people would all stand in one place on the platform. It would make a bigger tribute." "Will the train stop, Daddy?" "I've got some nice hot coffee in the car." "I hope he's not in one of those old-fashioned trains. It wouldn't be proper."

Periodically, a lad of thirteen or so, in a red-and-blue-striped mackinaw, dashed down to the watchman's shack to consult him about the progress of the funeral train. "It's in the block now," he reported to the crowd several times. "Be here in three minutes." He was wrong each time, and soon the people paid no attention to him. Among the waiting people was a group of Capuchin brothers, mostly bearded, wearing brown cassocks bound with white cords and sandals on their bare feet. They aligned themselves with almost military precision and stood silently and patiently. They had walked a mile to the station from their monastery at Glenclyffe, the former estate of Stuyvesant Fish, and they gave a medieval tone to the gathering. We were watching them when the first Washington train swept by the platform at perhaps twenty-five miles an hour. "That's not it," said the boy in the mackinaw. "Bill says the President's in the next one, in a car called the Roald Amundsen." Everybody peered nervously down the track. "It'll be just terrible if I don't see him," a woman said. "They'll slow up when they see us," a man assured her.

The funeral train finally curved into sight, trailing a plume of white smoke, and the crowd became silent. As the locomotive pounded past the platform, some of the men removed their hats, the rest just stared. A car marked "Roald Amundsen" slid by and the youth in the mackinaw shouted, "There's the President!" He was wrong again, but the lady who had hoped against an old-fashioned train must have been relieved, for the special for Hyde Park was made up mostly of the new gray Pullmans and the flag-covered coffin was in a beautiful lounge car at the end, with its military guard of honor. It disappeared up the track, and Garrison's moment was over. "I saw him!" a little girl cried. "I saw him real plain!" "You couldn't have seen him," her mother said. "He was sleeping under the American flag." "I saw him," the little girl insisted. As the crowd slowly dissolved, the father and son who had been among the earliest arrivals walked past us. "I saw everything," the boy was saying. "That's good," his father said. "Now make sure you remember it."

THE GUIDE

"I'VE been watching you," the girl said. "You haven't danced once all night."

The soldier cracked his knuckles and did not speak.

"What do you think we came all the way out from Ashland for, to be stood up? Your lieutenant told us you boys were crazy to dance."

The soldier said, "That goldbrick's got no right to speak for us."

The girl's voice was husky. She said, "This is my first time here. What was it before it was a hospital, a country club?"

"A school. A school for snotty little rich boys."

"I've never seen such a place."

The soldier said, "Neither have I."

The girl hesitated. "I didn't mean to have it come out that way."

The soldier said, "Hell's bells, I got to live with it, don't I?" He was afraid now that the girl would go away. The orchestra had begun to play "The Last Time I Saw Paris" and soon another soldier, one of the sighted ones, might come up and ask her to dance. He said, "The C.O. says we got to get used to words like 'blind' and 'see.' He says we got to act like everything was still O.K. After all, he says, we're only one in a thousand. We have to keep in step with the rest of you." He had begun to talk about himself merely to hold the girl beside him, but, as it always did, his bitterness flooded over into what he said. "He has great ideas, the C.O. does. It was him and the lieutenant who cooked up these dances. They're supposed to give us confidence, like not using a cane, like learning to type and run machines and feed a bunch of lousy hens. It's to make everything seem dandy."

The girl said softly, "Dance with me."

The soldier shook his head.

"Dance with me. Please!"

"I won't." But his anger was checked by her voice, husky and pleading, and by his fear that she would go away. "I can't," he said. "I don't know how."

"You do. I'm sure you do."

"I haven't danced since last year, since we went overseas."

"I knew you could!"

"I'd go bumping you into people. You'd get knocked down."

"I'll take a chance." The girl's voice sounded close to him. She said, "You won't be cross with me if I lead a little, will you? Then nothing will go wrong. Then we'll have fun."

The orchestra was playing "Long Ago and Far Away." The soldier said sharply, "Fun?," but he held out his hands toward her voice. When he felt her right hand take his left hand, he placed his other hand in the hollow of her back. He said, "You're smaller than I thought."

"I am?"

She sounded pleased, and he said, "You feel like a kid."

"Say, I'm not as young as all that."

"I bet you're pretty."

She said, "Maybe we better try dancing. Everybody else is."

He took his hand from her back and ran it slowly over her face. "You feel pretty," he said. "You got a high forehead and little nose. What color eyes?"

"Blue. But you mustn't go thinking I'm pretty."

"I will. I can tell. And I like your mouth and chin." He held up his index finger. "Did I get lipstick on it?"

The girl laughed and said, "It's called Pink Ice. I'll wipe it off with my handkerchief."

"Don't." He touched his finger to his lips. "It tastes good." The girl tugged at his left hand, preparing to dance, but the soldier said, "I bet you're the prettiest girl in the room. I bet you are."

"Please," she said. "Please let's dance."

SHE led him slowly toward the middle of the room. The orchestra was playing a waltz. The floor felt smooth and reassuring under his feet. Now and then he stumbled and said, "I told you what'd happen, didn't I?," but she always said, "Quiet, silly! It's fun." After two or three dances, when he had gauged the size of the floor, he began to listen to the scattered conversations around him, to the sound of other soldiers and girls dancing, without being afraid that they would run him down. The other girls' voices seemed loud and harsh compared to his girl's voice. They talked too much about themselves and about the war, calling out to one another and giggling at the soldiers' comments. One girl kept repeating, "Stop it. *Stop* it. Oh, I'll die if I don't stop laughing." But his girl hardly spoke. Lowering his cheek to hers, he said, "You smell good."

She said, "It's called Apple Blossom."

"Don't keep giving me the names of things. I mean you smell good."

She touched his cheek with her fingers and said, "You're sweet."

He said, "Thanks for making me dance."

"I was afraid to ask you for a long time. I stood right beside you, but I didn't dare say anything."

"I could feel you there," he said. "I thought maybe you figured I was some kind of a freak."

"I didn't!"

"I'm just telling you. That's why I was sore at first. I don't like people coming out here to the hospital, not even entertainers or Red Cross people. I don't like anybody being sorry for me. I like to be left alone." As he spoke the words, the soldier knew that they were untrue, or only partly true, and he was afraid that the girl would believe them. She didn't answer, and he went on hurriedly, "Only not you. I'm glad you came out here. I don't want you to leave me alone."

She squeezed his hand. "You're funny."

"Am I?"

"I mean, you're all mixed up."

He could not help his self-pity. "Maybe that's what stopping shrapnel does."

"We better not talk about that," the girl said.

"I don't mind."

"I think I'd mind."

The music had ended, and they were dancing to the sound of their voices. The soldier said, "The lieutenant told us there'd be refreshments on a table to the left of the front door. Between the door and the windows." He tried to keep his voice steady. "Ten paces," he said. "I counted it off before the dance. Would you like some fancy hospital refreshments?"

The girl said, "That would be fine." She continued to hold his hand, guiding him and pretending not to guide him across the floor. The voices of the other girls and soldiers grew shrill as they approached the table. The girl said, "You wait here while I get something for us."

"It'll only be grape juice and cookies," the soldier said. "It's always grape juice and cookies." He imitated the singsong voice of a child reciting in school. "I've been taught how to fill my cup already. It's simple. I can tell by the temperature of the grape juice inside the cup how close to the top I'm getting."

"Please don't talk like that. I'll be back in a minute."

Ever since he had become blind, time had passed for him with painful slowness. Now, to keep from growing impatient, he counted the seconds—"a one and a two and a three"—between the sound of her heels clicking away into