ERNEST HAYCOX, “LAST STAGE TO LORDBURG”

CHARACTERS

The characters—flat, stock figures—are characterized primarily by their response to Henriette and the Indian threat.

*a girl going down to marry an infantry officer* (p. 41).

There was a strength in the army girl, a fortitude that made her think of the soldier. For she said quietly, “You must have had a bad trip” (p. 47).

*a whiskey drummer from St. Louis* (p. 41).

The whiskey drummer stood strangely in the right sunlight shaking his head dumbly while the others climbed back in... The drummer climbed in slowly... (p. 44).

... the blond man helped the gambler lay the whisky drummer in the sweltering patch of shade created by the coach... The whisky drummer’s lips moved a little... (p. 45)

*an Englishman all length and bony corners and bearing with him an enormous sporting rifle* (41).

*a gambler* (p. 41).

The gambler watched the army girl with the strictness of his face relaxing, as though the run of her voice reminded him of things long forgotten (p. 43).

The gambler was here, his thin face turning to the army girl with a strained expression, as though he were remembering painful things.

*a solid-shouldered cattleman on his way to New Mexico* (p. 41).

*Henriette*

There was this wisdom in her, this knowledge of the fears that men concealed behind their manners, the deep hungers that rode them so savagely, and the loneliness that drove them to women of her kind. She repeated, “You are all right,” and watched this whisky drummer’s eyes lose the wildness of what he knew (p. 45).

*Malpais Bill*

... there was a shine like wildness in his eyes (p. 47).

His lips laughed and the rashness in him glowed hot again and he seemed to grow taller in the moonlight (p. 48).

SETTING

The setting is vague, detailed only enough to give the sense of a journey.

Out below in the desert’s distance stood the relay stations they hoped to reach and pass. Between lay a country swept empty by the quick raids of Geronimo’s men (p. 41).

Three hours from Tonto the road, making a last round sweep, let them down upon the flat desert (p. 42).

Without escort they rolled across a flat earth broken only by cacti standing against a dazzling light. In the far distance, behind a blue heat haze, lay the faint suggestion of mountains (p. 43).

The mountain bulwarks began to march nearer, more definite in the blue fog (p. 46).

They were moving on toward the frame house whose corners seemed to extend indefinitely into a series of attached sheds. Lights glimmered in the windows... (p. 46).

THE STAGECOACH

The specific details about the movement of the stagecoach, its wheels, and the road give a sense of reality to the journey.