Wine of Wyoming, Ernest Hemingway

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IT WAS A HOT AFTERNOON IN WYOMING; the mountains were a long way away and you could see snow on their tops, but they made no shadow, and in the valley the grain-fields were yellow, the road was dusty with cars passing, and all the small wooden houses at the edge of town were baking in the sun. There was a tree made shade over Fontan's back porch and I sat there at a table and Madame Fontan brought up cold beer from the cellar.

A motor-car turned off the main road and came up the side road, and stopped beside the house. Two men got out and came in through the gate. I put the bottles under the table. Madame Fontan stood up.

"Where's Sam?" one of the men asked at the screen door.
"He ain't here. He's at the mines."

"You got some beer?"
"No. Ain't got any beer. That's a last bottle. All gone."
"What's he drinking?"

"That's a last bottle. All gone."
"Go on, give us some beer. You know me."
"Ain't got any beer. That's a last bottle. All gone."

"Come on, let's go some place where we can get some real beer," one of them said, and they went out to the car. One of them walked unsteadily. The motor-car jerked in starting, whirled on the road, and went on and away.

"Put the beer on the table," Madame Fontan said. "What's the matter, yes, all right. What's the matter? Don't drink off the floor."
"I didn't know who they were," I said.

"They're drunk," she said. "That's what makes the trouble. Then they go somewhere else and say they got it here. Maybe they don't even remember." She spoke French, but it was only French occasionally, and there were many English words and some English constructions.

"Where's Fontan?"
"Il fait de la vendange. Oh, my God, il est crazy pour le vin."
"But you like the beer?"

"Oui, j'aime la bière, mais Fontan, il est crazy pour le vin."
She was a plump old woman with a lovely ruddy complexion and white hair. She was very clean and the house was very clean and neat. She came from Lens.
"Where did you eat?"
"At the hotel."

"Mangez ici. Il ne faut pas manger à l'hôtel ou au restaurant. Mangez ici!"
"I don't want to make you trouble. And besides they eat all right at the hotel."
"I never eat at the hotel. Maybe they eat all right there. Only once in my life I ate at a restaurant in America. You know what they gave me? They gave me pork that was raw!"

“Really?”

“I don’t lie to you. It was pork that wasn’t cooked! Et mon fils il est marié avec une américaine, et tout le temps il a mangé les beans en can.”
“How long has he been married?”

“Oh, my God, I don’t know. His wife weighs two hundred twenty-five pounds. She don’t work. She don’t cook. She gives him beans en can.”
“What does she do?”

“All the time she reads. Rien que des books. Tout le temps elle stay in the bed and read books. Already she can’t have another baby. She’s too fat. There ain’t any room.”
“What’s the matter with her?”

“She reads books all the time. He’s a good boy. He works hard. He worked in the mines; now he works on a ranch. He never worked on a ranch before, and the man that owns the ranch said to Fontan that he never saw anybody work better on that ranch than that boy. Then he comes home and she feeds him nothing.”
“Why doesn’t he get a divorce?”

“He ain’t got no money to get a divorce. Besides, il est crazy pour elle.”
“Is she beautiful?”

“He thinks so. When he brought her home I thought I would die. He’s such a good boy and works hard all the time and never run around or make any trouble. Then he goes away to work in the oil-fields and brings home this Indienne that weighs right then one hundred eighty-five pounds.”
“Elle est Indienne?”

“She’s Indian all right. My God, yes. All the time she says sonofabitsh goddam. She don’t work.”
“Where is she now?”
“Au show.”
“Where’s that?”

“Au show. Moving pictures. All she does is read and go to the show.”
“Have you got any more beer?”

“My God, yes. Sure. You come and eat with us tonight.”
“All right. What should I bring?”

“Don’t bring anything. Nothing at all. Maybe Fontan will have some of the wine.”

That night I had dinner at Fontan’s. We ate in the dining-room and there was a clean tablecloth. We tried the new wine. It was very light and clear and good, and still tasted of the grapes. At the table there were Fontan and Madame and the little boy, André.

“What did you do today?” Fontan asked. He was an old man with small mine-tired body, a drooping gray mustache, and bright eyes, and was from the Centre near Saint-Etienne.
“I worked on my book.”
“Were your books all right?” asked Madame.

“He means he writes a book like a writer. Un roman,” Fontan explained.
“Pa, can I go to the show?” André asked.

“Sure,” said Fontan. André turned to me.

“How old do you think I am? Do you think I look fourteen years old?” He was a thin little boy, but his face looked sixteen.
“Yes. You look fourteen.”

“When I go to the show I crouch down like this and try to look small.” His voice was very high and breaking. “If I give them a quarter they keep it all but if I give them only fifteen cents they let me in all right.”
“I only give you fifteen cents, then,” said Fontan.
“No. Give me the whole quarter. I’ll get it changed on the way.”
“Il faut revenir tout de suite après le show,” Madame Fontan said.

“I come right back.” André went out the door. The night was cooling outside. He left the door open and a cool breeze came in.
“Mangez!” said Madame Fontan. “You haven’t eaten anything.” I had eaten two helpings of chicken and French fried potatoes, three ears of sweet com, some sliced cucumbers, and two helpings of salad.
“Perhaps he wants some kek,” Fontan said.

“I should have gotten some kek for him,” Madame Fontan said. “Mangez du fromage. Mangez du crimcheez. Vous n’avez rien mangé. I ought have gotten kek. Americans always eat kek.”
“Mais j’ai rudement bien mangé.”

“Mangez! Vous n’avez rien mangé. Eat it all. We don’t save anything. Eat it all up.”
“Eat some more salad,” Fontan said.

“I’ll get some more beer,” Madame Fontan said. “If you work all day in a book-factory you get hungry.”
“Elle ne comprend pas que vous êtes écrivain,” Fontan said. He was a delicate old man who used the slang and knew the popular songs of his period of military service in the end of the 1890’s. “He writes the books himself,” he explained to Madame.

“You write the books yourself?” Madame asked.
“Sometimes.”
“Oh!” she said. “Oh! You write them yourself. Oh! Well, you get hungry if you do that too. Mangez! Je vais chercher de la bière.”
We heard her walking on the stairs to the cellar. Fontan smiled at me. He was very tolerant of people who had not his experience and worldly knowledge.
When André came home from the show we were still sitting in the kitchen and were talking about hunting.

“Labor day we all went to Clear Creek,” Madame said. “Oh, my God, you ought to have been there all right. We all went in the truck. Tout le monde est allé dans le truck. Nous sommes partis le dimanche. C’est le truck de Charley.”

“On a mangé, on a bu du vin, de la bière, et il y avait aussi un français qui a apporté de l’absinthe,” Fontan said. “Un français de la Californie!”
“My God, nous avons chanté. There’s a farmer comes to see what’s the matter, and we give him something to drink, and he stayed with us awhile. There was some Italians come too, and they want to stay with us too. We sung a song about the Italians and they don’t understand it. They didn’t know we didn’t want them, but we didn’t have nothing to do with them, and after a while they went away.”

“How many fish did you catch?”

“Très peu. We went to fish a little while, but then we came back to sing again. Nous avons chanté, vous savez.”
“In the night,” said Madame, “toutes les femmes ont dormi dans le truck. Les hommes à côté du feu. In the night I hear Fontan come to get some more wine, and I tell him, Fontan, my God, leave some for tomorrow. Tomorrow they won’ have anything to drink, and then they’ll be sorry.”
“Mais nous avons tout bu,” Fontan said. “Et le lendemain il ne reste rien.”
“What did you do?”

“Nous avons pêché sérieusement.”
“Good trout, all right, too. My God, yes. All the same; half-pound one ounce.”
“How big?”
“Half-pound one ounce. Just right to eat. All the same size; half-pound one ounce.”
“How do you like America?” Fontan asked me.

“It’s my country, you see. So I like it, because it’s my country. Mais on ne mange pas très bien. D’antan, oui. Mais maintenant, no.”
“No,” said Madame. “On ne mange pas bien.” She shook her head. “Et aussi, il y a trop de Polack. Quand jétais petite ma mère m’a dit, ‘vous mangez comme les Polacks.’ Je n’ai jamais compris ce que c’est qu’un Polack. Mais maintenant en Amérique je comprends. Il y a trop de Polack. Et, my God, ils sont sales, les Polacks.”
“It is fine for hunting and fishing,” I said.

“Oui. Ça, c’est le meilleur. La chasse et la pêche,” Fontan said.
“Qu’estce que vous avez comme fusil?”
“A twelve-gauge pump.”
“Il est bon, le pump,” Fontan nodded his head.

“Je veux aller à la chasse moi-même,” André said in his high, little boy’s voice.
“Tu ne peux pas,” Fontan said. He turned to me.

“Ils sont des sauvages, les boys, vous savez. Ils sont des sauvages. Ils veulent shooter les uns les autres.”
“Je veux aller tout seul,” André said, very shrill and excited.
“You can’t go,” Madame Fontan said. “You are too young.”

“Je veux aller tout seul,” André said shrilly. “Je veux shooter les rats d’eau.”
“What are rats d’eau?” I asked.
“You don’t know them? Sure you know them. What they call the muskrats.”

André had brought the twenty-two-calibre rifle out from the cupboard and was holding it in his hands under the light.
“Ils sont des sauvages,” Fontan explained. “Ils veulent shooter les uns les autres.”
“Je veux aller tout seul,” André shrilled. He looked desperately along the barrel of the gun. “Je veux shooter les rats d’eau. Je connais beaucoup de rats d’eau.”
“Give me the gun,” Fontan said. He explained again to me. “They’re savages. They would shoot one another.”
André held tight on to the gun.

“On peut looker. On ne fait pas de mal. On peut looker.”

“Il est crazy pour le shooting,” Madame Fontan said. “Mais il est trop jeune.”
André put the twenty-two-calibre rifle back in the cupboard.
“When I’m bigger I’ll shoot the muskrats and the jack-rabbits too,” he said in English. “One time I went out with Papa and he shot a jack-rabbit just a little bit and I shot it and hit it.”

“C’est vrai,” Fontan nodded. “Il a tué un jack.”
“But he hit it first,” André said. “I want to go all by myself and shoot all by myself. Next year I can do it.” He went over in a corner and sat down to read a book. I had picked it up when we came into the kitchen to sit after supper. It was a library book—Frank on a Gunboat.

“Il aime les books,” Madame Fontan said. “But it’s better than to run around at night with the other boys and steal things.”
“Books are all right,” Fontan said. “Monsieur il fait les books.”

“Yes, that’s so, all right. But too many books are bad,” Madame Fontan said. “Ici, c’est une maladie, les books. C’est comme les churches. Ici il y a trop de churches. En France il y a seulement les catholiques et les protestants—et très peu de protestants. Mais ici rien que de churches. Quand j’étais venu ici je disais, oh, my God, what are all the churches?”
“C’est vrai,” Fontan said. “Il y a trop de churches.”

“The other day,” Madame Fontan said, “there was a little French girl here with her mother, the cousin of Fontan, and she said to me, ‘En Amérique il ne faut pas être catholique. It’s not good to be catholique. The Americans don’t like you to be catholique. It’s like the dry law.’ I said to her, ‘What you going to be? Heh? It’s better to be catholique if you’re catholique.’ But she said, ‘No, it isn’t any good to be catholique in America.’ But I think it’s better to be catholique if you are. Ce n’est pas bon de changer sa religion. My God, no.”
“You go to the mass here?”

“No. I don’t go in America, only sometimes in a long while. Mais je reste catholique. It’s no good to change the religion.”
“On dit que Schmidt est catholique,” Fontan said.

“On dit, mais on ne sait jamais,” Madame Fontan said. “I don’t think Schmidt is catholique. There’s not many catholique in America.”
“We are catholique,” I said.

“Sure, but you live in France,” Madame Fontan said. “Je ne crois pas que Schmidt est catholique. Did he ever live in France?”
“Les Polacks sont catholiques,” Fontan said.

“That’s true,” Madame Fontan said. “They go to church, then they fight with knives all the way home and kill each other all day Sunday. But they’re not real catholiques. They’re Polack catholiques.”

“All catholiques are the same,” Fontan said. “One catholique is like another.”
“I don’t believe Schmidt is catholique,” Madame Fontan said. “That’s awful funny if he’s catholique. Moi, je ne crois pas.”
“Il est catholique,” I said.

“Schmidt is catholique,” Madame Fontan mused. “I wouldn’t have believed it. My God, il est catholique.”

“Marie va chercher de la bière,” Fontan said. “Monsieur a soif—moi aussi.”

“Yes, all right,” Madame Fontan said from the next room. She went downstairs and we heard the stairs creaking. André sat reading in the corner. Fontan and I sat at the table, and he poured the beer from the last bottle into our two glasses, leaving a little in the bottom.
“C’est un bon pays pour la chasse,” Fontan said. “J’aime beaucoup shooter les canards.”

“Mais il y a très bonne chasse aussi en France,” I said.
“C’est vrai,” Fontan said. “Nous avons beaucoup de gibier là-bas.”
Madame Fontan came up the stairs with the beer bottles in her hands, “Il est catholique,” she said “My God, Schmidt est catholique.”
“You think he’ll be the President?” Fontan asked.
“No,” I said.

The next afternoon I drove out to Fontan’s, through the shade of the town, then along the dusty road, turning up the side road and leaving the car beside the fence. It was another hot day. Madame Fontan came to the back door. She looked like Mrs. Santa Claus, clean and rosy-faced and white-haired, and waddling when she walked.

“My God, hello,” she said. “It’s hot, my God.” She went back into the house to get some beer. I sat on the back porch and looked through the screen and the leaves of the tree at the heat and, away off, the mountains. There were furrowed brown mountains, and above them three peaks and a glacier with snow that you could see through the trees. The snow looked very white and pure and unreal. Madame Fontan came out and put down the bottles on the table.

“What you see out there?”
“The snow.”
“C’est jolie, la neige.”
“Have a glass, too.”
“All right.”

She sat down on a chair beside me. “Schmidt,” she said. “If he’s the President, you think we get the wine and beer all right?”
“Sure,” I said. “Trust Schmidt.”

“Already we paid seven hundred fifty-five dollars in fines when they arrested Fontan. Twice the police arrested us and once the government. All the money we made all the time Fontan worked in the mines and I did washing. We paid it all. They put Fontan in jail. Il n’a jamais fait de mal à personne.”
“He’s a good man,” I said. “It’s a crime.”

“We don’t charge too much money. The wine one dollar a litre. The beer ten cents a bottle. We never sell the beer before it’s good. Lots of places they sell the beer right away when they make it, and then it gives everybody a headache. What’s the matter with that? They put Fontan in jail and they take seven hundred fifty-five dollars.”
“It’s wicked,” I said. “Where is Fontan?”

“He stays with the wine. He has to watch it now to catch it just right,” she smiled. She did not think about the money any more. “Vous savez, il est crazy pour le vin. Last night he brought a little bit home with him, what you drank, and a little bit of the new. The last new. It ain’t ready yet, but he drank a little bit, and this morning he put a little bit in

his coffee. Dans son café, vous savez! Il est crazy pour le vin! Il est comme ça. Son pays est comme ça. Where I live in the north they don't drink any wine. Everybody drinks beer. By where we lived there was a big brewery right near us. When I was a little girl I didn't like the smell of the hops in the carts. Nor in the fields. Je n'aime pas les houblons.

No, my God, not a bit. The man that owns the brewery said to me and my sister to go to the brewery and drink the beer, and then we'd like the hops. That's true. Then we liked them all right. He had them give us the beer. We liked them all right then.

But Fontan, il est crazy pour le vin. One time he killed a jack-rabbit and he wanted me to cook it with a sauce with wine, make a black sauce with wine and butter and mushrooms and onion and everything in it, for the jack. My God, I make the sauce all right, and he eat it all and said, 'La sauce est meilleure que le jack.' Dans son pays c'est comme ça. Il y a beaucoup de gibier et de vin. Moi, j'aime les pommes de terre, le saucisson, et la bière. C'est bon, la bière. C'est très bon pour la santé."

"It's good," I said. "It and wine too."

"You're like Fontan. But there was a thing here that I never saw. I don't think you've ever seen it either. There were Americans came here and they put whiskey in the beer."
"No," I said.

"Oui. My God, yes, that's true. Et aussi une femme qui a vomis sur la table!"
"Comment?"
"C'est vrai. Elle a vomis sur la table. Et après elle a vomis dans ses shoes. And afterward they come back and say they want to come again and have another party the next Saturday, and I say no, my God, no! When they came I locked the door."
"They're bad when they're drunk."

"In the winter-time when the boys go to the dance they come in the cars and wait outside and say to Fontan, 'Hey, Sam, sell us a bottle wine,' or they buy the beer, and then they take the moonshine out of their pockets in a bottle and pour it in the beer and drink it. My God, that's the first time I ever saw that in my life. They put whiskey in the beer. My God, I don't understand that!"
"They want to get sick, so they'll know they're drunk."

"One time a fellow comes here came to me and said he wanted me to cook them a big supper and they drink one two bottles of wine, and their girls come too, and then they go to the dance. All right, I said. So I made a big supper, and when they come already they drank a lot. Then they put whiskey in the wine. My God, yes. I said to Fontan, 'On va être malade!' 'Oui,' il dit. Then these girls were sick, nice girls too, all-right girls. They were sick right at the table. Fontan tried to take them by the arm and show them where they could be sick all right in the cabinet, but the fellows said no, they were all right right there at the table."

Fontan had come in. "When they come again I locked the door. 'No,' I said. 'Not for hundred fifty dollars.' My God, no."
"There is a word for such people when they do like that, in French," Fontan said. He stood looking very old and tired from the heat.
"What?"

“Cochon,” he said delicately, hesitating to use such a strong word. “They were like the cochon. C’est un mot très fort,” he apologized, “mais vomir sur la table—” he shook his head sadly.
“Cochons,” I said. “That’s what they are—cochons. Salauds.”
The grossness of the words was distasteful to Fontan. He was glad to speak of something else.

“Il y a des gens très gentils, très sensibles, qui viennent aussi,” he said. “There are officers from the fort. Very nice men. Good fellas. Everybody that was ever in France they want to come and drink wine. They like wine all right.”

“There was one man,” Madame Fontan said, “and his wife never lets him get out. So he tells her he’s tired, and goes to bed, and when she goes to the show he comes straight down here, sometimes in his pyjamas just with a coat over them. ‘Maria, some beer,’ he says, ‘for God’s sake.’ He sits in his pyjamas and drinks the beer, and then he goes up to the fort and gets back in bed before his wife comes home from the show.”

“C’est un original,” Fontan said, “mais vraiment gentil. He’s a nice fella.”
“My God, yes, nice fella all right,” Madame Fontan said. “He’s always in bed when his wife gets back from the show.”
“I have to go away tomorrow,” I said. “To the Crow Reservation. We go there for the opening of the prairie-chicken season.”
“Yes? You come back here before you go away. You come back here all right?”

“Absolutely.”
“Then the wine will be done,” Fontan said. “We’ll drink a bottle together.”
“Three bottles,” Madame Fontan said.
“I’ll be back,” I said.
“We count on you,” Fontan said.
“Good night,” I said.

We got in early in the afternoon from the shooting-trip. We had been up that morning since five o’clock. The day before we had had good shooting, but that morning we had not seen a prairie-chicken. Riding in the open car, we were very hot and we stopped to eat our lunch out of the sun, under a tree beside the road. The sun was high and the patch of shade was very small. We ate sandwiches and crackers with sandwich filling on them, and were thirsty and tired, and glad when we finally were out and on the main road back to town. We came up behind a prairie-dog town and stopped the car to shoot at the prairie-dogs with the pistol.

We shot two, but then stopped, because the bullets that missed glanced off the rocks and the dirt, and sung off across the fields, and beyond the fields there were some trees along a watercourse, with a house, and we did not want to get in trouble from stray bullets going toward the house. So we drove on, and finally were on the road coming down-hill toward the outlying houses of the town. Across the plain we could see the mountains.

They were blue that day, and the snow on the high mountains shone like glass. The summer was ending, but the new snow had not yet come to stay on the high mountains; there was only the old sun-melted snow and the ice, and from a long way away it shone very brightly.

We wanted something cool and some shade. We were sun-burned and our lips blistered from the sun and alkali dust. We turned up the side road to Fontan's, stopped the car outside the house, and went in. It was cool inside the dining-room. Madame Fontan was alone.
"Only two bottles beer," she said. "It's all gone. The new is no good yet."

I gave her some birds. "That's good," she said. "All right. Thanks. That's good." She went out to put the birds away where it was cooler. When we finished the beer I stood up. "We have to go," I said.
"You come back tonight all right? Fontan he's going to have the wine."
"We'll come back before we go away."
"You go away?"

"Yes. We have to leave in the morning."
"That's too bad you go away. You come tonight. Fontan will have the wine. We'll make a fête before you go."
"We'll come before we go."

But that afternoon there were telegrams to send, the car to be gone over—a tire had been cut by a stone and needed vulcanizing—and, without the car, I walked into the town, doing things that had to be done before we could go. When it was supper-time I was too tired to go out. We did not want a foreign language. All we wanted was to go early to bed.

As I lay in bed before I went to sleep, with all the things of the summer piled around ready to be packed, the windows open and the air coming in cool from the mountains, I thought it was a shame not to have gone to Fontan's—but in a little while I was asleep. The next day we were busy all morning packing and ending the summer. We had lunch and were ready to start by two o'clock.

"We must go and say good-by to the Fontans," I said.
"Yes, we must."
"I'm afraid they expected us last night."
"I suppose we could have gone."
"I wish we'd gone."

We said good-by to the man at the desk at the hotel, and to Larry and our other friends in the town, and then drove out to Fontan's. Both Monsieur and Madame were there. They were glad to see us. Fontan looked old and tired.

"We thought you would come last night," Madame Fontan said. "Fontan had three bottles of wine. When you did not come he drank it all up."
"We can only stay a minute," I said. "We just came to say good-by. We wanted to come last night. We intended to come, but we were too tired after the trip."
"Go get some wine," Fontan said.

"There is no wine. You drank it all up."
Fontan looked very upset.

"I'll go get some," he said. "I'll just be gone a few minutes. I drank it up last night. We had it for you."
"I knew you were tired. 'My God,' I said, 'they're too tired all right to come,'" Madame Fontan said. "Go get some wine, Fontan."
"I'll take you in the car," I said.

"All right," Fontan said. "That way we'll go faster."

We drove down the road in the motor-car and turned up a side road about a mile away.
“You’ll like that wine,” Fontan said. “It’s come out well. You can drink it for supper tonight.”

We stopped in front of a frame house. Fontan knocked on the door. There was no answer. We went around to the back. The back door was locked too. There were empty tin cans around the back door. We looked in the window. There was nobody inside. The kitchen was dirty and sloppy, but all the doors and windows were tight shut.”
“That son of a bitch. Where is she gone out?” Fontan said. He was desperate.

“I know where I can get a key,” he said. “You stay here.” I watched him go down to the next house down the road, knock on the door, talk to the woman who came out, and finally come back. He had a key. We tried it on the front door and the back, but it wouldn’t work.
“That son of a bitch,” Fontan said. “She’s gone away somewhere.”

Looking through the window I could see where the wine was stored. Close to the window you could smell the inside of the house. It smelled sweet and sickish like an Indian house. Suddenly Fontan took a loose board and commenced digging at the earth beside the back door.
“I can get in,” he said. “Son of a bitch, I can get in.”

There was a man in the back yard of the next house doing something to one of the front wheels of an old Ford.
“You better not,” I said. “That man will see you. He’s watching.”

Fontan straightened up. “We’ll try the key once more,” he said. We tried the key and it did not work. It turned half-way in either direction.
“We can’t get in,” I said. “We better go back.”

“I’ll dig up the back,” Fontan offered.
“No, I wouldn’t let you take the chance.”
“I’ll do it.”

“No,” I said. “That man would see. Then they would seize it.”
We went out to the car and drove back to Fontan’s, stopping on the way to leave the key. Fontan did not say anything but swear in English. He was incoherent and crushed. We went in the house.

“That son of a bitch!” he said. “We couldn’t get the wine. My own wine that I made.”
All the happiness went from Madame Fontan’s face. Fontan sat down in a corner with his head in his hands.
“We must go,” I said. “It doesn’t make any difference about the wine. You drink to us when we’re gone.”
“Where did that crazy go?” Madame Fontan asked.

“I don’t know,” Fontan said. “I don’t know where she go. Now you go away without any wine.”
“That’s all right,” I said.
“That’s no good,” Madame Fontan said. She shook her head.

“We have to go,” I said. “Good-by and good luck. Thank you for the fine times.”
Fontan shook his head. He was disgraced. Madame Fontan looked sad.
“Don’t feel bad about the wine,” I said.

“He wanted you to drink his wine,” Madame Fontan said. “You can come back next year?”
“No. Maybe the year after.”
“You see?” Fontan said to her.

“Good-by,” I said. “Don’t think about the wine. Drink some for us when we’re gone.” Fontan shook his head. He did not smile. He knew when he was ruined.
“That son of a bitch,” Fontan said to himself.

“Last night he had three bottles,” Madame Fontan said to comfort him. He shook his head.
“Good-by,” he said.
Madame Fontan had tears in her eyes.

“Good-by,” she said. She felt badly for Fontan.
“Good-by,” we said. We all felt very badly. They stood in the doorway and we got in, and I started the motor. We waved. They stood together sadly on the porch. Fontan looked very old, and Madame Fontan looked sad. She waved to us and Fontan went in the house. We turned up the road.

“They felt so badly. Fontan felt terribly.”
“We ought to have gone last night.”
“Yes, we ought to have.”
We were through the town and out on the smooth road beyond, with the stubble of grain-fields on each side and the mountains off to the right. It looked like Spain, but it was Wyoming.
“I hope they have a lot of good luck.”

“They won’t,” I said, “and Schmidt won’t be President either.”

The cement road stopped. The road was gravelled now and we left the plain and started up between two foot-hills; the road in a curve and commencing to climb. The soil of the hills was red, the sage grew in gray clumps, and as the road rose we could see across the hills and away across the plain of the valley to the mountains. They were farther away now and they looked more like Spain than ever. The road curved and climbed again, and ahead there were some grouse dusting in the road. They flew as we came toward them, their wings beating fast, then sailing in long slants, and lit on the hillside below.

“They are so big and lovely. They’re bigger than European patridges.”
“It’s a fine country for la chasse, Fontan says.”
“And when the chasse is gone?”

“They’ll be dead then.”
“The boy won’t.”
“There’s nothing to prove he won’t be,” I said.

“We ought to have gone last night.”
“Oh, yes,” I said. “We ought to have gone.”

The End