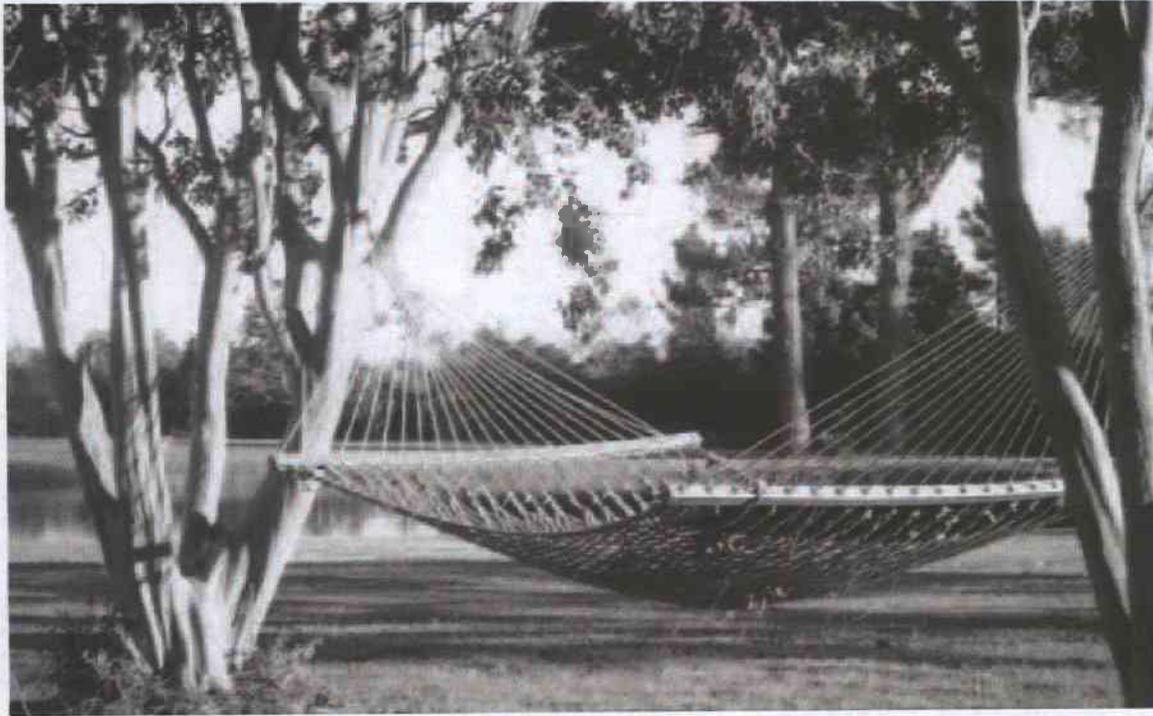


ART ALIVE



The Hammock
By Hope Beatson '12

MARE

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starry sky flicker through the leave above. About three miles from the village the trail had slowly become wooded. She took comfort in the widely spaced trees. She remembered running all through them as a child, playing chase with Lucas. She was touched by his concern tonight. They were close, but she didn't realize he'd miss her that much.

Her thoughts turned to the journey ahead. After she had been paid for the palomino she was to spend the day in the town surrounding the palace to buy a few goods that weren't available in the village: a jar of Indian spices, some cinnamon for father's tea, a bit of gold chain for stallions' bridles... Father had told her to buy herself something special after she had finished transacting business. But what should she get? A nice dress? No, the only dresses sold in town were too frivolous for her lifestyle, even if she were to wear it to a wedding. Maybe she'd just buy some cloth to make her own dress... and so her thoughts wandered until she figured it was about three in the morning.

She stopped in a cozy, familiar hollow just off the road but well hidden in the tress. She blindly unsaddled the stallion, but only loosened the lashings on her gelding. His packings were extremely light, nothing to cause him discomfort, and it was a cool night so he should appreciate the extra warmth. Lara did undo her bedding and a cover throw for the stallion, though. When everyone was sufficiently taken care of she curled up on a bed of ferns just under the eastern trees to

keep her in the shade when the sun rose. Her eyelids flickered a couple times, then she immediately fell asleep, exhausted from being up most of the day and all night.

Lara awoke to the soft clink of the hobbles she had put on the horses the night before. It was about noon when she stretched upright, rubbing her eyelids with her knuckles. She sighed as she let her hands fall back into her lap. She looked around the hollow blinking, gazing at the two horses grazing in the center of the hollow, warming their backs in the sun. She had planned appropriately the night before, bedding on the ferns that held her warmth, just out of reach of the sun, which had allowed her to sleep so late. She stretched her arms straight out in front of her and groaned. The buckskin, Jasper was his name, shook his head, flopping his ears like a dog, and looked up at her.

"Good morning, Jasper," she called. He nickered a greeting back to her, shook his head again and went back to grazing. Lara would stay in the hollow about another hour, allowing everyone including herself time to eat, then ride the rest of the day out. It would be safe enough in the daylight since they were still so close to the village, (one night's plodding didn't get you far) and she could move a lot quicker, trotting through the evening before plodding again most of the night. After that it would be strictly travel under cover of night until she reached the city about the feet of the castle.

Look for Part Two: The City in the November/December issue of The Lance!

"Think Globally, Act Locally"