

# COSMOPOLITAN

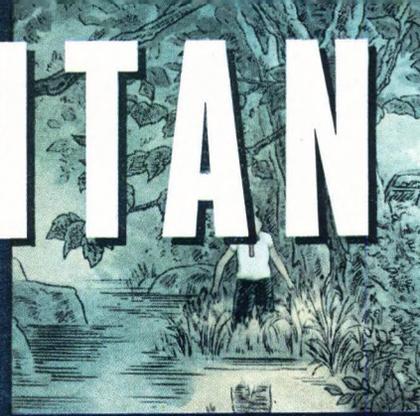
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## Special Fiction Issue

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"Father and Son," by Saroyan



That Man Lancaster



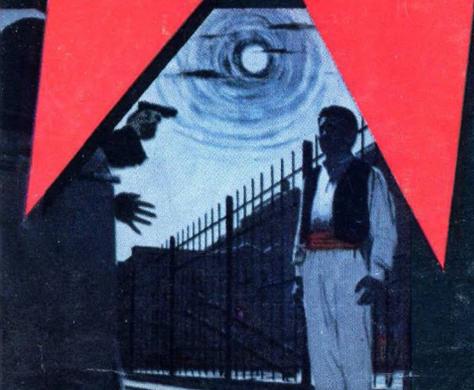
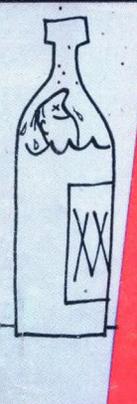
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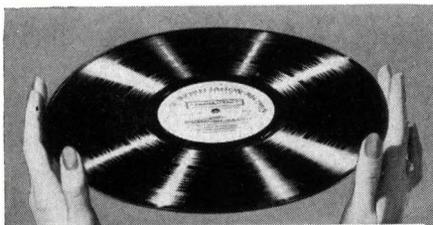
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Here it is summer and we've just seen a quick put-together of a musical that is going to be ready in the Fall. We like it so much that we can't wait to tell you about it.

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Kelly, Dailey and Kidd play three buddies who vow on V-J Day to meet again in ten years. They do—with results that are hilarious, consequences that are romantic, and song-and-dance sequences that are breath-taking!



Story and screen play bring new credit to Betty Comden and Adolph Green—who provided such fun in two other Arthur Freed productions for M-G-M, "Singing In the Rain" and "The Bandwagon".

Among the seven songs, gay and here-to-stay, "Baby, You Knock Me Out" and "I Love Me" top our list. Kelly's sensational in a riotous roller-skate routine. Dailey's dazzling at a penthouse frolic. Cyd's a slit-skirted gem in a he-man gym. A bow to Andre Previn for the music!

Things-To-Come tip! You and yours ought to get together for "It's Always Fair Weather!"

—Leo



# COSMOPOLITAN

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AUGUST, 1955

Vol. 139, No. 2

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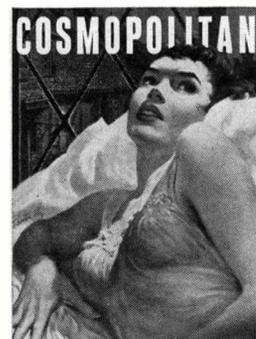
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**COVER**—The lady shown on the right is actually only one twelfth of our cover, but such a luscious twelfth that we decided to present her in full-cover size. So on page 91 you will find her illustrating our murder mystery, "So Soon to Die," by English suspense writer Jeremy York. The picture alone, by Thornton Utz, makes us understand very well the reluctance of the hired killer to do away with the young lady.



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# What Goes On at Cosmopolitan

SUMMERING ADVICE, FRENCHMEN EN VACANCES, OFF-BEAT SCREEN IDOL

Jerome Weidman, Ann Chidester, William Saroyan—flip over this month's pages of COSMOPOLITAN and you'll find them all—six short stories, a short novel, and a book-length murder mystery. Each is worth settling down to with a couple of good eating apples.

This special summer fiction issue, of course, hews to the pattern that made and keeps COSMOPOLITAN's reputation for publishing good, and often famous, stories: not only do we bring you the best of the



Jerome Weidman



Noel Clad

well-known writers, but also the new writers everyone will be reading tomorrow. For an example of what we mean, turn to our short story "Foreign Service Wife" (page 34), by Noel Clad, a young writer never before published in an important national magazine. We'll put down money that you'll enjoy the tale.

## Don't Be an Oyster

One thing we cheer in vacation days is the glaze over the eyes of the baker, publisher, or weary ad executive, betokening that, although still here in body, the fellow is already halfway to Nova Scotia on a cruise, tripping his camera shutter at the Grand Canyon, or bravely exposing his knees in tropical countries.

"If you have earned a vacation, take it," George Ade exhorts us (and we are happy to be exhorted) in the July, 1921, COSMOPOLITAN vacation editorial we read annually just to make sure our eye is still on the ball: "Move around before the ivy begins to climb up your legs. Only an oyster remains forever at the old homestead. Go on a journey every year so that you may jolt out of your brittle headpiece the notion that your home township is the steering-gear of the universe. The time has come to exchange your cold currency for some new sensations.

"But you worry. If you splurge around

... maybe your children will not have all the funds they need, fifteen years hence, to keep them in red touring cars and squirrel coats? ... make a will reading ... : 'Dear Offspring: Go out and get it, the same as I did.'"

## "Meet the U.S.A."

And speaking of vacations, when a trio of French tourists snapped our picture on Fifty-seventh Street last week, we got to wondering what French sight-seers were looking at in the U.S. while Americans are busy looking at the Eiffel Tower in Paris. It turns out that our annual crop of 35,000 French tourists will head first for Rockefeller Center, the Empire State Building, and the Cloisters. In that order, says the French Tourist Bureau.

After that, if still in New York, most Frenchmen can be found nightly listening to jazz, leaning over the bar at Eddie Condon's, or in Downbeat, Basin Street, or the Embers. Daytimes they go swimming and exclaim at the fine sand at Long Island's "La Plage Jones." Those with the money hurry upstate next to marvel at "La Cascade de Niagara." After that it's Washington, D.C., which seems most like Paris to the French—and why not, since it was designed after plans by French engineer Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant? Then Texas, which a Frenchman is determined to see to believe. *Wherever* they are, they spend much time ecstatically telephoning each other in amazement that they can get their party in seconds. They are also delighted at the idea of wheeling carts in supermarkets, and astonished at the amiability of these natives.

"Almost every American family reads at least one magazine regularly," we were enchanted to note in "Meet the U.S.A.," a brochure explaining American habits to the foreign visitor. "Families of the middle and upper classes frequently read from three to five magazines." When the French tourists snapped our picture, we were—luckily—carrying a copy of COSMOPOLITAN, but unfortunately only one. Presumably, therefore, we can be labeled a native of slightly below the middle class. But just as amiable as anybody else.

## Man's Best Chronic Barker

"To nuzzle a dog after two or three cocktails is the surest way I know of getting your nose bitten off." On page

40, Dr. Arthur Trayford, D.V.M., tells why and also explains a lot more that has probably puzzled you about Fido, that sometime chaser of cars, chronic barker, sneerer at the food you offer him, and altogether ingratiating fellow. We admit to former ignorance as to whether our children would be safer with one breed of dog than with another. We never knew that dogs were modest; and all this time we have been completely taken in by the rumor that German Shepherds are part wolf.

Trayford, lecturer and dog surgeon, whose famous dog hospital is in Huntington, Long Island, led a doggy life even before he entered Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine. Trayford's father was a dog handler who showed prize-winning dogs. Pure-bred dogs, of course. Which brings us to another question: is a mongrel smarter than a pure-bred dog? This is the one Trayford is asked more often than a lawyer at a party is asked for free legal advice.

## Circus-Lover Lancaster

With all the other things to be said about Burt Lancaster—he hates incompetent directors, he loves circuses, he travels light from coast to coast without even a toothbrush—there wasn't much space for Cameron Shipp (page 28) to

Penning



Hairy-chested Haut Monde

tell what the guy will do for laughs. Here he is dressed to the teeth for the actors' Friars Club benefit dinner. Lancaster is the fellow on the right. What we can't figure out is what he finds so funny about the dowager on his left. Maybe it's because it's Robert Mitchum. —H. L. B.

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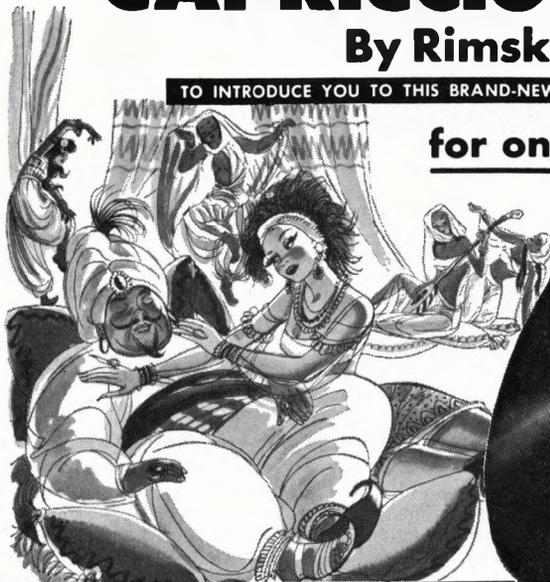
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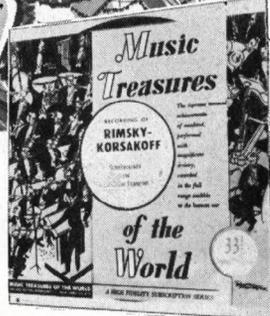


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### A Fantasy on Spanish Themes

Rimsky-Korsakov loved to travel, and wherever he went he noted down the folk songs he heard—melodies, themes, dance tunes he would later use in his compositions. The *Capriccio Espagnole* was the result of a trip to Spain... and is based on several Spanish themes—a lively dance in two-four time; a wild gypsy song; a plaintive folksong; and as a stunning finale, a fiery Fandango!



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# Music for Moods

*Tunes for tired lovers, the Devil on Broadway, and a microgroove cruise*



A current record release features Gwen Verdon and Stephen Douglass singing tunes from a devil-may-care musical.

## BY PAUL AFFELDER

**Music for Moods.** Instrumental music to fit every mood and to accompany every activity from making love to making a trip to the moon has been flooding the market. Now the mood music idea has spread to the vocalists. What sounds like the most successful attempt along this line thus far is "Music for Tired Lovers," a spate of love songs huskily crooned by Woody Herman with **Erroll Garner** at the piano. It's one of the most relaxed and relaxing things of its kind we've ever heard. Herman is no great shakes at singing, but his easygoing, infectious style and Garner's wonderfully adventurous piano playing add up to an inspired duo. (*Music for Tired Lovers*. Columbia CL 651. \$3.95.)

There's far less relaxation but much more variety and pure listening entertainment in the latest disk by Sammy Davis, Jr., who mixes straight, clear singing with tongue-in-cheek impersonations. He runs the gamut from "Stan' Up an' Fight" (the toreador song from "Caroleen Jones") and "This Is My Beloved"

(from "Kismet") to the disk's outstanding offering, a spontaneous rendering of "Birth of the Blues." (*Starring Sammy Davis, Jr.* Decca DL 8118. \$3.98.)

**Faust at Bat.** Mephistopheles has thought up some mighty neat schemes in his day, but it's doubtful if even he ever dreamed he'd encounter Faust watching a Washington Senators' baseball game in front of a television set and change him into a home-run-hitting hero. Yet that's what happens in ***Damn Yankees***, the latest version of the Faust legend, which turned up late in the season as one of the brightest of current Broadway musicals. The score—musical, that is—by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross isn't quite up to the level of their efforts for "Pajama Game," but there are several real show-stoppers like Gwen Verdon's "Whatever Lola Wants" and "A Little Brains, A Little Talent"; the Verdon-Eddie Phillips "Who's Got the Pain When They Do the Mambo?"; the barbershop rendition of "Heart"; Stephen Douglass' "A Man Doesn't Know"; and Jimmie Kormack and Nathaniel Frey's "The Game." These have plenty on the ball. (*Damn Yankees*. RCA Victor LOC 1021. \$4.98.)

**Cruise on Wax.** "Four Frenchmen on a Mediterranean Cruise" might be the title of a recording by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra which Columbia has chosen to name "Ports of Call." By means of Jacques Ibert's "Escales" ("Ports of Call"), Debussy's "Clair de lune," Chabrier's "España," and Ravel's "Boléro," "La Valse," and "Pavane," you can go on a microgroove cruise that visits Italy, North Africa, Spain, France, and Austria. These Frenchmen must have been most observant, because they've managed to evoke the spirit of each country visited, a spirit richly realized by Ormandy, his musicians, and the recording engineers. (*Ports of Call*. Columbia ML 4983. \$4.98.)

**Coonskin Tunes.** Few television programs have had the impact of Walt Disney's "Disneyland." Biggest "Disneyland" hit, of course, has been the filmed story of Davy Crockett, starring Fess Parker as the famed Tennessee frontiersman and Buddy Ebsen as his singing side-kick, George Russel. The film's "theme song," "The Ballad of Davy

Crockett," was quick to skyrocket to No. 1 position on the popularity lists. Now adventure-loving small fry should be tickled with a record culled from the film's sound track offering three full episodes in Crockett's life, interspersed with several verses of the "Ballad" and connecting narration by Ebsen. It's entertaining, educational, and far above the level of current "horse operas." (*Davy Crockett*. Columbia CL 666. \$3.95.)

**Prize-Winning Saint.** When a serious opera on a religious subject can win three important prizes, beating out all of the Broadway musicals, it must be good. That's what happened to Gian-Carlo Menotti's "The Saint of Bleecker Street," which recently received the Pulitzer Prize, and awards from the New York Drama Critics Circle and New York Music Critics Circle. Dealing in powerful terms with the conflict between religious fanaticism and worldly skepticism in New York's "Little Italy," "The Saint" is composer-librettist-director Menotti's richest, most deeply moving score to date. It has been recorded complete, except for one or two judicious cuts, with the original Broadway cast, including Gabrielle Ruggiero, Gloria Lane, and David Poleri. (*The Saint of Bleecker Street*. RCA Victor Set LM 6032. 2-12". \$7.96.)

**Swing, Uncensored.** Practically every swing record is either arranged beforehand or the musicians improvise with the knowledge that their efforts are being engraved for posterity. Leave the mike open without their knowing it, though, and you get some really startling results. Columbia did just that during a session with the **Benny Goodman Sextet** fourteen years ago, when the late Charlie Christian sparked the combo with his inventive guitar. It's the two warmup numbers, "Waiting for Benny" and "Blues in B," that come off best in this memorial tribute to Christian who helped to lay the groundwork for an era of bop. (*Charlie Christian*. Columbia CL 652. \$3.95.)

**Diamonds, a Disk's Best Friend.** Hi-fi enthusiasts may argue heatedly about the relative merits of one pickup, cartridge, changer, amplifier, or speaker over another, but far too many are neglecting the most vital spot in the entire phonograph system—the stylus, or needle.

It's the highly polished, scientifically shaped stylus tip, with a radius of one-thousandth of an inch, that makes actual contact with the grooves of your long-playing records. Most phonographs come equipped with sapphire styli which, under normal use, will wear out after only a few weeks. As soon as the point becomes worn, it exerts uneven pressure on the sides of the grooves, actually cutting away microscopic bits of the record, thereby damaging it permanently. There is no such thing as a "permanent" stylus, but by far the longest-lasting, safest styli are those made of diamond. They cost about eight times as much as sapphire, but will last up to thirty times as long. Even diamond styli should be checked periodically with a high-powered microscope, a service rendered free by many dealers. For better clarity of reproduction and, more important, for protection of your 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  and 45 rpm records, no matter what type of playing equipment you have, get a diamond needle.

**BEST BETS FOR YOUR BASIC LIBRARY (4)**

(Approximate cost: \$68)

- Bach: Brandenburg Concerti—Phohaska (Bach Guild, 3-12"), Horenstein (Vox, 2-12"), Münchinger (London, 2-12", 1-10")
- Backhaus Carnegie Hall Recital (Beethoven: Piano Sonatas No. 8 in C Minor, No. 17 in D Minor, No. 25 in G Major, No. 26 in E flat Major, No. 32 in C Minor) (London, 2-12")
- Berlioz: Symphonie Fantastique—Ormandy (Columbia)
- Brahms: Symphony No. 2 in D Major—Toscanini (RCA Victor), Walter or Ormandy (Columbia)
- Fauré: Requiem—Bourmauck (Columbia), Cluyens (Angel)
- Lehar: The Merry Widow—Schwarzkopf (Angel, 2-12")
- Mendelssohn: Symphonies No. 4 in A Major ("Italian") and No. 5 in D Major ("Reformation")—Toscanini (RCA Victor)
- Mussorgsky-Ravel: Pictures at an Exhibition; Stravinsky: Firebird Suite—Ormandy (Columbia)
- Mozart: Violin Concerti No. 3 in G Major and No. 4 in D Major—Grumiaux (Epic), Goldberg (Decca)
- Respighi: The Fountains of Rome; The Pines of Rome—Toscanini (RCA Victor)
- Schumann: Quintet for Piano and Strings in E flat Major—Curzon and Budapest Quartet (Columbia), Bohle and Barchet Quartet (Vox)
- Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat Minor—Rubinstein (RCA Victor)

THE END

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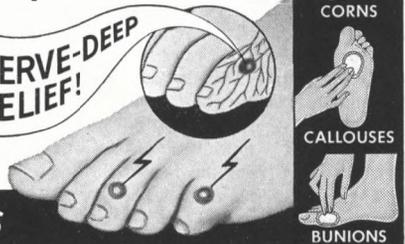
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# The Drinker's Family, Coeds' Worries, Follow The Leader, and the Self-ousted Suitor



BY AMRAM SCHEINFELD

**Drinkers' families.** How do a man's wife and children react when he becomes an alcoholic? Investigator Joan K. Jackson (University of Washington) found that many families so troubled go through seven stages: (1) The husband's drinking begins creating strains, and the wife and children try hard to adjust. (2) As heavy drinking increases, the family becomes more isolated, the wife loses self-confidence, the children show disturbances. (3) The family no longer looks upon the alcoholic as a true husband and father, nor does it attempt to control him. (4) The wife takes control of the family, and develops a motherly attitude toward the drinker. The children become more settled. (5) If the wife can overcome the problems involved, she and the children separate from the father; and (6) they reorganize and maintain a home without him. (7) If he achieves sobriety, the family comes together and readjusts to him.

**"Plus" and "Minus" Worries.**

Two things are uppermost among the worries of most college girls nowadays: (1) That they are too big in the hips, waist, calves, thighs, ankles and feet; and (2) that they are not big enough in their—uh—Marilyn Monroe zone. (A big change from their mothers' generation, when flat chests were *de rigueur* on campuses!)

The psychologists making the survey, Sidney M. Jourard and Paul F. Secord (Emory University), found also that the girls they queried, like American women in general, hold very fixed ideas as to the exact dimensions comprising the ideal female figure and that the more their own figures deviated from

... ideal—regardless of how unrealistic it might be for their bone structure—the more insecure they felt.

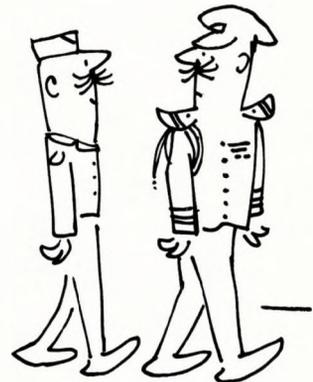
**"Criminalists."** Want to be a modern Sherlock Holmes (or Holmesette—for women, too, are eligible)? Professor Paul L. Kirk, crime expert, says college courses in criminalistics are now being offered, including one under his direction at the University of California. Good reasoning ability is a requisite for the prospective student. Training then follows in many subjects—microscopy, chemistry, physiology, anatomy; identification of poisons, hair, fibers, soils, blood, bullets, tool marks, handwriting; the psychology of criminals; police and court operations, etc. We think that after about five years of this the graduate should receive a "Wh. D." degree—"Doctor of Whodunnit."

**Spinsters most secure?** Girls who hurry to get men while the getting's good, and marry young, are probably much less mature and secure for their age than are the hold-outs, if sociologist Floyd M. Martinson (Gustavus Adolphus College) is correct. Comparing girls who had married within a few years after high school graduation with those who hadn't, he found that the still-single girls, as a group, were brighter, healthier, better adjusted emotionally, and more self-reliant than their married classmates. Whether this will be true for those who wait another five or ten years before marrying, or whether it is true for spinsters generally, remains to be proved. Mr. Martinson thinks it may well be "that it is the immature or not-so-well adjusted person for whom marriage has its strongest appeal." (Personally, we doubt it!)

**Americans like to work.** "If you inherited enough money to live comfortably without working, what would you do?" Sociologists Nancy C. Morse and Robert S. Weiss (of the University of

Michigan) asked this of 400 men from varying ranks. Only one in five said he'd quit and take it easy. All the others said they would go right on working because they enjoyed it, or would feel lost, useless, or bored if they retired. The biggest percentage of those who derived satisfaction from their jobs were professional men (90 per cent) and salesmen, tradesmen, and farmers. Managers and unskilled workers mentioned money more often as the reason for working. A growing problem for most American men is what to do with their time after retirement.

**Leader and follower.** The notion that you are either the one or the other is mistaken, say psychologists E. P. Hollander and Wilse B. Webb. Their studies among U.S. Naval Air Cadets show that



the man who makes a good leader must also have the qualities of a good follower, since both roles require the ability, temperament, and willingness to work efficiently with others toward a common goal.

**Are women teachers bossier?** Schoolmarns won't like this, but Henry M. McGee of the Oakland, California,



public schools reports that women grade-school teachers (particularly the younger ones) are, on the whole, more dictatorial with their pupils than are men teachers. Possible reasons: women generally go into teaching because it provides social status, attractive salaries, and a convenient stop-gap before marriage. Most men teachers, on the other hand, regard teaching as a life work and enter it not because of practical considerations but because they have a genuine interest in, and affection for, young people and a sensitivity to the thoughts and feelings of others.

**Self-ousted suitors.** Some men literally kick themselves down a girl's front steps, according to psychologist Edrita Fried (New York). She cites instances of Romeos who get women to the point of saying "yes" and then suddenly invite



rejection by making a deliberate *faux pas*. The same type of man may be on the verge of success in a job or enterprise, and then induce his own defeat. Such men, the psychologist finds, often were destructive and cruel as children and were severely punished. They grew up with an exaggerated belief in their power to be dangerous, and now fear that they cannot cope with their own passions and urges. Therefore they keep inducing others to block or check them. Men of this kind may need a disciplined life and such work as is provided by the Army and other highly regulated organizations.

**Girls' dads neglectful.** The difficulties which many women have with men—first with boy friends, then with husbands—are often caused by their fathers' failure to condition them properly, says psychiatrist O. Spurgeon English (Philadelphia). Much of this parental failure stems from the false notion that a girl "belongs" to her mother, a boy to his father; this belief keeps many fathers from developing any real closeness with their daughters or guiding them into a natural and comfortable feeling with the opposite sex. Dr. English warns dads that the emotional development of their daughters calls for just as much of their personal attention, concern, and interest as does the development of their sons.

THE END



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# Toll-Road Holidays

*Ever mountain-climb, jog along a canyon on a mule, or crab-fish in a dinghy off Maine? Toll-road driving puts you within range of new weekend adventures*

**BY EDWARD R. DOOLING**

**M**ore than 1,000 miles of traffic-free motoring on smooth, safety-engineered toll roads are now provided by the network of turnpikes in the eastern part of the United States. Covering the most congested travel routes, the turnpikes have extended the vacation touring range of families with average two-week vacations and have substantially reduced driving hazards.

Although tolls are charged on all these roads, turnpike authorities claim, with considerable justification, that the cost is more than offset by the advantage of smooth, uninterrupted driving, which eliminates costly stops and starts and decreases wear and tear on vehicle and traveler.

The most easterly of the turnpikes is Maine's express road from Portland to Kittery, which offers 45 miles of superhighway at a toll of 75 cents a car. An additional section, from Portland to Augusta, is scheduled to open in October.

New Hampshire's little 18-mile toll road connects with the Maine Turnpike at Kittery and runs south along the state's brief shoreline to Salisbury, Massachusetts. The toll is 20 cents.

Connecticut does not have a turnpike as such, but its Wilbur Cross and Merritt

Parkways are modern, four-lane toll roads. They run between the New York state line and Meriden, Connecticut, and involve a total charge of 30 cents.

New York's great Thruway, which traverses the entire state, is open from Buffalo to Harriman, near the New Jersey border. The toll rate on this 400-mile superhighway is 1½ cents a mile.

New Jersey has two modern toll roads: the New Jersey Turnpike, running from the George Washington Bridge at New York to the Delaware Memorial Bridge south of Wilmington; and the Garden State Parkway, following the shoreline from Paramus to Cape May. Both of New Jersey's toll roads have fares geared to the distance traveled. The maximum on the Turnpike is \$1.75 for the full trip, and the maximum on the Parkway is \$2.25.

The 360-mile Pennsylvania Turnpike is the oldest of the major toll roads. At present it extends from the Delaware Valley Interchange north of Philadelphia westward to the Ohio State line, where it connects with the new Ohio Turnpike. The maximum toll on the Pennsylvania pike is \$3.75. A new bridge over the Delaware River will be opened in July, 1956, to give the Pennsylvania Turnpike

a direct connection with the New Jersey Turnpike in the vicinity of Burlington, New Jersey.

Only a small section of the Ohio Turnpike, from the Pennsylvania line to Niles-Youngstown is now open, with a toll of 30 cents, but the entire road to the Indiana state line will be opened in October.

Two other turnpikes operate at present in West Virginia and Oklahoma, but they are not connected with the rest of the eastern turnpike system. The West Virginia Turnpike follows a scenic route for 88 miles between Charleston and Princeton, and the toll is \$1.65. Oklahoma's Turner Turnpike is 102 miles long, connecting Tulsa and Oklahoma City for a toll of \$1.40.

A roundup of present turnpike facilities has been compiled by the Automobile Club of New York. Numerous extensions, branches, and connections are under construction or are being planned.

**Door County, Wisconsin,** the "thumb" of land which projects into Lake Michigan to create Green Bay, is the New England of the Midwest. There you'll find little fishing communities along the lake and bay sides of the peninsula. Drying fish nets, buoys, iron pots,

and weathered fishing smacks create scenes which cannot be distinguished easily from the waterfront at places like Gloucester, Rockport, Camden, and other communities along the New England coast.

**British money** looks fairly simple on the various converters, and most American tourists manage to memorize the equivalents of \$2.80 for a pound and 14 cents for a shilling. Further, they probably know that a British penny is worth slightly more than a U. S. penny, that a nickel is worth about fourpence, and a dime, eightpence.

But chances are that the first London taxi driver who quotes a fare will say something like, "That'll be five bob, thruppence." Or the store clerk will say, "Two quid, mum." all of which is in keeping with our own habit of referring to a dollar as a "buck," ten dollars as a "sawbuck," and a quarter as "two bits."

Most British prices will be quoted in shillings and pence, but the average working Londoner still uses his monetary slang of a "quid" for a pound, a "bob" for a shilling. A few others which may draw a blank stare from the tourist are the "florin," the "half crown" and the "guinea." A florin is a silver coin worth two shillings; a half crown is the equivalent of "two and six," or two and one-half shillings; and the guinea is valued at 21 shillings, or about \$2.94, although there is no coin or note issued in that denomination. Nevertheless, some swanky stores will quote prices in guineas. The crown, or five-shilling coin, is fairly rare. It is wise to examine your coins carefully, or you may get all mixed up on florins and half crowns.

**THIS MONTH'S BUDGET TRIP**

The future is bright and sunny for wallet-watchers this fall. For the first time in maritime history, a shipping company will operate a series of eight twenty-day round-trip cruises to Europe at a minimum rate of \$520 for Cabin Class accommodations.

Pioneer in this new cruise field is the American Export Lines, which is putting its most luxurious ships into this budget-priced service. The SS *Constitution* and the SS *Independence* will serve as hotels while passengers tour and shop in such ports as Algeciras, Lisbon, Gibraltar, Ponta Delgada, Barcelona, Cannes, Genoa, Naples, and Palermo.

The first cruise leaves New York September 22. Each of the voyages has a slightly different schedule of ports of call, but there will be time for at least four trips ashore during each cruise. Since the fall months are warm and mild in this sun-baked Mediterranean area, it's no wonder that these have been tagged the "Sunlane Cruises." **THE END**

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# On Top of the World

*Facts Picked Up Around the Globe* BY DAVID E. GREEN

**GERMANY** . . . Notes on some forgotten women: Hitler's sister, 58-year-old Paula Hitler Wolf, lives near Berchtesgaden, existing on small sums sent by friends and relatives. Her claim to a share of the Führer's sizable fortune is in the hands of a Berlin court because some doubt exists regarding her brother's death. Frau Emmy Goering and Frau Marguerite Himmler both live in Munich but never see each other. Frau Himmler lives on 57 marks a month, or about \$13.00.

**CALCUTTA** . . . Astrology is still this country's number-one matchmaker. Thousands of eligible boys and girls are taken to market by their parents, their horoscopes are compared, and, if found compatible by the stars, they are married.

**CAIRO** . . . If a city official is caught sleeping during office hours, he must pay a fine of five days' pay. If he is caught reading a newspaper, it costs him fifteen days' pay.

**AUSTRIA** . . . An Innsbruck mechanic has perfected a vending machine which heats people's feet during the cold weather. Upon receipt of a coin, the machine gives the frozen tootsies fifteen seconds of ultra-shortwave heat.

**NEW YORK** . . . Tellatouch, a machine resembling a portable typewriter, enables a normal person to talk to the deaf and the blind. When a letter on the keyboard is pressed, small pins bring up its Braille notation under the finger of the blind-deaf reader. It is 9" x 9" x 21½", weighs 3 lb, and can be carried with a shoulder strap.

**BRUSSELS** . . . A national welcoming committee has been organized to greet the first men who arrive on Belgian soil from Mars.

**TURIN** . . . For nearly 2,000 years people have speculated about what Jesus Christ looked like. For twenty-five years Professor Lorenzo Ferri has worked from the outline features and

presumed blood stains on the winding sheet treasured in the cathedral here as the authentic holy shroud that enveloped the body of Jesus after the crucifixion, and he has reproduced at least the sort of figure and face that would have left such an imprint. In sum, the shroud outlines the full-length figure of a man who was between 6'1" and 6'2", slender, and whose left shoulder had been dislocated, probably during the crucifixion, making the left arm appear shorter than the right. There were wounds at each wrist and foot, the nostrils were arched, and the brows prominent.

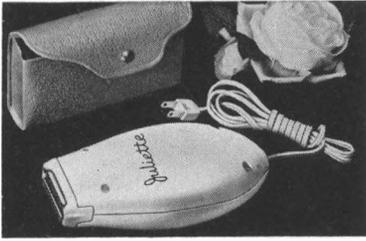
**PARIS** . . . At the famous Lido cabaret here, half of the girls in the production numbers are always bare from the hips up. The other half are

Monkmeyer



fully dressed. Those who are fully dressed get 30,000 francs (about \$80) a week. Those who are constantly undressed are paid only 25,000 francs (about \$20 less) for their work. The French salary philosophy: A girl must be much more talented to be sexy *with* clothes on.

**SINGAPORE** . . . Police are investigating a popularity contest in which 1,000 Malayan dollars (about \$335) is being offered to the first person to guess accurately the order in which Communist China's top six leaders are to be liquidated. THE END



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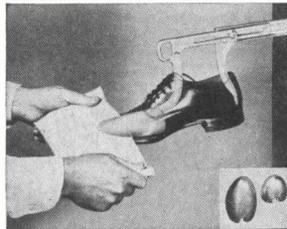
BY CAROL CARR



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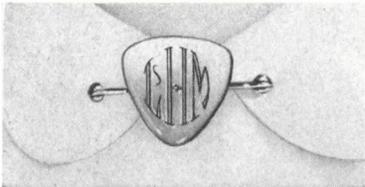
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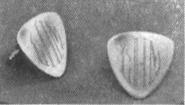


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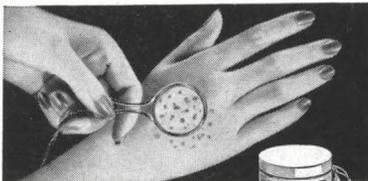


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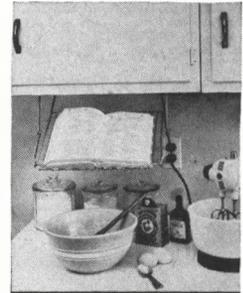
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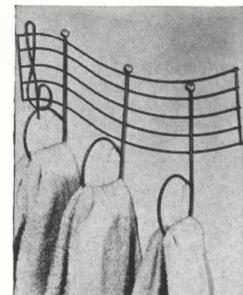
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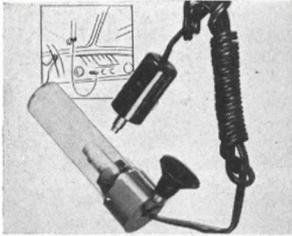
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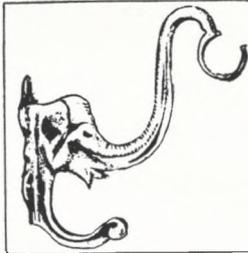


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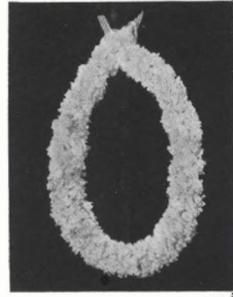


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- Fred Ludekens
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- Ben Stahl
- Robert Fawcett
- Austin Briggs
- Dang Kingman
- Albert Dorne



**BEST CHILDREN'S FILM**— "Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier" will charm adults, too. Plucked by Walt Disney from an obscure page of history, given a coonskin crown and a shove toward the popular imagination, Davy marched right into the box office with the giant strides of a great folk hero. Towering Fess Parker (left) gives body and plenty of spirit to his fine portrayal of the legendary frontiersman.

# The Hollywood Frontier

## MOVIE CITATIONS BY LOUELLA O. PARSONS

**F**ess Elijah Parker is his natural-born name, Texas is his birthplace, and stardom on the screen's "wild frontier" is his destination. And Neighbor, I'm here to tell you that the role of Davy Crockett has made Fess Parker an overnight success the like of which has not been seen since Cable, and that never, since Hopalong Cassidy, has anybody caused such a stampede among the younger generation.

But Hoppy and Gable put together would be no match for the Parker-

Crockett team right now. I found that out the day Fess came calling at my house, when, in response to the persistent demands I've received in my fan mail, I sized him up.

Well, Fess looms six feet, five inches high and feels a gravitational pull of 210 pounds. As for his twang, it's as broad as the frontier itself. I mean he says things like "My pa always sauced and blowed his coffee." He allows as how "Fess" means "proud" in old English, and as how he's actually Fess, Jr. He

reckons one reason he owns a producing oil well is that he "had to feel like a real Texan." But don't let the folksiness fool you. Underneath the deliberate corn pone of his speech is a mind that clicks like a steel trap.

As a matter of fact, besides being handsome and loaded with charm, he's a graduate of the University of Southern California. A Navy veteran, he's not quite twenty-eight, strictly unmarried, and strictly serious about acting. As late as last year he was working for a master's

degree in drama, and virtually starving while trying to make a living as a professional actor.

Now, if he takes my advice, he'll stop studying for that degree. Davy Crockett has made him a master of show business, and that's all the diploma he needs.

Walt Disney first saw Fess in "Them," playing a role so small that Fess says, "If he'd blinked, he would have missed me." But Walt has a steady eye and he signed Fess to play Davy Crockett in a three-part TV serial. It was after the first episode that fringed-suited frontiersmen, aged five to fifteen, began turning up in almost every American family. With the second episode, raccoon caps went to millions of small heads, while the sales of "The Ballad of Davy Crockett" went to

eight million. By the time Davy breathed his last in the third installment, Disney knew history had to be rewritten.

#### Davy Lives To Pioneer Again

The result is the feature-length film now playing at your local theater. "Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier" is the three TV episodes strung together, with one difference: Davy does not die at the Alamo. He fades into the shadows intact, the better to reappear in more movies. I don't pretend that it has anything like the stature of the other movies I am citing this month. But I do believe that it may have more impact in the long run, particularly on the preschool set.

And if it does, it will be because of the happy coincidence which joined the

talents of my friend Walt Disney, a genius with the heart of a child, with those of this remarkable young actor who, with sincerity and humor, describes what he feels to be his mission:

"I figure actors, lawyers, and ministers have a lot in common," Fess says. "I teathed on the stories of Davy Crockett, Sam Houston, and other American heroes. Now Walt aims to have me play some more of them, after we finish with Davy. So it could be that we'll sneak over a little learnin' and American idealism, plus providing a lot of fun."

Plus providing himself and Walt with a million or so in cash money, if you ask me, and both of them trying to look as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths.

The best grade of butter, naturally.

### FOUR OTHER FINE FILMS



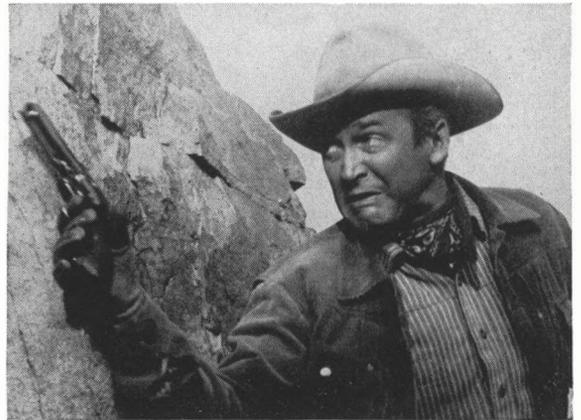
**BEST PRODUCTION**—That all-time champion heart-warmer "Oklahoma!" is now awesome as well, as the new Todd-AO process spreads the vast prairie setting onto a wide, curved screen. Rodgers and Hammerstein's beloved songs deserve, and receive, hi-fi reproduction by stereophonic sound. (Above) Shirley Jones as "Laurey" and Gordon MacRae as "Curly."



**BEST DRAMA**—"The Shrike" is the somewhat depressing but powerful story of a man driven to attempted suicide and a mental institution by his shrewish wife. Jose Ferrer repeats the performance that earned him Broadway honors. June Allyson, a little too ingenuous for the part, plays the "shrike" in Universal-International's filming of the prize-winning play.



**BEST COMEDY**—Warner Bros.' "Mister Roberts" is the wry, humorous story of life on a wartime Navy cargo vessel. In CinemaScope and color, its outdoor sequences were filmed aboard ship in the Pacific. Henry Fonda (right) plays the title role in the same battered cap he wore in the Broadway hit. William Powell, James Cagney, Jack Lemmon also star.



**BEST WESTERN**—An exciting story, a strong cast put "The Man from Laramie" in "Shane"'s class. Columbia Pictures went to the Pueblo Indian village of Tesuque, New Mexico, even bulldozed a road to an inaccessible canyon, to get desert shots in CinemaScope. James Stewart's fiftieth picture, it co-stars Arthur Kennedy, Donald Crisp, and Cathy O'Donnell.

# The Wives In Their Lives

*The wives of some famous men answer a question posed by artist-reporter Jon Whitcomb—What part does a wife play in her husband's success? Meanwhile, they do some pretty posing of their own*

BY JON WHITCOMB



**B**ack of every big-shot male there's supposed to be a pushy little woman, toiling in obscurity for the sake of her husband's career. In fiction these girls are always responsible for a man's success, busying themselves with backstage guile, planting clever schemes in their spouses' minds, charming the Right People, manipulating a chubby

raise here or a mammoth contract there—but always letting George think he did it all himself. Do most celebrities' wives dip a prettily polished finger or two into their husbands' affairs? Is the lady of the house really the Power Behind the Throne? To clear up this point, I recently asked these questions of seven ladies, all wed to gentlemen in the public eye. Here is the testimony, with sketches of them as they looked during the interview.



## MRS. JACK PAAR

*Miriam Paar is a blonde with a deep tan and blue eyes and absolutely no method of contributing to her famous husband's routines. This delights Jack because it leaves Miriam free to dream up gala dinners, which Jack ritualistically precedes with a couple of Scotches on the rocks. He proposed to Miriam Wagner, who is a member of the Hershey chocolate family, the second day after they met. By the time she'd decided this was a great idea, he'd decided he didn't have enough money for her. One day they reached affirmative decisions at the same time, and they married five months after their introduction. Miriam takes pride in Jack's success, enjoys his TV world—especially since he has left "The Morning Show" for "The Jack Paar Show," broadcast at the more civilized hour of 1 P.M. Jack's fame spread to the animal kingdom when a friend named a horse after him. The day I saw Mrs. Paar, two little boys were playing with Randy, the six-year-old Paar daughter. They were chanting: "Jack Paar came in first!" Mrs. Paar said that the race horse had just that afternoon won at a track in Florida. He paid nine to one.*





## MRS. COBY WHITMORE

Born in Dayton, Ohio, as her husband was, Ginny Comer Whitmore looks twenty-two, has a size 10 figure, gray-green eyes, dark hair, and no interest at all in manipulating her husband's career. "I don't even pose for him," she says, "unless I just can't get out of it. With three children—nine, fourteen, and eighteen—I haven't had enough time to umpire my artist, too. I'm just completely out of the picture. We both have fun with his hobby, racing cars, but for different reasons. We go to sports-car races here and abroad, and I like the travel part. I leave the cars to him." Last month Coby took temporary leave from his work as one of the best-known U.S. illustrators and packed up the whole family, a secretary, and a dog for a year's painting spree in Lugano, Switzerland. Ginny promptly took to studying French and Italian. The Whitmore romance began with Ginny dating Coby's



brother Tod, who introduced her to Coby one day over the phone. She lost interest when they met. "I didn't like red hair or freckles," she says, "and Coby had both. But he turned out to be a very nice character, so we got married."

(continued)

## MRS. GALEN DRAKE

Anne Peron Drake, who has flaming red hair, huge gray eyes, a twenty-four-whistle figure, says no one could call her a power behind her husband's throne. He's the CBS radio commentator who, in a rich, confidential baritone, is wise and amusing on almost any subject for over five hours a week. "Once he had to discuss modeling," she said, "so I typed two pages on it. He used only one line. Since then I've kept strictly out of things. Maybe he couldn't read my typing." In 1950 Anne, a model, lived at the Barbizon Hotel for Women, where the radios went off at 11 P.M. During their courtship Galen broadcast at 11:15, so she never heard him until after they married. They live in Manhattan because neither likes commuting. Besides posing for artists and photographers, Anne raises two small Drakes, specializes in Chinese cooking, and buys all Galen's shirts and ties. He often has to make personal appearances in supermarkets. When Anne, a cross between Rhonda Fleming and Jeanne Crain, went along once to watch, she stayed in the background. "What did you do?" I asked. "Not much," she said. "Just bought some pickles."





## MRS. SID CAESAR

*My favorite overheard dialogue concerns NBC-TV comic Sid Caesar—"Is there a Mrs. Caesar?" "Sure. She's Fabrette Coca, or somebody." The somebody is a blue-eyed blonde named Florence, who met Sid in 1942 at a Catskill hotel where he was doing his acts. "It was a summer romance," she said, "but we ended up married." Aside from laughing at Sid's jokes, Mrs. Caesar, née Levy, disclaims credit for his success. Star and creator of "Caesar's Hour"—and a music publisher—Sid seldom gets to dinner before midnight. Florence used to dine twice, once with the two little Caesars and later with Sid. "This led to a diet," she said. "I just pretend to eat with the children now." She paints a little, and plays chess with Sid. Sometimes they revisit the Catskills. On their one trip to France they had constant language difficulties. "Sid doesn't speak French," Florence says, "only double talk he got*



*from foreign movies. I don't either. By the third day, when we couldn't match our tickets to the seats at the races, Sid was wholly exasperated. 'Mom,' he said, 'let's go home.' We did, that very night. And we haven't been out of the country since.'*

## MRS. PERCY FAITH

*Take a few hundred violins, some hot brass, many wood winds, and Percy Faith to arrange and direct the whole shebang, and you have my favorite disk—songs from "House of Flowers." Add to this his handling the baton for top Columbia vocalists and for CBS Radio's "Woolworth Hour" and writing songs like "My Heart Cries for You," and you may ask when he has time for his wife, two children, and grandchild. Handsome Mary Palange Faith, who has brown eyes, a black widow's peak, and the nickname Dolly, says she sees him quite often. "He runs trains in the cellar," she says. "Authentic scale models. But now he has a new Thunderbird, which gets him outdoors. He forgets to buy gas, and the other night the car quit on a country road at two A.M. A kind motorist with nothing else to do rescued him. Percy was so relieved." Mrs. Faith, not a musician, told me, "I don't hesitate to make suggestions. Maybe I should," she added modestly. She asked if I'd heard his record of the "Kismet" music. I hadn't. "I'll send it to you," she promised. It was my turn to be relieved. There are hardly any grooves left on my "House of Flowers."*





## MRS. BENNETT CERF

*She is the only lady I know who had a shotgun wedding. The late Harold Ross introduced Phyllis Fraser to Mr. Cerf. "Three minutes after we met," she says, "he kissed me; four minutes later I slapped him. It seems like five minutes after that we got married." Mayor La Guardia officiated at City Hall, just after Ross burst in declaring, "This man met this little girl at my house, and I'm here to see he does right by her." Phyllis was a movie starlet in the late thirties. She left films to write, did movie columns and advertising copy. With blazing blue eyes, dark blonde hair, and a little-girl figure, she still reminds you of a starlet. Asked if she influences Cerf's career (he's an editor, publisher, columnist, author, and a panelist on TV's "What's My Line?"), she says, beaming, "I'm entirely responsible. He can devote all his time to work, because I manage everything*



*else—family (two sons), house, social obligations." She does an interview column for Long Island's Newsday (taking and processing her own pictures), draws up magazine cryptograms, is active in the Urban League and a children's play project.*

## MRS. JOHN CAMERON SWAYZE

*Asked if she has a special hobby, Mrs. Swayze says, "Yes, my husband." A chic, brown-eyed woman with silver-gray, close-cropped hair, she is highly interested in her husband's affairs, watches all his broadcasts with a critical eye, and reports that he depends to a great extent on her reactions. Five times a week, NBC-TV presents the news with John Cameron Swayze, a brisk, good-looking man with crisp diction and a reputation for never wearing the same necktie twice. His wife denies this. "But he does get a lot of ties as gifts," she explains. "He has about six hundred." Beulah Mae Estes, of Arkansas, met John Cameron Swayze, of Kansas, in New York City, where they went to the same drama school. William Shakespeare introduced them, so to speak, when parts in "As You Like It" required the two to rehearse privately. They were married after being engaged for two years. In 1947 Swayze, an experienced radio newsman, was accidentally shoved into TV and what he feared would be total obscurity. He was, of course, mistaken. The Swayzes live in Greenwich, Connecticut, have a daughter in college and a son in Germany with the Army.*



# The Defiant Mustache

*It belonged to the idol of American childhood, and we had to have that mustache on our cereal box. But, since its owner detested "Ruffies," a drastic measure — tall, blonde, and leggy — was required*

BY WALTER KAYLIN ILLUSTRATED BY ERNEST CHIRIAKA

The desk clerk wouldn't give me Djopono's room number until he'd phoned to see if I was expected. I was.

"Fourteen twenty-three," he said unhappily. "He says you should come right up."

"Relax," I said. "I'll salaam outside the door and leave my shoes in the hall."

The elevator operator looked at me with interest when I told him the floor I wanted.

"Djopono's on fourteen," he said.

"Never heard of him," I said. "What kind of name is that? Mesopotamian?"

"Never heard of Djopono!" The way he looked at me, I might have asked him who is this Marilyn Monroe. "Only the best distance hitter since Babe Ruth, that's all Djopono is. Say, the way he's hitting them homers . . . You're kidding, aintcha, Mac?" He sounded desperate. "You heard of Djopono?"

"I couldn't place the name for a second," I said as the elevator reached my floor. "Which way is twenty-three?"

"To your left as far . . . Twenty-three! That's Djopono's room."

"Kid's been having a little trouble hitting a curve ball," I said. "The Sox sent me up here to give him a couple of pointers."

I could feel his eyes on my back like telescopic lenses all the way down the hall. Outside fourteen twenty-three, I lifted my hand to knock on the door, but

it was opened before I could get started.

"Come on in, Mr. Rice," he said. "I'm Djopono."

His name was Pono, Joe Pono, but the way he spoke, the words piling in, one on top of the other, it came out "Djopono" and that's how everyone knew him. He was a big, red-faced man of about twenty-four, with a booming voice, black hair stiff and thick as a paint brush, and an exuberant way about him that made baseball seem a game instead of a corporate enterprise. Then, of course, there was the mustache! Not one of your little waxed-points affairs, not one of those tidy toothbrush jobs, but the real article. Proud, defiant, bristly, a veritable black cat of a mustache. With that, and the way he was belting the ball and his big-kid ways, he was setting all baseball on its ear and a good part of the country with it.

"Call me mister once more and I'll feel a hundred. Djopono." I said, sitting down. "My name's Harry. Harry Rice. Winkle, Brandon, Connor, and Rice, Advertising. I'm at the end of the parade. That makes me a very young man."

"Sure, sure, Harry," he grinned. "Anything you say. What's it all about?"

He piled a couple of pillows at the end of the bed and made himself comfortable. He was wearing flannel slacks and a white shirt with the sleeves rolled up. One hand was under his head and the other patted at the famous mustache.

"Djopono, our agency has just taken on the Ruffies Cereal account," I said. "We're planning a tremendous campaign. Magazines, newspapers, radio, TV, billboards, store displays—the works. Mr. Roman—that's Harrison Roman, president of Ruffies—has told us to go the limit. He's also given us the angle, the gimmick, the theme of the whole campaign. You."

"Me?" That startled him. He let go of his mustache and sat up, putting his hands on his ankles. "What does that mean?"

"Well, first of all it means you make a nice chunk of money, a very nice chunk of money, if you don't mind my saying so."

"I don't mind," he grinned, "but what do I have to do for it?"

"Pose for some pictures, sign a few testimonials, things like that. For instance, we'd put your picture on the Ruffies box with a balloon above your head saying something like, 'Kids, I eat Ruffies every morning. They're great!' Then we'd have some TV commercials where you'd be finishing up a bowl of Ruffies; then you'd pat your mustache, wink at the audience, and say, 'Now, I'm ready to hit one over the fence. Kids, there's nothing like Ruffies.' Get it?"

"I don't think I ever had Ruffies," Djopono said thoughtfully. "What is it, cooked or cold?"

"Cold, I think. You're supposed to put

*"Why not?" she said. "Why shouldn't a couple of cheapies make a cluck out of a real sweet guy?"*



**While we danced she reported her progress in snaring Djopono.  
She looked beautiful, and suddenly I felt I was selling my birthright  
for a bowl of "Ruffies." It made me so sad I kissed her**

milk on it. Comes in a big blue box, but we're going to make it white as a better backdrop for your mustache. See, Ruffies are really a pretty old product, but they've never done well. Harrison Roman just bought the company and he wants action. We've got a whole bunch of tricks up our sleeve for him. Djopono cutouts in the newspapers, little cardboard Djoponos in grocery stores, and—get this one—replica Djopono mustaches in every box . . ." I stopped as he picked up the telephone. "Am I keeping you from an appointment?"

"No, that's all right," he said, then into the phone: "Room service, please. Hello? Room service? This is Djopono in fourteen twenty-three. Could you send me up a box of Ruffies and some milk and whatever else is supposed to go with it? Thanks."

"We were thinking about a contest, too." I said weakly as he hung up. (This was a new one on me: a celebrity who investigated the product he was supposed to be advertising.) "There'll be a little number on every box top, see? And the first kid to get a complete . . ." I said it all loudly, then gave it up. It wasn't coming out right. Djopono got up off the bed and stood in front of the mirror practicing his swing until room service knocked. The Ruffies and accessories came in on a tea table. Djopono tipped the guy who had brought them, signed a menu for him, then sat down on the bed and pulled the tea table over. I drew my chair to its other side and watched anxiously as he filled the bowl with Ruffies, sprinkled sugar over them, poured in milk, and took his first spoonful. For some moments the only sounds in the room were those of chewing and swallowing. Then he patted his lips with a napkin, put the spoon back in the bowl, and shook his head slowly.

"Harry, that's a very inferior cereal," he said positively. "I couldn't possibly advise my fans to eat it."

Well, I worked up a lather trying to make him change his mind, but no soap. He wasn't sore, but when he started referring to Ruffies as "that guk," I realized I was through.

We were waiting outside the park in a car the next afternoon when the baseball game ended. Mr. Winkle, Mr. Brandon,

and Mr. Connor were in the back seat glaring at me and talking panicky. They had brought me in because I was supposed to be a good contact man. Now this. Harrison Roman was in the front seat with me, looking round, smooth, free-rolling, and intent. Harrison Roman looked like the sort of man who didn't like anyone getting in front of him once he started rolling.

"I left the details to you people," he had said when I reported the failure of my mission. "but I guess I'll have to take care of that, too. I am determined to have that boy's mustache on every box of Ruffies."

"Yes, sir," I'd said quickly. "Well, I can see him again tomorrow and . . ."

"I'll see him tomorrow," he said. "We'll drive up and be there when he comes out after the game."

So there we were as Djopono came out grinning and being almost swarmed under by a gang of kids. He reached in among them, picked up a little colored kid, and perched him on his shoulder.

"How about Willie Mays?" the kid shouted delightedly, steadying himself with a hand in Djopono's hair. "How about Willie Mays?"

"Oh, Willie hits a pretty good ball." Djopono said good-naturedly, signing autographs.

"Hold it," I said suddenly as Harrison Roman began to open the door. "Look there."

There was a girl on the edge of the crowd around him, a tall, blonde girl in a white dress, white pumps, and a white skullcap-type hat. She was holding a program in her hand and smiling. It was a very lovely, patient sort of smile.

"I never heard anything about Djopono and a girl," I said. "Let's see what that's all about."

"Now, Harry, if Mr. Roman . . ." someone said nervously in the back seat.

"Mr. Roman wants to speak to Djopono, Harry. Don't . . ."

"Harry, Mr. Roman knows what he . . ."

"We'll take a look," Harrison Roman said, settling back.

As the kids got their autographs and scooted off, the crowd around Djopono grew smaller. The blonde girl moved in on its outer edge, still smiling, a rueful

sort of smile, now, as though she were the subject of her own amusement. When Djopono saw her, he did a double take, finished up the last autographs, lifted the kid from his shoulder down to the ground, and stood there with the girl. A bus roared past us and we couldn't hear what they said, but we saw the girl hand her program to him to sign. He did, then handed it back to her and they stood there laughing and talking. After a couple of minutes, they came to the curb and got into the car in front of ours.

"We'll follow them," I said.

A Greek chorus got under way in the back seat.

"Now, Harry, maybe Mr. Roman . . ."

"Run up there and grab him before they start, Harry. Mr. Roman said he wants to talk . . ."

"Harry, didn't you hear Mr. Roman say . . ."

"We'll follow them," Harrison Roman said.

They drove for about half an hour. Djopono behind the wheel. We could see them talking through the rear window. They looked as though they were having a good time. When they finally stopped, it was before a narrow, three-story apartment house, not in such hot shape or in such a hot section of town, either.

The girl got out, bent over to say something through the door window, smiled, then turned and entered the house. Djopono pulled away from the curb. Behind me, the chorus got anxious.

"Harry, before he gets . . ."

"Harry, follow that . . ."

"Quick, Harry . . ."

I got out of the car and watched the front of the house. On the top floor, two windows opened and hands showed for a second beneath them.

"It's worth a try," I said to Harrison Roman. "How about if I offer her a thousand? What do you think?"

"It's worth a try," he said. "But, she gets paid only if it works."

"All right."

With the clue of the opening windows, finding the girl's apartment was easy. The name under the bell was Pat Roberts. I rang, and a moment later she opened the door and looked at me, smiling and uncertain. She had taken off her hat and put on a pair of harlequin

glasses. She held a newspaper in one hand.

"Good afternoon, Miss Roberts," I said. "My name is Harry Rice. Winkle, Brandon, Connor, and Rice. Advertising." I handed her my card. "May I speak to you a moment?"

"Why, yes, of course, Mr. Rice," she said excitedly, opening the door wide. "Come in, come right in. I'm so glad to meet you."

I hadn't expected *that* warm a welcome. What's with this dame? I wondered uneasily. She was racing around the room, scooping up newspaper pages, clapping couch cushions into livelier appearance, and giving me the big bright smile every time she got a chance. I sat down on the couch and here she comes dragging an armchair across the room, then sitting down in it right in front of me.

"Mr. Rice, I can't tell you how happy . . ." she began, then gave a startled "oh," whipped off her glasses, and smiled guiltily. "What show is it? Oh, I'm so excited."

"Show?" I asked blankly. "What's this about a show?"

"Why, the TV show your agency is producing," she said. "That's all it *could* be. I've applied to every agency in town. Isn't that what you've come to see me about? A part?"

"I'm afraid not, Miss Roberts," I said. "Winkle, Brandon, Connor, and Rice haven't done much in TV so far. We're not handling any shows just yet. It's just that I couldn't help seeing you with Djopono."

She got up and began to drag the chair back to its former place. I helped her. Her face was very pink, but she had the poise to make it okay. "Thank you," she said. "Please, sit down, Mr. Rice." I returned to the couch and she put on her glasses again and sat in the chair. "I see much better with them," she explained.

"Miss Roberts, I'm terribly sorry to have misled you as to my reason for calling on you."

"It wasn't your fault, Mr. Rice."

She looked quite composed, now—no more of that fluttering around—hut sort of tired. She crossed her legs, folded her hands in her lap, and looked down at them, smiling faintly.

"I've just retired from show business," she said. "At the age of twenty-six. Over the agonized protests of practically nobody. To state it frankly, I have fallen flat on my lovely kisser. The high point of my career was reached in a thirty-second TV commercial for Countess Peg Shoes, sandwiched in between reels of 'The Monster Ghoul of Paris.' For this midnight spot, I slipped into a pair of black opera pumps and stood on a polar

bear rug while two cameras zeroed in on my feet. It seemed to me that for such an assignment, one need possess no special talent, but only two feet of approximately the same size and a lack of regard for dead bears. As my other assets include the aforementioned kisser, a presentable pair of limbs in size extra long"—she raised one leg for my inspection and I nodded sympathetically—"as well as some rudimentary knowledge of song and dance, I felt that show business was not availing itself of all my potential. Result: retirement to be followed swiftly by return to Simmons Flats. One career—kerblooie. However, there is this nephew, and he would murder me if I didn't bring him Djopono's autograph. So . . . Now, what *did* you want to see me about, Mr. Rice?"

I ran through the situation for her and she sat watching me, feet together on the floor, elbows on her knees, chin in her cupped hands. If there is one girl who does not belong in Simmons Flats, this is the one, I found myself thinking. She should be around and about and available. She should be very close at hand.

"Then in other words, I'm to make some sort of play for Djopono," she said when I was finished. "Get him sufficiently interested in me so he'll sign the contract if I ask him to."

"That's the ticket," I said glumly. It

didn't sound like such a good idea any more. I didn't want this Pat Roberts tossing herself at Djopono, or anyone else, as a matter of fact—except maybe me. "There's a thousand in it for you if it works."

Suddenly, I had a nice, clean thought. She was going to say No. She was going to be genuinely indignant and say No, she wouldn't think of such a thing, what did I think she was, a loose woman? She might even take a swing at me. How dare you, sir . . .

"All right," she said. "I'll do it." "A" "Maybe you ought to think about it a little first." I said. "Maybe it's not exactly your kind of thing."

"Oh, it's my kind of thing, all right," she said firmly. "Just as long as it gives me a chance in fifty to keep away from Simmons Flats."

"Okay." I sighed, then got myself an idea: "There's just one other thing."

"Yes?"

"Progress reports." I said carefully. "Little discussions of how you're making out. I thought we might get together for dinner once in a while, maybe take a walk . . ."

She came across the room, put her hands on her knees and bent toward me.

"Why not?" she said, lovely and unsmiling, her face inches from my own. "Why shouldn't a couple of cheapies out to make a cluck of a real sweet guy get



"As a girl I was boy crazy. Then I was man crazy. Now it's old men."

together and discuss the progress we're making?"

Those next two weeks were busy and uncomfortable. I felt as though I were inside a triangle with Harrison Roman on one side, my senior partners on another, and Pat Roberts on the third.

"If everything goes all right, I'll put a million dollars into a campaign to make America Ruffies-conscious," Harrison Roman said. "The agency's fifteen per cent will come to one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. But—no Djopono, no campaign, at least not handled by Winkle, Brandon, Connor, and Rice. You get my point?"

"Perfectly. Mr. Roman." I said. "Either I produce Djopono and his mustache for Ruffies, or you take your business elsewhere. Right?"

"Right."

My partners were equally prepared to let me run with the ball—and keep on running if I ever dropped it.

"We took you into the firm because you're young, personable, and aggressive, Harry," they told me. "In regard to establishing a cordial relationship with someone like this Djopono, you seemed perfect for the job. However, if your special features are to prove inadequate for the sort of assignments we had in mind for you, why . . ."

"In other words, I get Djopono's *Djopono* on the dotted line or I can take my special features somewhere else. Right?"

"Now, Harry, now, Harry," they said, raising horrified hands. "No one said anything about . . ."

"I know, but that's still the case, isn't it?"

"Now, Harry . . ."

"Isn't it?"

"Yes," they sighed regretfully. "That's the case."

I took Pat to eleven baseball games during that two-week period. When they were over, I'd take her to the players' exit and she'd wait there till Djopono came out. Sometimes I'd stick around—but at a distance, of course—to see them together. Djopono grinning and edging his way through a mob of kids, Pat smiling as she waited for him. Progress was being made, all right.

"Doesn't he have any other girls?" I asked suddenly one evening. "A big, successful guy like that, you'd think he'd have a million."

"I've got this special technique," she said. "Very tough to resist."

It was past midnight, and we were in a booth at the Night Bird Club. It seemed a logical place to receive progress reports. No bright lights to hurt the eyes, no loud distracting talk—just the smooth,

neat rhythms of Sandy Wills and His Birds of Passage. Yet, I was being distracted, anyway—because Pat was wearing something light blue and filmy, a small cape had been removed from her shoulders so that they gleamed smooth and white in the soft light, and her blonde hair was lovely. She looked beautiful, and something huge and sad lurched around inside me as I realized I had all but flung her bodily at Djopono—and she hadn't offered much resistance.

"You might have a little modesty," I said sulkily. "There's nothing so remarkable about a technique that consists of flinging yourself . . ." "Slightly inaccurate," she said coldly. "More like being flung."

"Well, you didn't *have* to go through with it, you know."

"Neither did you have to suggest it. It's what I said that first day. It comes natural to us. We're a couple of cheapies."

"And Djopono's a sweet guy."

"The best," she said firmly. "The very best."

I considered that gloomily for a minute, then asked her if she wanted to dance. She said, "All right," and I led her out on the floor. It was quite late and there were very few people left. The Birds of Passage were playing "If I Could Be with You an Hour Tonight"—playing it nice and slow with a fine, blue trumpet in charge. Everything was sad and soft and lovely—so I kissed her. I'm not one for cutting up in public, but this was something I had nothing to do with. It just happened. For a moment she didn't say anything, and we kept on dancing. Then she leaned her head back and looked at me unhappily.

"I think you'd better take me home, Harry."

"Sure thing," I said emphatically. "I guess I got a little out of line. I must be a pushover. You didn't even have to use that special technique, did you?"

"I don't like that," she said angrily. "Pretending it's all my doing. You want his name on that contract, too. It's important to you, isn't it?"

"Sure, it's a job, money, prestige, but . . ."

"And to me it's a thousand dollars," she said. "Now, as one cheapy to another, please take me home."

She called me the next morning at the office.

"I'm at the drugstore downstairs," she said. "With Djopono. He's ready to sign your agreement."

"How did you spring it on him?" I asked. Very businesslike. Both of us. "Is he sore?"

"Why should he be? He knew it all along."

"Did you say he knew it all along?"

"That's right. I told him the first time I saw him after speaking to you. He's waited so long because he thinks Ruffies are so terrible, but now he's decided to do it because he likes me and he knows that if I don't get the thousand dollars I'll have to go back home to Simmons Flats."

"In other words, this secret technique you were alluding to was simply telling him the truth?"

"That's right. I told him you'd pay me a thousand dollars if I got him to sign the agreement and he's finally willing to. Aren't you happy?"

"How should I know?" I shouted. "There's something unethical about it. I mean, telling the guy the truth instead of tricking him into it. How could anyone resist that? A big slob like Djopono! It's taking unfair advantage of him."

"He's down here all wrapped up and tied with a nice pink bow," she said patiently. "Do you want him or don't you?"

"All right, all right," I said. "I'll be right there."

They were sitting in a booth when I got downstairs. It was eleven o'clock and there were no other customers in the store. The waitresses and counter people were all looking at him bug-eyed. I pulled a chair over and sat down at the end of the table.

"Hello, Harry," Djopono said glumly. "How's it going?"

He was wearing a sport jacket over an open-necked shirt. His big hands were on the table, gripping a glass of milk and making it look like a thimble.

"Good to see you, Djopono," I said, no more happy than he. "How are you, Pat?"

"Fine," she said in a voice like winter around Hudson Bay.

The waitress came over and I ordered a bowl of Ruffies. I'd never had them before.

"Take something else, Harry," Djopono said earnestly. "They'll make you sick."

"If they're that bad, why are you going along with this? How about all the kids who'll start eating them?"

"Oh, they'll be okay," he muttered. "Ruffies aren't that bad. Besides, I don't want Miss Roberts going back to Simmons Flats. It sounds like a crummy town. I wouldn't want it to be my fault that she went back there."

"That's not the only reason," she reminded him. "Tell Harry the other reason, Djopono."

"About you losing your job and everything, Harry," he mumbled. "I wouldn't want that to happen because of me."

"Now, that was real sporting of you,"

I said, glaring at Pat. "That was . . . Say, what is this goo I just put in my mouth?"

"Ruffies," Djopono said sadly. "Aren't they awful?"

The agreements were to be signed in Harrison Roman's office. I had phoned him before going down to see Pat and Djopono, and he had said we should come right over. There were some kids playing stick ball in the yard next to his building, but fortunately they didn't see us as we drove up. Harrison Roman's office was on the first floor. My partners were already there, all beaming and clucking as I ushered Pat and Djopono in and made the introductions.

"We're going to make that mustache of yours famous, my boy," they chortled. "Coast to coast, wherever Ruffies are sold . . ."

"That'll be swell," Djopono said unhappily. "Real swell."

Pat was sitting in a chair with one leg under her, examining her nails. Harrison Roman was at his desk, drumming his fingers on top of his interoffice thingamajig. Relaxed. Confident. Just another business coup. He flipped one of the buttons.

"Miss Wilson, would you bring in those Djopono contracts," he said. "We're ready for them now."

"I'm in a no-parking zone," I said suddenly. "Be right back."

I wasn't gone more than about a minute. When I returned, the contracts were on Harrison Roman's desk, and fountain pens were being unscrewed. Pat still sat in her chair being careful not to look at anything or anybody. Djopono was holding a copy of the contract in his big mitts and scowling at it.

"Well," I said cheerfully. "We may as well get on . . ."

Then the doors burst open and an avalanche of kids poured into the room. At least a million of them, running, jumping, leapfrogging—all shapes, colors, and sizes. In half a second we were knee-deep in them—and you should have heard the racket.

"Djopono, Djopono . . ."

"Hey, Djopono . . ."

"There's Djopono. Hey, look."

"How about Willie . . ."

"Naw, Djopono!"

His hands full of them, Djopono turned and looked helplessly at Pat. She got up from her chair and nodded, her face strained and very white. She cupped her hands to her mouth.

"Go ahead, Djopono," she called. "Go ahead with them. It's all right. Go ahead."

"But, how about Simmons . . ."

"Never mind Simmons Flats," she screamed, then glared at me defiantly. "Go ahead. It's all right."

"What's going on here?" My partners were screaming, running around the room, trying to pull him out of the cluster of kids moving inexorably toward the door. "What's going on? Let go of him. What do you think you're doing? Who let you in here in the first place?"

"He did," a blond kid with braces on his teeth shouted, pointing at me. "He told us Djopono was in here and we should come and get him."

I went to the window and looked out. They were out on the sidewalk now, a little, skinny, black-headed kid sitting on Djopono's shoulder.

"How about Stan Musial?" he was demanding.

"Nice little ball player, Stan," Djopono said comfortably. "I always liked the way Stan hits a ball."

"Isn't he cute?" Pat said from next to me. Easy as though we'd known each other for years, she put her arm around my waist and we both watched them out the window. "Isn't he just lovely," she said.

I grinned at her and she laughed and I kissed her and she kissed me and really, there never was anything nicer—even with the groans my former partners were producing behind us.

"So, you invited them in," Harrison Roman said softly. "Thoughtful of you.

Rice. Just what did you have in mind?"

"I tried your Ruffies this morning, Mr. Roman," I said. "They didn't have it. To be perfectly frank with you, they taste just a little like an old sponge."

I steered Pat to the door, past the sharp little daggers my former partners were mentally whanging at us. We were almost outside when Harrison Roman spoke.

"Where do you think you're going?"

"Simmons Flats," I said cheerfully. "Gonna get us a couple of acres of bottom land, plant a few rows of corn . . ."

"Don't be ridiculous," he said impatiently. "We've got work to do. If Ruffies taste like an old sponge, they'll have to be changed. Never had them myself. Doctor's orders. I'll notify the lab immediately. They'll start sending samples over to Djopono. When he says it's right, that's it. You two will stay with him constantly. See . . ."

"Here we go again," Pat sighed, but happily.

. . . that the competition doesn't get to him. Keep . . ."

"How about a couple of hours off for us to get married," I sneaked in.

"All right, but make it snappy," Harrison Roman barked. "We're just beginning with Djopono and his mustache."

THE END





**FAMED FOR HE-MAN ROLES.** Lancaster is also a devoted husband and father. He met his wife, Norma, during the war in Italy, where she was a USO entertainer. No matter where Burt goes to make a picture, she and the children (they have five) go along. They have been to the Fiji Islands, Mexico, and Italy, and are now living in a rented chateau outside Paris.

# Burt Lancaster

*A star from the day he first exploded on Hollywood, this leaping, fighting, stunting ex-acrobat sassed directors, told off his bosses, made \$110,000 within a year. Now he earns ten times that as a producer-director-star and is well on his way to becoming the "hottest" personality in the movies. Here's his intimate story, full of surprises*

**BY CAMERON SHIPP**

**F**or a long time before he came to Hollywood to be a movie star, Burt Lancaster's chief contribution to the theater was an act in which he stood on his head atop a forty-foot pole in small-time circuses. This head-over-heels stance, diligently practiced twice a day, is undoubtedly good for the digestion and possibly beneficial to the hair follicles, but it is a lonely performance at best. A man who stands on his head on a stick for ten years has time to think tall thoughts, and he is likely to pine for somebody to talk to.

Mr. Lancaster, when he finally dismounted, was a handsome, crag-jawed young man with muscles like an Iroquois warrior's. He inevitably made his way to Hollywood. There he saw at once that Hollywood, not he, had been viewing show business from an upside-down angle. He has been lecturing, talking, pointing out, and viewing with dismay ever since that time.

There are august directors in Hollywood, victims of Lancaster's contempt, who devoutly wish Lancaster would go somewhere, preferably on foreign soil, and stand on his head in forty feet of water. They would prefer hot water. The Screen Directors' Guild expressed itself plaintively just before he started "The Kentuckian," which he wanted to direct himself.

## **The Guild Bounced His Check**

The Guild professed to be astonished that Lancaster should ask to become a member. They returned his check, deferred consideration of his application, and suggested that he reform. (He has since reapplied for membership.)

Burt went ahead anyway, directed his own picture, had a whopping good time—especially with a scene in which a villain lashes him with a bull whip—and thumbed his nose at the Guild.

Some people say Lancaster is the most

argumentative man in Hollywood. He gives argument a new dimension, they claim, being able to take three sides at once. Thom Conroy, his dialogue director, dissents.

"Argue with Lancaster?" he asks. "It's impossible. How can you argue with a man you can't interrupt?"

There is no argument, at any rate, about this: Lancaster's impact on Hollywood has been jolting from the first. It has been highly satisfactory to Lancaster, and a fine thing for millions of moviegoers who like him on screen. He has made more than twenty motion pictures. In most of them, as in "Apache," "Vera Cruz," "The Flame and the Arrow," "The Rose Tattoo," and "The Killers," Lancaster has been tough, athletic, and stripped to the waist as often as possible to show off his thews. But as co-producer of "Marty," from the thoughtful television play by Paddy Chayevsky, he now has on his desk the Grand Prix from the

Cannes Motion Picture Festival. "Marty" is the first American picture to win the Grand Prix since the war.

Today—still striding around like a professional acrobat—Lancaster is "hot": a movie star whose pictures make enormous sums of money. In addition, he has at his disposal one of the handsomest self-help kits in do-it-yourself America. This consists of all the gadgets, electronic playthings, and guys and dolls that twelve million dollars of cash on the line will buy. Lancaster can star in his own pictures, or direct them, or produce them. Recently he did all three in "The Kentuckian."

When Burt is not leaping, falling, stunting, fighting, or dismembering executives, he resembles an intense young college instructor who lettered in gym. He is forty-two years old but seems barely thirty. His light brown hair is short but looks as if he had trimmed it with a hedge clipper. He stands six feet tall, weighs a hard-muscled 180 pounds. His most striking feature is his teeth. These are large and gleaming. With a candelabra in his hand, he might tempt Liberace to play him for a piano.

#### In the Scenes—and Behind Them

He burst into his office, where I was waiting for him the other day, bouncing like a supersalesman who had just shod all the barefoot tribes in Asia. "They liked it!" he announced. "It got 'em!"

He meant his new one, "The Kentuckian," which had been sneak-previewed in San Diego the night before. The events leading up to the sneak give an accurate picture of star-director-producer Lancaster in full cry.

He began by conferring long distance from 9 A.M. to 11 A.M. with A. B. Guthrie, the author. At noon he talked to William Murphy, his film editor, about a debatable censorship problem. Lancaster decided the scene in question wasn't debatable, left it in. He lunched with his agency's president, Lew Wasserman. At 2 P.M. he took the train for San Diego, a two-and-a-half-hour trip. In San Diego he conferred all afternoon with Fox West Coast distribution executives. He had a hasty dinner.

At the Fox Theater he watched his picture and dictated comments on it to Elaine Michea, his secretary. One comment: a big Lancaster scene runs too long. Cut Lancaster down.

After the show, he conferred at the U.S. Grant Hotel with a production staff of six. They took scenes out and put scenes back in until 2:30 A.M.

At this hour, Lancaster went out for

**SUPERB PHYSIQUE**, natural charm are Lancaster's success secrets. He has never had a dramatic lesson.



## Burt Lancaster (continued)

a hamburg. He then went to an all-night drugstore to buy a razor and toothbrush. He had brought along no baggage of any kind. He seldom travels with baggage.

### Staff Meetings for Breakfast

Staff discussions followed at breakfast. He caught the train back to Los Angeles at 9 A.M., played two rounds of gin rummy in the club car, hurried to his office on arrival, and put in a call for his partner, Harold Hecht, at the Georges Cinque Hotel in Paris. They talked for an hour and a half. Then he hurried upstairs to see me. He was trailed by editor Murphy.

Before the interview was over, Mrs. Lancaster arrived from downtown.

"Traffic was bad," said Mrs. Lancaster.

Mr. Lancaster then delivered a fifteen-minute lecture on how to drive automobiles. It was a cogent and useful essay. The gist of it was that Mr. Lancaster drives defensively, as if all other motorists were retarded baboons with murder in their hearts.

This reminded him of directing pictures.

"Why shouldn't anybody, including me, have an opinion about how a movie should be directed?" he inquired. "Anybody who sees movies, if he has an adult mind, knows when a movie is badly directed, just as he knows bad automobile driving when he sees it."

It wouldn't do to say that Lancaster has "humility," either in the Arthur Godfrey sense of that word or in the correct

one, but he does not suffer from one familiar type of Hollywood paranoia. He is willing to be a clown, a boob, or a bad man if he thinks the part and the picture have a chance of turning out to be good. He likes himself in pictures in which he is less than beautiful and heroic. Up to "The Kentuckian," his favorite role was that of the Italian-American truck driver in Hal Wallis' "The Rose Tattoo," from the play by Tennessee Williams.

"Best thing I ever did," he says, referring to a part in which he enacted a poetic simpleton with a bowl haircut, in love with a plump widow.

In our interviews he never mentioned a picture called "From Here to Eternity." He won an Academy nomination for that in 1954, and many Hollywood people (omitting directors) firmly believe he should have had the Oscar for it.

### His Neighborhood Wasn't Tough

Burt was born November 2, 1913, at 209 East 106th Street, New York City. His father, James H. Lancaster, a small, spry man, was a postal clerk. In many stories about Lancaster you are likely to read that he was fetched up in a tough neighborhood, comparable to the Lower East Side of James Cagney and Irving Berlin. This is incorrect. The neighborhood was shabby but respectable, and Burt's father was a steady man in a government job. His mother—who died when he was sixteen—was an opinionated woman.

"She'd take bums in," Burt tells me,

"feed them well, then glare at them and say, 'All right, you've had it, on your way.' And she insisted on impeccable honesty about everything."

Burt was never a star performer of any kind in any circus, although some bemused biographers claim he was, and he never worked for Ringling Brothers.

### The Daring Young Lancaster

He did indeed don the spangled tights and fly through the air with ease for almost ten years. He did this on the bars, eight feet high: an act which looks easy and isn't. High-wire performers and trapeze artists have it safer; they can fall into nets. The bar boys have only the ground to cushion their backsides or their heads. In the small, tawdry circuses Lancaster worked with, he also performed his pole-standing act, another highly lethal performance. All told, Burt's circus years were obscure, tough, lean, and potentially neck-breaking.

Worse than that, his entire working vocabulary consisted of two words, "Allez Oop!" When he got out of the circus he was as pent up as a sewing circle under a vow of silence.

At 19, Burt was a gangling, well-muscled kid, good at all competitive sports. He excelled at sports at P.S. 83 and at De Witt Clinton High School. He played on a city championship basketball team and won an athletic scholarship to N.Y.U. (His brother Jim was also a superb athlete; he captained a national championship basketball team at New York University in 1934. He is now a



**TECHNIQUES** for a new paste-up game are pondered by father Lancaster and son Billy, 6. Also seen are daughters Susan, 5, Joanna, 3, and son Jimmy, 8. Sighle, one year, is elsewhere. Lancaster is intensely determined to be a good father as well as a Hollywood success, and spends every spare hour with his children. They ride horseback, do acrobatic tricks—the children competing constantly for a ride on his burly shoulders.

sergeant on the New York Police force.) Burt's paying job at N.Y.U. was to coach boys in the afternoon at a downtown settlement house. There he met Curly Brent, a former circus performer, who took a swift interest in the agile kid and showed him how to swing and perform on parallel bars. Here you have it: this was the first move toward being a movie star.

Burt's best friend was a little fellow named Nick Cravat, who barely topped five feet. Cravat, too, became fascinated by the parallel bars. They swung like pendulums for a year and finally worked up an act they considered professional. They wrote to Kay Brothers Circus for a job. Naturally, they received no reply.

They bought a ninety-dollar car, saved up ten dollars, and set out for Petersburg, Virginia, to catch up with Kay Brothers. They got a break. The show needed a bar act. Lancaster and Cravat were hired at three dollars a week and cakes. When they became extremely good, they received a raise in salary to five dollars.

### Ten Years on the Road

Nick and Burt played "mud shows," which travel by road, having no rail equipment; small-time vaudeville; and the W.P.A. Circus, for ten years. Eventually, they earned sixty dollars a week—the highest salary Lancaster was to receive as a professional performer until he became a movie star. In 1949, he went out with the famous Cole Brothers show and was paid \$11,000 a week for the same stunts he and Cravat used to do for three dollars.

Between 1935 and 1938 Lancaster was married to a girl named June Ernst, an aerialist. They failed to get along and finally arranged an amicable divorce. It was so amicable that for several years after their separation Burt worked in an act starring his mother-in-law, Ora Ernst, a trapeze performer.

He finally quit in November, 1941, when he ripped his right hand on a bar and suffered a painful infection.

Burt sought refuge with a circus family, the Smiths, known professionally as the Smiletts. They put him up in Chicago while he sought non-acrobatic work.

His first job was, of all things, that of floor walker in the lingerie department at Marshall Field's big department store. He did well. He opened up like a visiting peddler in a harem. His rhetoric came in spurts and spates. He uttered kingly prose about brassieres and nightgowns. He flashed his impressive teeth, bowed magnificently, and walked on his hands on counters to the delight of sub-debs. But Lancaster soon grew sated with feminine underthings.

He requested transfer to the furniture



**WHIP FIGHT** is high point of "The Kentuckian," first picture in which Lancaster stars while also directing and producing. He insisted on using a real whip and ordered his opponent to sting him enough to make him react.

department, worked a sale, found no inspiration for his oratory, sold nothing. He moved to men's haberdashery, pumped himself up to full cry again, and became number-three man in the department. He kidded the customers, did his flashy stunts, and earned seventy-five dollars a week—no mean salary in 1941. This, too, soon bored him.

He heard of a job with the Community Concerts Bureau of CBS and was fetched by the prospect of selling Melchior, Tibbett, Pons, and Traubel instead of dry goods and furniture. He got the job, all right, but greetings from the President intervened. Pending induction, Lancaster worked in the engine room of a cooler plant, operating giant boilers which provided refrigeration for butchers.

### The Sergeant Found Him Shy

Two important things happened to GI Lancaster. Let his former sergeant, Thom Conroy, tell the first:

"We put on camp shows in Italy and North Africa. Lancaster had never been on stage, but he seemed to know all there was to know about putting on shows—and, believe it or not, he was shy. We did a vaudeville turn together, patter stuff. It took a lot of goading to get Burt to talk up when he finally got his chance to speak before an audience.

"He made sergeant but he was an officer-hater and got busted. Sent him to Oran once to manage a pianist and a

violinist. Some little lieutenant made the musicians scrub floors. Sergeant Lancaster called the lieutenant a so-and-so and became a Pfc. Then he fell in love."

The girl was Norma Anderson, a USO entertainer in Italy. She spied Lancaster first on stage, muttered "That's for me," and arranged an introduction.

### Broadway Gave Him the Eye

At the war's end he followed Norma to New York. She got a job as secretary to Ray Knight, a radio producer, with offices in the Hotel Royalton. Burt came to call at lunchtime.

In the elevator he noticed a man "putting the mince pies on me. Giving me the eye, you know. Broadway type. Thought maybe I'd have to poke him. But I went on to the office. The feller came right on in after me. He says, 'Say, how'd you like to act in a Broadway play?'"

"'This guy a phony?'" I asked. But Knight knew him. His name? I can't remember. I can recall faces every time, but look, if I see you on the street next week I probably won't know your name."

Burt panthered about the room, took off his glasses, put them back on, and shrugged.

"Like I say, names get me down. Aren't there names you can't remember? Now, I owe everything to that man. I think he's dead now, haven't seen him for years. But what in the world is his name?"

## *"I believe in gambling . . . taking the big chance"*

Penguin



**TOUGH SERGEANT** role in "From Here to Eternity" earned Lancaster a 1954 Academy Award nomination.

His name was Jack Mahlor, an associate of Irving Jacobs, the Broadway producer. Jacobs was preparing a play, "The Sound of Hunting," and he needed a tough, lean actor to play a sergeant. Lancaster got the part in one reading.

### **A Short Run—and Seven Offers**

The show opened in Philadelphia, came on to New York, and failed. It stayed open for two weeks, which was just long enough for seven Hollywood studios to make offers to Lancaster.

"I know it's incredible," Burt told me, "but with big studios and big agencies after me, the only man who impressed me was an agent with no clients, Harold Hecht. He was honest. And he said a remarkable thing: 'Burt, if we go together, you'll be a producer in five years.'"

"I believe in gambling, taking the big chance. I took it with Hecht, and look: producers!"

He signed a contract with Hal Wallis and came to Hollywood in borrowed clothes. His pants were unpressed. His hair jutted like the tailfeathers of a disturbed cockatoo.

"Who is this bum?" asked a casting assistant. Told that this was Mr. Wallis' new boy, the casting director sent him on to the dialogue man.

"Who is this bum?" said the dialogue man.

Lancaster appeared in a pair of cords and a sweat shirt for his first interview with director Byron Haskins. Instead of listening appreciatively to Haskins, Burt delivered a two-hour lecture about what's wrong with movies, how actors should act, and how directors should direct.

Mr. Haskins was stunned but he made the test anyway. There was no getting around an impressive fact: Lancaster's image hit the screen with explosive impact. The late Mark Hellinger, who was casting "The Killers," saw this test and sent for Burt.

### **Smart Enough to Be Dumb**

Hellinger asked Lancaster to lunch to look him over. The big fellow matched the part of the awkward Swede he had in mind. But Lancaster said nothing. He didn't try to get the part. Hellinger, a voluble man, began to sell Burt. He told him "The Killers" was the best screenplay he ever had, that it would make Lancaster a star.

Lancaster fumbled, spilled his coffee, and observed that he supposed the script was all right.

Hellinger went to work on him with all his charm and induced him to take the part. The Swede he wanted had to be big, dumb, and awkward. Lancaster the acrobat, one of the most graceful men you ever clapped eyes on, was all three.

Years later, Burt confessed to a reporter that he had studied "The Killers" carefully before the Hellinger interview.

"Were you playing the part of the Swede at lunch?"

Lancaster grinned. "What do you think?" he asked.

Burt's first picture for Wallis, "Desert Fury," was not so good. "It starred a station wagon." Burt complained. But "The Killers" set him up at once. His rise was faster than Gable's, or Carbo's, or Lana Turner's—or any other quick success story that comes to mind. He never played a small part. He was featured or starred from the beginning. He earned \$110,000 his first year in Hollywood and hasn't made less than \$150,000 a picture since. He and Harold Hecht formed their own company, Hecht-Lancaster, in 1953.

The Lancasters and brood—Jimmy, 8, Bill, 6, Susan, 5, Joanna, 3, and Sighle, one year old—live in a large, old-fashioned ranch house in Brentwood. The most important room of this house is the kitchen, which is enormous and is used as the family room. They eat all their meals there. Outside there is a swimming pool and enough athletic equipment for a small carnival. All the children except the baby perform on the parallel bars.

Two or three times a week, Burt climbs out of bed at 6 A.M., revs up his new Thunderbird, and speeds over to the campus of the University of California in Los Angeles, a mile away. There he dons a sweat shirt and spiked shoes and trots diligently around the half-mile track until eight o'clock. He goes out to San Fernando Valley occasionally to work on the bars in the backyard of his father's place. He does not pretend to enjoy this. Part of his job is to keep fit, so he does it—making a hobby out of it.

Lancaster's real hobby is contract bridge, which he plays vehemently, loudly, and expertly. His partners are his wife; Ruth Waterbury, the writer; and Jack Ostrow, a comptroller of the Hecht-Lancaster Corporation. After his location trip to Mexico for "Vera Cruz," Burt displayed a new wizardry, playing like a master, and cleaning his friends out. After five straight nights of success he confessed the truth: he had met Eli Culbertson in Mexico City, played with him nightly—and he remembered Mr. Culbertson's advice to astonishing effect.

Burt reads voraciously. He's the kind of reader who will study the telephone book and enjoy it if no other literature is on hand. He enjoys music, plays many records, and would like to sing in pictures. As a matter of fact, he did—folk songs in "The Kentuckian."

The Thunderbird is a new thing. Up to this year, Burt trundled around Hollywood in an ancient Ford. Mrs. Lancaster still drives a 1948 station wagon. Their home is inexpensively furnished. They are, I believe, the least pretentious of the great movie star families.

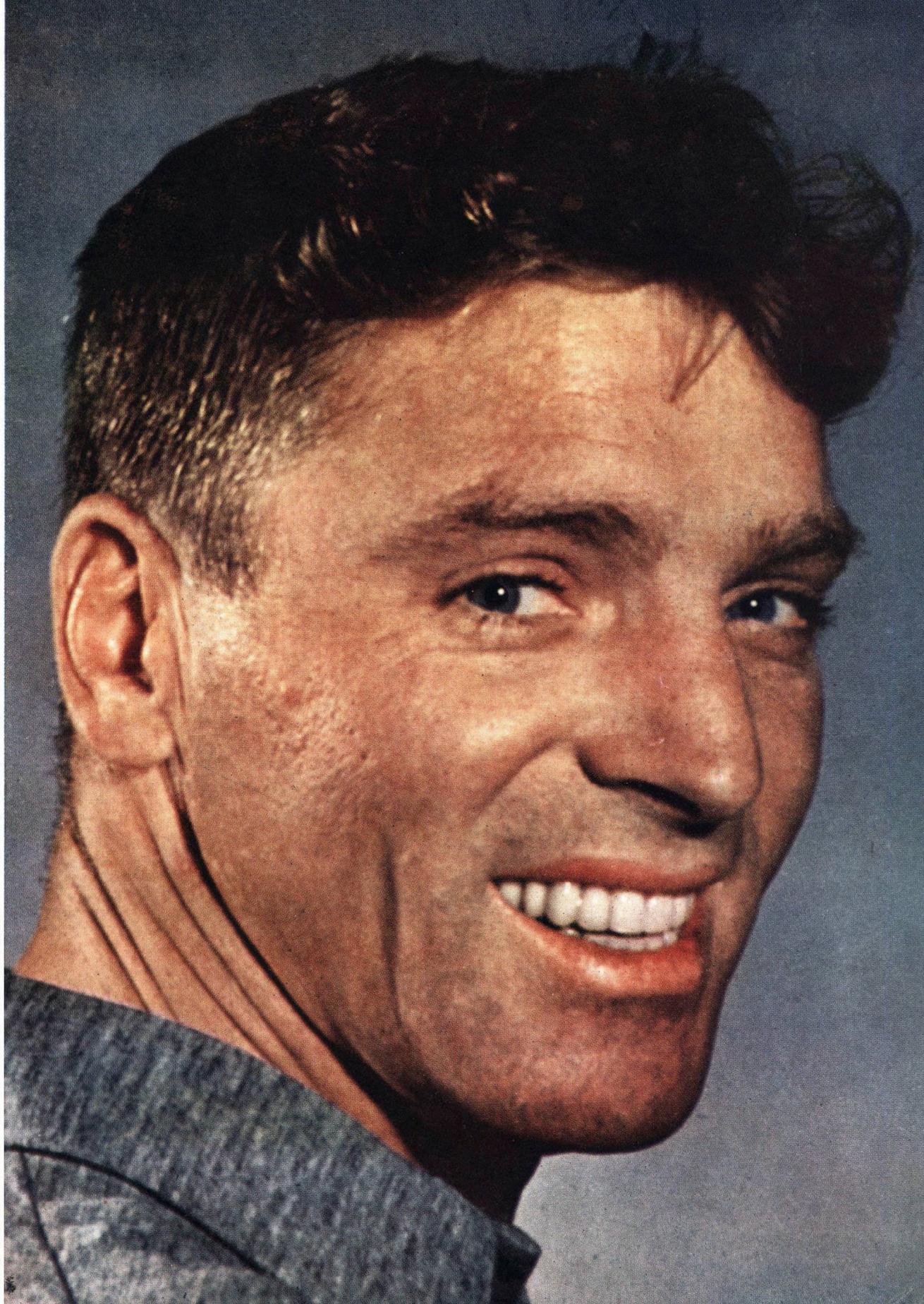
### **He Always Uses His Head**

Plainly, with all the contradictions on hand, there is no quick way to pigeon-hole a complicated man like Lancaster. Thom Conroy, one of his oldest friends, tried the other day with little success.

"To say he has 'drive' isn't enough," Thom said. "Many men have 'drive.' This boy not only has that, he is driven all the time to 'drive.'"

One fairly simple explanation of Lancaster does come to mind. He's a do-it-yourself boy. He learned to rely on himself and on nobody else during those tough and tawdry years in the circus. Just as when he performed atop the pole, so has he been using his head ever since. He knows no other stance. **THE END**

**RUGGED** self-confidence is his key characteristic. If he succeeds as a director, he plans to quit acting.





# Foreign Service Wife

*She was sick of it all—the stifling secrecy, the empty talk. Tonight she must tell her husband that, if need be, without him, she was going home*

BY NOEL CLAD

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE HUGHES

**M**yra Clark sat motionless. The fireplace grate was filled with coal, for the first time in months. But nothing could really warm the frigid splendor of this room.

The concert-size piano was waxy with cold. The embroidered drapes at the twenty-foot windows were as motionless as sculpture, saturated with the unshakable dust of two hundred years. Thirty feet above her head an idiotic cupid aimed his everlasting arrow at the shepherd and shepherdess seated in a leafy glade. Myra sighed.

The dining room doors opened and the maid came in with the cocktail tray. She never entered without making that shrewd, swift examination, as though the smallest change—an antimacassar moved



*The pressure was on now...private tragedies didn't matter.*

or an extra stub in the ash tray—might justify a report to the Hungarian police. I'm sick of it, Myra thought. I am sick to death of it.

"It is well to serve now, Madame? Mr. Clark is not delayed?" A delay might mean an emergency conference at the embassy. That would be worth reporting.

"No, Ilona," Myra said. Their luck in finding this jewel who spoke English in a Communist country made them the envy of the rest of the diplomatic colony. Every servant made reports. It was luck to get one who also knew how to serve. Luck, Myra repeated to herself. Her mouth twisted in bitterness. It was too much to ask of anyone.

"Very good, Madame." The maid set the silver tray with its ice and gin and vermouth on the inlaid coffee table and then formally back-stepped in the ducal manner, not turning her back on her employer. Once more her eyes eased the room. The doors closed behind her.

The cherub-incrusted Meissen clock on the mantel ticked too loudly. Myra bent toward the tray. No, she thought. Tom will be home in a minute. I won't be like those wives who drink so they can stand the pressure. She lit a cigarette and sat back firmly.

In a moment she heard the car turn through the archway, shifting as it came

up the incline into the courtyard. The car door slammed. There was a moment's conversation. Then the heavy downstairs door opened and the automobile began to turn around. She could hear Tom's feet on the marble steps. Myra shivered. The apartment door closed behind him.

"Hi." He was a thin young man. He had once had a Sinatra appeal. Now his large eyes, always red from reading too much, and his sleeves that were never quite long enough for his wrists, made him look haggard. His nose was thinner than ever. He had the beginnings of a nervous tic at the edge of his jaw.

"Hi," she said. She couldn't look at him. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw him put his attaché case down on the couch where he was going to sit. Its little padlock bobbed. He must never let it out of his sight. "Will you pour?" She hadn't meant to say that. It was one of those civilized, conventional remarks that made life bearable. And she refused any longer to make life bearable for herself or for him.

"Sure." He looked at her timidly and then frowned and paid elaborate attention to mixing the drinks and pouring them. "Sleep well?"

"I slept till noon," she said. It was a lie. She had stayed in bed until she had heard him leave, and then afterwards until she thought she would go mad

thinking about it. But she had made up her mind. "Everything all right at the office?"

"Just the usual." He always said that. She was not supposed to know what he did. It's the secrecy, she thought. That's what I can't stand most of all. The United States Government has made us strangers. He handed her a glass, letting her hold it while he twisted the lemon rind over it. "Sully was in," he said.

Uncontrollably, she felt pain and fear. Her own sense of guilt was infuriating. She refused to care what the British First Secretary thought of her. She was beastly weary of stiff upper lips and seeing it through. She had a right to some kind of life. But Sullivan was nice. It was too bad he had to be here when her dammed-up anguish finally broke through. Myra sipped her Martini, not looking at her husband. "Sorry I was so tiresome last night," she muttered. Stock phrases. Unlike Europeans, Americans did not find it easy to mouth empty words. It took years to learn to talk without meaning. Once you did, the isolation was complete.

"He understood," Tom said. "He said it's good to blow up once in a while, when it's just ourselves." He laughed. Even Tom's laugh wasn't real any more. That was pretending, too. "Sully said to tell you he gets as sick of talk as you do. And he's had thirty more years of it than you. I better dress. The Happings and the Marinacs will be here in an hour. Did you call Protocol to see whether the British or the French Second Secretary should sit on your right?" He reached out and touched her arm awkwardly with his fingertips. "I'm glad you had a good rest."

Myra took a deep breath. "It's not all right again, Tom." She closed her eyes, feeling a little sick. But there was no going back. She would die if she did not escape.

"Huh?" Tom turned around. His tired face was blank, the habitual strain hanging at its edges ready to take over. I love my husband, she thought. And they're taking him away. I can't reach him any longer. Please, please let him understand that it's impossible to go on any longer like this.

"I meant what I said last night. I just can't stand it any longer, darling." She couldn't look at his shocked, wounded eyes. She pushed herself up from the couch, the drink spilling a little on the lace at her wrist. "I'm suffocating, darling. I want us to go back to Minnesota."

"Minnesota?" He licked his lips, as though he didn't understand. The weariness had come back into his eyes, and with it a professional reserve that she



loathed. Rule one of the Foreign Service: always get your opponent to commit himself before you commit yourself. But we are not enemies, she told herself wildly. We are husband and wife. We ought to decide things together.

"Minnesota, Tom." She could have screamed it, but she held herself in. "You still have the farm up there. Your father used to be a farmer. Remember how green it is in the spring? Remember, Tom, how we used to skate in winter? Real fresh butter, and when it's cold you can have all the heat you want." She stopped. Her voice was beginning to tremble with sheer desperate longing. It's so quiet in Minnesota, she thought. And when people talk, they say what they mean.

"I'm a Foreign Service officer," Tom said stiffly.

"Darling." She set her glass on the tray and put her arms around him. "You'd make a wonderful farmer." It was like hugging a statue. She buried her face in his lapel. "Just you and me, Tom. Together, in a real world."

She felt his hand touch her hair. "I'm afraid this world is real, too," he said gently.

Abruptly, she looked up. His eyes were closed. "Tom, this isn't real." Her voice was so urgent that it must reach him; it must convince him by its own passionate conviction. "A house that's your own. A settled place with furniture and your own things that aren't always being broken in shipment, or stolen or lost. And children, Tom. And schools they can go to for all the time they go to school, without being yanked out because you're transferred to another post. Please, Tom."

"Poor darling," Tom said.

"I tried it," she said, burying her face in his coat again. She must make him see it. "You know I tried. But I need stability, darling. I need things to have meaning."

"And diplomatic things have so many meanings," he said. She felt his body stiffen as he shook his head. "I'm a professional, Myra. This is what I do."

"No," she cried helplessly.

"Yes," he said softly.

"Tom. Please."

"Sully brought up that shopworn old phrase today: England expects every man . . . and so forth. It's still true."

"Sully." She jerked back her head and pushed him away from her. "I hate Sully. I hate the professionals. They can't tell you the time without first considering all the diplomatic ramifications. They don't know how to be real any more. And they're doing it to you, Tom. I can't find you any more."

"Every trade has its tools," Tom said.

"You can't help letting them affect you. Our tools are words."

"Words without meaning," she said bitterly. She picked up her cocktail glass and emptied it at a gulp. "I'm mortally sick of it. All over the world, people talking, talking, talking. Peace conferences, and no peace. Territorial arbitrations, and no settlement. Dinners, cocktail parties, round tables, and nothing ever comes of it."

"It's better than war," he said.

"That's what you all say. Why is it better? War at least is something real. Oh, Tom." She poured another cocktail. "You've done enough. Let's go back, please. We can forget all about this life."

His voice was very gentle. "This is our life, Myra."

"All right." She set the glass down so hard she was afraid for a moment she had broken it. "It may be yours, but it's not my life." Tears of anger were forming in her eyes. She wiped her hand impatiently across them. "I'm sorry, darling, but I'm not the type. Some people just aren't." She lifted her head. She would not have him feeling sorry for her.

She wanted him to say something. But he simply sat and watched her. Why couldn't he open himself and let her see what he really thought? But it was this damned habitual secrecy. Maybe she didn't dare to look. Maybe there wasn't really anything left inside him.

"Tom, I'm going home." In spite of her resolve, she could not face him. The way he sees it, she thought, I am weak. But people weren't meant to live like this. Looked at another way, the sense of duty which the Foreign Service tacitly acknowledged was fatuous and juvenile. Any woman would understand that. The diplomats wanted glory. They were afraid to run away because they were afraid of what people might think.

For an instant, his trained face caved in. He leaned over the cocktail shaker and she could not see his face. When he straightened up again, he had control.

"You're going alone?"

"If I have to." She lifted her chin. Now it was he who would not look at her. "Tom, darling. You know the phrase: this above all, to thine own self be true. It's terribly hard to say this. But sometimes it's braver to run away, when everything you love, everything you're living for, is in danger."

He fixed his eyes on the Martini. She couldn't bear it if he said some platitude. There would be no hope then. She would know he was irrevocably lost to her. He wet his lips. "Maybe running is a bit selfish, too," he said.

She sighed. There was still hope for



## THANKS N.I.A. FOR WRITING ACHIEVEMENT

"One day while looking through a magazine I saw an N.I.A. ad and decided to enroll. I have sold a question and answer to the 'Quiz-Em' column in 'This Week' Magazine. I also had a feature published with a by-line in the Leaper County Press. Thanks to N.I.A. for my writing success!" —Mrs. Norma Sullivan, Marlette, Mich.

# Why Can't You Write?

*It's much simpler than you think!*

SO many people with the "germ" of writing in them simply can't get started. They suffer from inertia. Or they set up imaginary barriers to taking the first step.

Many are convinced the field is confined to persons gifted with a genius for writing.

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them. together. "Maybe it is," she said. "Maybe women are selfish. Tom. But the world would have died out long ago if women hadn't fought like hell for homes and babies. And love. Tom." He looked up quickly as though to protest, but she stopped him with a gesture. "Yes, love. You're going away from me, carried away on a sea of words. We don't talk any more about us. We're suffocating under the meaningless talk we've developed because we're afraid we'll give away state secrets if we ever open up. Why do we have to sacrifice so much? Why does it have to be us?"

"Because it's my job," he said.

"Because it's your job," she echoed despairingly. "Oh, Tom." She covered her face with her hands and spoke through them. "Well, it's not my job. It's not my fault there's a Cold War. Oh, Tom." She got abruptly to her feet. "If any of it were even useful. But

you ask me to give up my whole life, give up everything any woman wants, and all that ever happens is words, words, words."

For a moment longer she stood, swaying. Then she collapsed on the couch again and sobbed. Even as she did it, she noticed the dining room door vibrate. Ilona again, listening. Were domestic quarrels grist for the secret police mills? Yes. Because an unhappy husband was a vulnerable diplomat. It was all part of the myriad tactics of the Cold War. I don't care, she thought. And the knowledge that she was so far indoctrinated that she had seen that slight tremble at the door made her cry harder than ever.

"I better dress," Tom said miserably.

He looked at the dining room doors, hesitating. He did not want to say it. She answered his unspoken question before she knew whether he could find it in him

to ask. "Yes, dinner is ready. A fine diplomatic dinner. Eight o'clock. As always." She couldn't say any more.

She heard the floor creak once, then the doors shut quietly. She was alone. It was all over. She was a weakling and a coward. But it was heavenly to stop being noble. I wonder what I will do, she thought. I love him. But there isn't anything to love now. The warmth, the intimacy are all gone.

Why did women always have to be put in this position? The things women wanted were peace and harmony, the very things the world professed to want. Left to themselves, the women of the world would never make war. Men's ideals made war. Why was it that the quiet wants of women never inspired anybody? It wasn't fair.

The telephone rang. She sat up and brushed some ashes off her gown. It was rumpled. And it was too good ever to send to a Budapest cleaner. They would ruin it purposely, as a small-scale sabotage of capitalist luxury. She shook her head. In Minnesota there were good American cleaners. She had forgotten about Minnesota for a second.

She got up automatically and opened the dining room door. Ilona was not there. Almost at once the maid came out of the kitchen, looked at Myra, smiled, and went back into the kitchen again. Myra took the phone out as far as she could, to keep the dining room under surveillance.

"Myra Clark here." The kitchen door was slightly ajar. But Ilona couldn't hear anything from that far away.

"Myra? Nick Johnson here." It was Tom's superior. "Is Tom around?"

"Yes, sir," she said. "I'll get him."

"Rather nice weather, Myra."

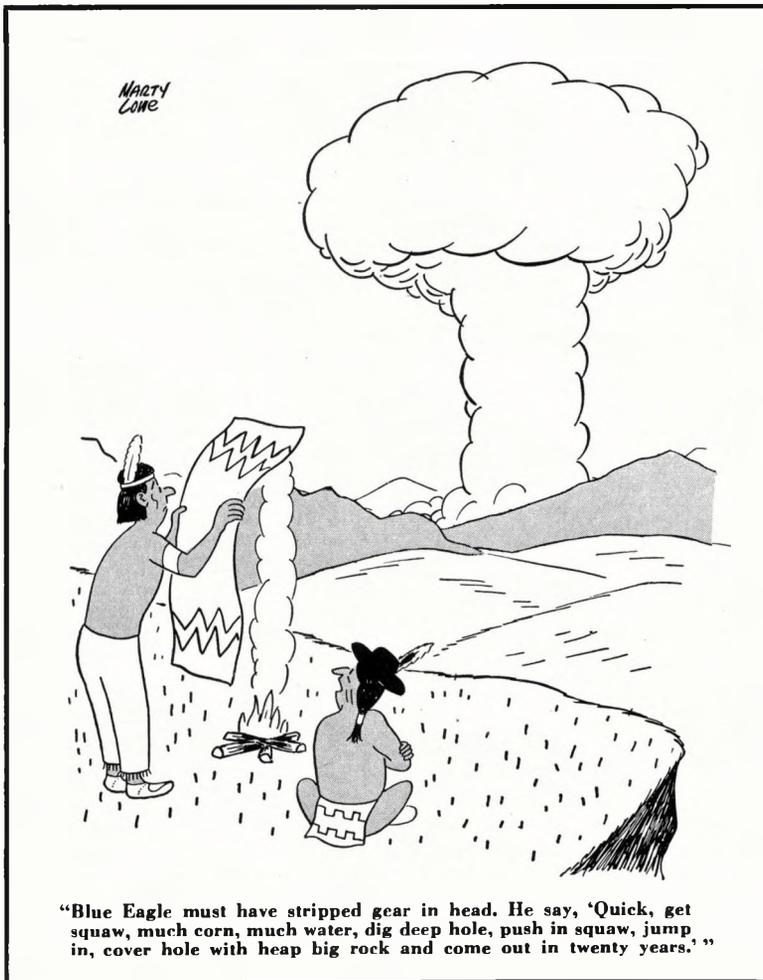
"Oh yes, sir," she said. "It is. It's nice weather. Just a moment."

She set the phone down carefully and went down the long hall to the bathroom. The gas heater was sputtering under the too-small boiler, and she had to knock hard before he heard her.

"Tom. It's Nick."

"Thank you."

She heard him splash, and the door opened almost at once. He had a towel wrapped around his waist, and gooseflesh started on his shoulders as the draft came in from the cold hallway. He wouldn't complain. If only once he would say, "Tell him I'm in the tub; I'll call back" or, "What does the old man want at this time of night?" she could have lived with it. But Tom never did. None of the professionals ever did. Tom wrapped himself in his bathrobe and stepped hurriedly into his slippers.



"Blue Eagle must have stripped gear in head. He say, 'Quick, get squaw, much corn, much water, dig deep hole, push in squaw, jump in, cover hole with heap big rock and come out in twenty years.'"

"Clark here, sir." Tom switched the phone into his other hand, still shivering a little. "Yes," Tom said. He listened for a long moment. Myra watched his face. There was no change. They are all like professional poker players, she thought. Twenty-four hours a day. "Yes, sir. All right. Yes, of course. Goodbye, sir." Tom put the phone down very gently in its cradle.

His face was the color of ashes. He sank down on the couch. She poured another drink and handed it to him. He nodded. "Ken Happing has been picked up," he said at last.

"Tom." She put her hand to her throat. It could happen any time. It could happen to Tom.

**T**he usual phony charge. Espionage. An hour ago. The pressure is on. Diplomatic immunity is always dependent on the pleasure of the government." Tom smiled faintly.

"Poor Janet." She felt sick with sympathy for Janet Happing. Janet was not a friend, in the old sense of back home. But there were no friends here in the old sense. She had played bridge with Janet, sat across from her at a hundred dinner parties. If only she could do something for Janet. They ought to be close together now, as only women could be in times of trouble. They ought to confide their fears in each other. They should take strength from each other.

"She's still coming," Tom said.

"Janet's coming? Here? To dinner?"

"Nick talked to Sully. It's better to keep her occupied. We don't know yet where they're holding Ken. We're hoping for a preliminary talk next week."

"Next week?" A preliminary talk. They might hold Ken Happing for months, or for years. Myra looked around the ordered, ornate room, grinding her teeth. There was nothing they could do about it. Only talk.

"I better dress," Tom said. He stared at his cocktail without touching it. After a moment he got up. He had aged another precious year since he had come through that door.

Myra automatically rang, then left the room. There was no need to tell Ilona to clear away the cocktail things. Ilona understood everything. Myra clenched her fists. If there were only some way to retaliate, for Ken, for all of it. But there was no way. No way at all.

In the bedroom, she let the negligee slide off her shoulders. She had been going to wear her black, but of course it would be impossible now. She looked at her other dresses. Bright colors were popular for diplomats' wives. Counterfeit gaiety. The only dress she had ever felt right in, in Hungary, was the black.

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# COLORTINT

She watched as Tom put the studs in his dress shirt and meticulously tied his tie. The lamplight picked out the first gray hairs, so much too early, above his temples. How could anybody think of diplomacy as a world of striped pants and tea?

She went to her closet and slipped her best dress off the hanger. It was her Grecian drape, all white, set off by a slash of color that was the stole. It left one shoulder bare.

Who were these people who could put Ken Happing in prison on a trumped-up, ridiculous charge? Who were they, so petty they took revenge by ruining beauty in the guise of cleaning it? She slipped the beautiful dress over her shoulders. She had always loved it. She was wearing it for Janet. No government ever existed, she thought, that could kill beauty. She sat down to do her nails, absorbed in doing them perfectly. When she looked up, Tom was standing over her.

"Like the dress?"

"You know I do," he said. "Look, Myra. Don't say anything to Janet about . . ." He couldn't look at her. "About Minnesota."

"Of course not." She brushed up her hair and got out her pretty silver barrette. She had not worn it on her hair for months. No government could be allowed to kill off life, or make it so scared it

had to run. So long as one person stayed. So long as there was still one wife in pretty clothes, the war was won.

"I'm staying with you, Tom," she said.

**M**Myra." He started toward her. "I mean, if you really can't stand it any more. It is hard—" His hands worked, while he said all the expected useless things they both knew he was supposed to say. "Thank you, darling. Maybe you can get out for a while. Maybe you need a vacation."

"There's the bell," she said.

"Right." he said. Gratefully, he got to his feet. The Service, she thought, smiling. It discourages emotional displays.

Jacques Marinac, the Second Secretary of the French Embassy, smiled and showed his teeth, the way he always did, then stepped back to let his wife and Janet Happing go ahead. Janet's eyes were very red. She held them wide as though the ring of mascara, that Myra had never seen her wear before, could guard them from their own tears. Myra turned around. The door from the dining room trembled ever so slightly. Then she took Janet's hand.

"Even the nights seem warmer," Janet Happing said in a determined quaver. "It's really spring."

"Please do come in," Myra said. "And let me have your wraps. It is. It's nice weather."

THE END

# You and Your Dog

*Is it true that dogs fall in love, suffer grief, and have nervous breakdowns? How do you cure the chronic barker or the car chaser? Here, an expert gives you a revealing analysis of the habits, whims, and needs of man's best friend*

**BY ARTHUR TRAYFORD, D.V.M.**

**D**ogs get under your skin and into your heart. Many owners become so attached to their dogs that they think of them as people and, consciously or unconsciously, attribute to them human characteristics. They overlook the gulf which separates an animal's mental processes from the human faculty of rational thought. And, unfortunately, in disregarding their pets' shortcomings they may fail also to realize that in some respects dogs excel their masters. Their chief superiority lies in their instincts and sensory perceptions, which are sharper and more sensitive than ours.

For example, do you know the method by which a dog can find his way home from almost any distance? It is the procedure used by bird dogs in searching a field for game: circling. Almost as if equipped by radar, the dog runs around and around in gradually widening circles until eventually he strikes a familiar area. Then he picks up the scent and journeys home. Small dogs whose travel is confined to a leap from one pillow to another—such as the Pomeranian and the Pekingese—would never make it. But dogs who are home-minded and capable of getting out and moving have been known to find their way home from distances of hundreds of miles. There was the Boston terrier, for instance, who disappeared from his home on Long Island for a whole year. One morning he was found sitting at the front

door of his owner's shop. As mute evidence of the miles he had traveled, he wore a Midwestern dog license.

The dog's most powerful faculty is his sense of smell. He does not have a strong sense of taste but his sense of smell takes its place. Dogs savor or reject their food according to the way it smells. For this reason, some dogs will not touch raw meat; they prefer cooked meat because of its more appetizing aroma. If the food has little or no smell, they must be very hungry before they will touch it. Most dogs, especially the gourmets—and there are gourmets among them—like seasoning because it accents the odor of food. The problem of an indifferent eater can often be overcome by sprinkling his food with garlic, onion salt, or bits of cooked bacon. Many dogs like fruits, including citrus fruits. Probably it appeals to them for the same reason that candy does: they like the sugar smell. On the other hand, dogs do not like peppermint, wintergreen, or anything aromatic.

## **Drinkers, Beware the Dog!**

Dogs definitely dislike the smell of alcohol. They do not take kindly to the overzealous efforts of the individual with liquor on his breath to be affectionate. To nuzzle a dog after two or three cocktails is the surest way I know of getting your nose bitten off.

The smell of smoke irritates a dog's nose and nerves. Dogs panic at fire, and, because the smell of smoke is associated with fire, they do not like the smell of a pipe, cigar, or cigarette.

The dog that is basically a hunting dog, such as the pointer, or the springer spaniel, can, on occasion, pick up the scent of birds from the air. When a female is in season, males living as far as half a mile away are able to pick up the scent.

Compared with human hearing, a dog's is extremely sensitive. Many high-pitched sounds which are beyond the frequency range discernible by human ears are heard clearly by dogs. For this reason, high-frequency overtones of sirens, whistles, or harmonicas which we do not even hear are irritating, in fact painful, to the dog's sensitive ears. Screaming and shouting are equally unpleasant to a dog. Whenever there is great excitement, or when children are playing noisily, it is a good idea to keep an eye on the dog.

Dogs know before we do when a hurricane is coming. The forerunning winds whistle through such tiny spaces as cracks and window crevices, filling the house—especially if it is an old house—with shrill, high-pitched sounds. They are so high-pitched that we cannot detect them, but dogs can. When a dog shakes his ears continually, as though they were troubling him, it is almost invariably during, or just



Robert C. Gescheider—Pis

**"LUCKY," A PURE-BRED COLLIE,** is considered the highest-scoring collie in obedience in the United States. His official name: Sunderland Gay Cavalier, U.D. Lucky responds well to commands and, like most dogs, loves approval. Obedience training may spell the difference between a good and a useless dog.

## The most important thing of all

before, a windstorm or a thunderstorm.

When a dog appears at school every day punctually at three o'clock to meet his little master or mistress, as dogs have been known to do, habit-pattern may be the explanation. But it is more probable that the high-pitched voices of the children give him the cue, for he can hear them a mile away.

### A Dog's-eye View of TV

Dogs are totally color-blind. They can distinguish light and shadow, black and white, but they cannot discern the color of an object.

I am often asked, "Can dogs see TV?" Before I can reply, the question is usually answered for me (in the affirmative) by tales of Loverhoy, who barks when a dog appears on the screen, or who growls and slinks away when the villain is bent on foul murder.

If the television screen is within their range of vision, dogs see light, shadow, and movement. But they do not see a clear-cut image. Thus, when your dog barks at the image of another dog on the screen, either it is sheer coincidence, or else he has picked up the sound. Similarly, dogs may appear to recognize the villain because, being extremely sensitive to inflection and intonation, they react to the menace in his voice.

This sensitivity to intonation is of great importance in training a dog. The repetition of such words as *Sit, Down, Go, Fetch, Carry, Stay* gets results, but it is the tone of voice which the dog understands and obeys.

A certain amount of physical chastisement is necessary in training a dog, but you should never beat a dog except in self-defense. A very effective way of putting something across to a dog is to hold his jowls and give him a flick across the nose—smartly, hut, since the nose is a pretty sensitive organ, not too forcefully.

The element of surprise is an important one in training.

When we have a chronic barker in the hospital, I cure him by squirting water into his face from a two-ounce syringe, which emits a fairly powerful stream. The procedure causes no pain but so startles the dog that he does not know what has happened. Three treatments of this sort usually suffice to cure him of his barking.

This startle technique is also useful in training a puppy to be quiet at night. If your small puppy raises hob while you are trying to sleep, go to the room in which he sleeps, enter it quickly without warning, snap on the lights, give him a

quick smack, snap the lights off again, and pop out. Repeat three or four times, or as often as necessary. After the first night, you should never have to bother again.

Obedience training can make the difference between a good dog and a useless one; it can make you a better owner, too. But what you learn at school you have to practice at home: for what you learn, your dog learns. Without homework well and faithfully done, obedience training is a waste of time.

The problem of training a dog not to chase cars besets most owners. It is a tough one. Throwing a bucket of water from a moving car into the dog's face, or jumping out at him, switch in hand, are the only known means. If repeated often enough, they can instill fear of cars in the dog. Yet they are not always successful. Even a dog that is injured by a car may not be cured of chasing. An injury stimulates resentment in most dogs, with the result that they chase cars more than ever.

One of the reasons that dogs endear themselves to their masters is that, as I have said, many of them have human characteristics.

Vanity, for instance. Dogs that have not been groomed as puppies may resent it later on. But if, from puppyhood, they are accustomed to daily grooming, and then it is neglected, they feel neglected. Show dogs, sometimes thought to be unhappy dogs, are no unhappier than show-girls. Like their human counterparts, they like the glamour treatment. Dogs dote on the extra affection that goes with being clipped, brushed, and pedicured. Their handlers talk to them, pet them. Other people pay a lot of attention to them, too. Like humans, they find their position in the spotlight gratifying to the ego.

### Dog Modesty and Monogamy

Dogs have a sense of modesty, too. A dog that has been clipped too short will often hide under a bed and do his best to stay out of sight until the hair grows out. He is ashamed, obviously, of his scanty wearing apparel.

Dogs can fall in love. They can have canine attachments. I knew an Irish setter who formed a strong attachment for a neighborhood mutt. She had a litter of puppies by him, and although her owner tried time and again to mate her with another setter, she would have none of him. She went back, in spite of all precautions, to the same old mutt, and to the day she died would never mate with any other dog.

Dogs are definitely jealous, as is apparent to the many owners who have a dog before they have a baby. When the baby comes, attention is transferred from Fido to that little howling thing; and Fido forgets he was ever housebroken, becomes destructive as he never was before, and generally gives the family an awful time of it.

"Do dogs prefer their own breed as friends?" owners ask me. No. A miniature dachshund and a Great Dane may be better friends than two Great Danes. Dogs choose their friends, as we do, for reasons of congeniality. They will bypass the arrogant type and run with the pooch that chases rabbits, is outgoing, has fun. Dogs recognize barks, too; they can distinguish between the barks of their pals and the barks of strangers.

### Man—Dog's Best Friend

Dogs probably like humans better than they like other dogs, but not altogether for the reasons commonly supposed. There is no food forthcoming from other dogs, nor shelter. In terms of comfort and security, which they value, other dogs can give them nothing. Hence their preference for man.

Many dogs show a grief-pattern at an owner's death, but the fact that this reaction generally occurs in dogs who are at least ten years old indicates that the grief-pattern is, in part, actually broken habit-pattern.

Some of the diseases of man are also common to dogs:

Dogs may have cancer. In the female, mixed mammary tumors are most common. In the male, tumors appear most often in the genital organs. However, they are not usually malignant. In both sexes, lung cancer occurs.

The growth of cancer is rapid during the female's estrogenic cycle, but slows down when heat is over. Mammary tumors are not common in dogs that have been spayed. Three months after a female suffering from carcinoma is spayed, the disease subsides—often so completely that further treatment is unnecessary.

In answer to another question I am often asked, let me say here that spaying does not alter the disposition, personality, or behavior pattern of a dog. The only exception to this rule is the case of the dog who has cystic ovaries. In this case, spaying will restore whatever personality traits the dog had before the cysts developed.

The optimum time to spay is before the female comes into her first season. If not done then, it should be done four

# *in dog-training is the element of surprise*

months after she is out of season. But at any age it is safe, and when a dog is not being used to propagate her kind, it is humane. After spaying, the animal is at rest—mentally and emotionally. There is no sex impulse, and she stays home more. A spayed female is a better pet than a male.

If a male is to be altered, the operation should be performed early in his life. He becomes fat, insipid, and lazy if it is done later on.

Dogs do not show primary disease of the vascular system. Apoplexy, or cerebral hemorrhage, may occur after canine infectious hepatitis or leptospirosis. Dogs are subject to viruses of their own, and to infected tonsils, which often require a tonsillectomy. They also have ear problems.

A loose tooth can cause pain in the dog's jaw, but, by and large, dogs are less sensitive to pain than humans. Moreover, they do not go into emotional throes of pain as we do.

The idea that people "catch things" from dogs is, in large part, exaggerated. Rabies, when there is physical contact, is communicable. Scabies, commonly known as the mange, can be transmitted. The fungii, or skin diseases such as ringworm, are infectious when there is contact. Dogs may be carriers of a few other diseases.

## **Psychiatry for a Spaniel**

"Is it possible," I have often been asked, "for a dog to have emotionally induced illnesses?"

It is indeed. A typical case is that of a cocker spaniel brought to us shivering and shaking, vomiting, suffering from diarrhea, and with a temperature of 103 degrees. We gave her the normal treatment, which includes penicillin and anti-spasmodics, and the disorder cleared up. Three days later it started all over again. The treatment was repeated. Two days later, another recurrence. Not until the member of the family to whom she was most attached returned from a trip did the symptoms finally subside—and the dog has never had another "sick" day. Nor is she likely to have one until the object of her affections decides to take off again.

For the most part, dogs are sensible creatures, but we do have a few "nuts" among them with definitely psychotic tendencies.

Some dogs suffer from claustrophobia. If, in the initial stage of this affliction, the dog is put in one room and made to stay there, the trouble can often be overcome. If he is so disturbed that it is

impossible to cure him in such a manner, the only solution is to get rid of him.

Of the several human characteristics observed in dogs, the most striking is that the dog, like the human animal, is an individual.

In the opinion of many authorities, the German shepherd, justly famed for his work as the Seeing-Eye Dog, is the most intelligent breed. Generally speaking, however, no one breed is smarter than another. The common belief that mongrels are smarter than pure-breds is not necessarily true. The street urchins among them, who survive by pluck and intelligence, do develop a more than common degree of shrewdness, but this is the result of individual experience.

The male of any breed is naturally a wanderer; yet those who have strong family attachments stay near home. Others who are literally huns disappear for days at a time, willing to lie in the sun on the back porch of anyone who will give them a handout.

In any breed of dog some will be particularly attached to, others will take advantage of, the individual who feeds them.

And among dogs, as among men, there are the social and the antisocial, the stupid and the smart, the good fellows and the stinkers.

This being so, it is not possible to give specific answers to such questions as "What breed of dog is safest in a family where there are children?" or "Which breed adapts best to life in a city apartment?"

Generally speaking, it is wise, especially where there are children, to bypass the dog who acknowledges only one master. Otherwise, it is like having a time-bomb around. You dare not move for fear the mechanism will be disturbed.

## **Inbreeding Presents Problems**

Popular breeds that have been inbred present problems. When they are extremely inbred, with all sense of biology lost in the process, they become neurotic, hysterical, and unable to bear being touched. They are what we call "screamers." Congenital defects also show up: hair lips, cleft palates, hips that dislocate. Inbred dogs can also have congenital knee-joint deformities.

The longevity of a pet often influences a family's choice. Theoretically, the smaller the dog, the longer his life will be. In a large dog the metabolic rate is higher. He lives at a more rapid pace, wears out sooner. For example, the average age of the Great Dane is six years,

whereas some Chihuahuas live to be fifteen or sixteen years old.

Certain breeds are more complacent, and, over a long period of time, have established better behavior-patterns than others. The dachshund makes a fine pet. He has a great amount of character, gets along well with everyone, and is also content to be alone. The beagle, one of the hound group, is of a friendly, though somewhat detached and impersonal, nature. The standard poodle is an intelligent dog, trains readily, is a fine retriever, and quickly grasps what you tell him.

## **The Wolf at the Doghouse Door**

There is no wolf, by the way, in the ancestry of the German shepherd, misnamed the "police dog." The only breeds with wolf in them are in the Arctic. They are crossbred for strength and virility and for the wolf's ability to go long periods without food.

The Airedale is a very satisfactory dog, docile and dependable. So is the springer spaniel. The fact that neither of these breeds is currently "chic" makes them good dogs, since there is not the urge to breed and, inevitably, inbreed them.

In buying a dog of any breed, however, the primary rule is *always buy a puppy*. And be sure it is a puppy with a glossy coat, bright eyes, and an air of animation. Above all, buy the puppy that comes up and wags his tail. As for the fellow that goes off in a corner and whimpers—*leave him there*. He wants to be alone. He will always want to be alone. Also leave behind you the pooch that won't even let you touch him without yammering. He is, and always will be, a stinker. It is wise to take your whole family along (especially the children), for the puppy that shows no fear of the whole lot of you will be able to take the inevitable mauling—physical and mental—and will become a happy and healthy member of the family.

When they are sick, dogs instinctively want to get away from human contact. They usually seek out a cold or wet place in which to get well or to die. *If I stay with the pack in my weakened condition, they seem to be thinking, the pack will finish me off.* They are reverting to the habits of their remote ancestors and to the primitive state from which they came.

At any time, from birth to death, this atavistic reaction is likely to occur—a strong reminder that, although the dog is man's best friend, he is still an animal, and must be considered such if the relationship between dog and man is to be happy and beneficial to both. THE END



**BRINGING THE HOUSE DOWN** at Hollywood's Macombo. Dinah is a natural singer. She once took singing lessons while in high school, "But that lasted only two months." Dinah had a conflicting interest—cheerleading at football games.

# For Fifteen Years Nobody Finer

Dinah Shore: In 1940, she sang a song on Eddie Cantor's NBC network show. Now—fifteen years later—in a business where popularity wanes overnight, this naïve girl from Tennessee still has the fans crying for more

Photos By Homer Page



**AT RADIO SHOW REHEARSAL.** Dinah gives her all, gets back plenty in income. But the dollars haven't always rolled in. During hard early days, with another unknown, Frank Sinatra, she sang for nothing, just to show what she could do.

**BY ALBERT MOREHEAD**

Were you televiewing a few months ago when comedian Morey Amsterdam and columnist Earl Wilson appeared as guests on the same TV show? If so, you heard them in a totally unrehearsed and utterly confused bit of conversation.

"You never can tell how long you'll stay at the top," comedian Morey was saying. "Biggest thing that ever was, and look what happened."

"Yeah," rejoined columnist Earl. "terrific; bigger than ever. But she deserves it."

"She?" queried Amsterdam, momentarily puzzled. "Bigger than ever? You mean they discovered another one?"

"Of course not," Wilson said scornfully. "There'll never be another one like her."

Along about this time it began to dawn on both gentlemen that they were conversing on two separate subjects. Mr. Amsterdam was talking about the dinosaur. Mr. Wilson, on the other hand, had in mind Miss Dinah Shore.

Well, as short a time as a year or so ago the trade might have agreed with comedian Amsterdam. While far from extinct, Dinah Shore had slipped. Patti Page had replaced her as top seller of phonograph records; television produc-

ers thought of Dinah chiefly as a guest; and she hadn't had a movie contract for years.

Yet, just when the tide seemed at low ebb on this particular shore. Dr. Gallup polled the public on its favorite girl singers—and lo, Dinah's name still led all the rest. Which was no surprise to Shore fans; after all, she was unquestionably the favorite entertainer of ten million American fighting men in World War II. Even Dinah, who was a cheerleader in her college days, couldn't ask for a bigger cheering section than that.

**TV Put Her Back on Top**

Consistent with the times, it was television that put Dinah back on top again. With her own new show four seasons ago, she set a standard for fifteen-minute productions and consistently challenged Perry Como for the highest rating among multiple weekly shows. Chevrolet sponsors Dinah's TV show as well as her twice-a-week radio appearances.

Dinah's success in television was followed by a starring role in Paramount's "Aaron Slick from Punkin Crick," which also led to a boom in her record sales. In the bobby-soxers' autograph market, a Dinah Shore rose from a fifth of an Eddie Fisher to three Johnny Rays. NBC

finally gave its seal of approval by signing her to a long-term contract.

Her popularity within the NBC organization is not confined to the network's executives only. In the living room of her Encino, California, home Dinah proudly displays two cigarette boxes, presentations from the people who work with her. One is engraved: "To Dinah—The Sweetheart of NBC-TV." The other gift states simply: "From Your Ever Lovin' Studio 'D' Crew."

Dinah's appeal is much like that of Bing Crosby; one might even call her the female counterpart of Crosby. She isn't beautiful, but people like her looks. Experts may not find her voice of operatic quality, but the public goes for it. And, like Crosby, she has amazing versatility and can sing anything from low-down blues to cute novelties to tender love songs.

This versatility wasn't God-given: Dinah earned it the hard way. Back in 1940, when she got her first big break—a spot on Eddie Cantor's radio show—her new boss made a remark that epitomizes Dinah's formula for making good on Broadway. "You wouldn't believe it," said Cantor in awed tones. "You wouldn't believe it. I never knew anybody who worked so hard. Every week she shows up with



**LET'S GO.** In Hollywood, Dinah indicates she's all set to record her twice-a-week radio show after hours of polishing. The show is taped two weeks in advance.



**IN THE GROOVE.** "Whatever Lola Wants" is one of her big three. The other two, "Yes, My Darling Daughter" and "Sweet Violets," sold half a million records each.

twenty new songs. She's rehearsed 'em and she's learned 'em, and she wants to sing all twenty of 'em so I can pick out one for the show."

#### "Sing Free If You Have To"

Dinah's advice for young hopefuls today is the same as her policy was then: "Keep singing. Sing for money if you can get it, and sing free if you have to, but keep singing." In 1937, when Dinah first invaded Broadway, jobs were scarce even for headliners. Dozens of Broadway managers and agents still tell mournfully of the time they auditioned Dinah Shore and could have signed her, but let her go. To sing at all, Dinah had to sing free. Her first sustaining radio jobs (in one of

which she was paired with Frank Sinatra) were unpaid.

Although everybody in the entertainment field considers Dinah a polished performer, she still insists she has a great deal to learn. Because of her never-flagging desire to improve herself, Dinah does a night club performance every so often. She maintains that the immediate reaction an artist gets in a night club is extremely valuable.

Dinah traces her capacity for hard work to an attack of polio that struck her in infancy. That was in her native Winchester, Tennessee (population then 2,000), in the days when Dinah was still named Frances Rose Shore, abbreviated in Southern fashion to Fanny-Rose and

later changed because "Dinah" (is there anyone finah?) was her theme song on her first radio show.

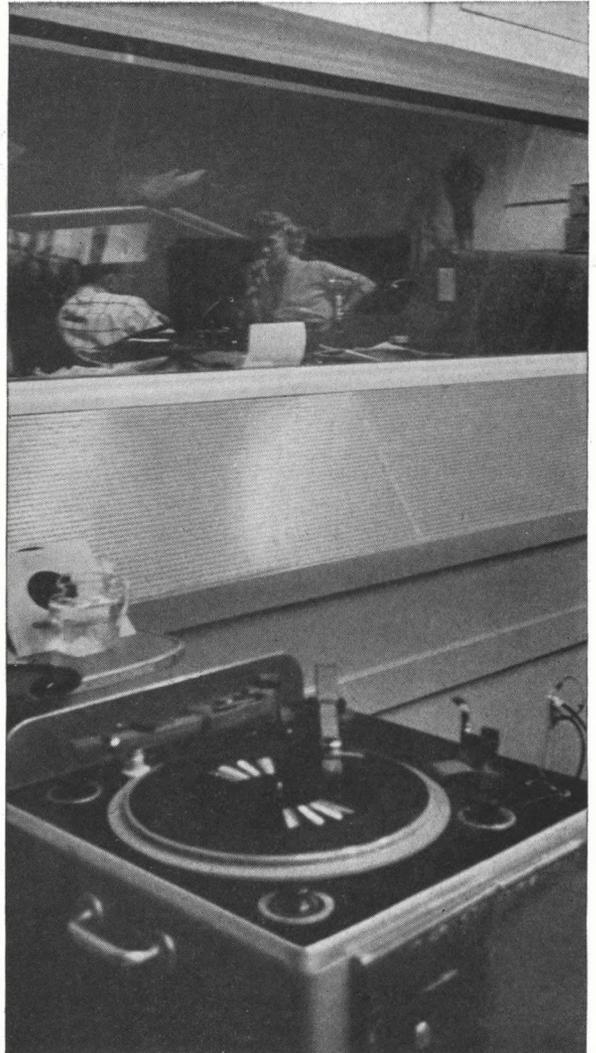
Though Dinah recovered completely from polio, she never got over the idea that neighbors were looking at her and wondering. So she had to dance longer and swim harder and do more things than any of the other girls, just to prove that there was nothing wrong with her.

#### A Young and Tender Heart

Though she graduated from Vanderbilt University before she moved on to Broadway, the Dinah Shore of the early New York years was still a college girl emotionally, rendered misty-eyed at the very thought of all the brave young men going



**A FLUFF.** *Instead of getting rattled, she breaks herself up, laughs it off, does another take. A fan claims that Dinah's relaxed, easy-living attitude is her real secret.*



**FIFTEEN-MINUTE PLAYBACK.** *Dinah listens in for spots that need editing. The first recordings Dinah ever made were with Xavier Cugat, who took a chance on her.*

off to war. She dated dozens of them and would daily announce herself irrevocably in love with one or the other. This hero-worship was so complete it almost broke up her association with Ticker Freeman, who was then her coach and today is her accompanist and musical *alter ego*. When Ticker figured one of Dinah's soldier boys was a phony, and said so, Dinah stormed out of the studio and wouldn't speak to Freeman for months. The GI beau finally proved Ticker one hundred per cent correct. He left Dinah singing the blues while he stole off and married the girl back home. This was a bitter pill for the struggling vocalist to swallow; she had not only lost her man, but Ticker as well. Realizing that she had acted

foolishly in the first place, Dinah contacted Freeman and apologized. With an important audition coming up, she figured that bygones had better be bygones.

Today Ticker Freeman plays an integral part in Dinah's professional career. He is no Svengali. Neither is he her business manager.

#### Ticker Keeps Tabs

Dinah may sing a song he doesn't like, or refuse one he does like, but never, never does Dinah do anything careerwise which Ticker doesn't know about. On musical matters she relies upon his judgment as often as upon her own.

Although the Shore-Freeman combination is very serious and conscientious

on matters which deal with music, they still manage to have a lot of fun.

For those not acquainted with the elaborate practical jokes exchanged between people in show business, and so loved by Dinah, Ticker, and their intimates, it may be well to give a documented case history of one that happened during one of her TV shows.

The program in question had a Casbah motif. Dinah was to walk down a winding street while snake charmers played flutes, Arabs gave forth with chants, and beggars beseeched alms for the love of Allah.

During rehearsals Dinah had a difficult time mastering the lyrics of one of the songs, but when showtime neared and Ticker asked her whether she wanted a

## For Fifteen Years Nobody Finer (continued)



**SITTING ON NEWSPAPERS** that keep the set clean, Dinah warms up to her NBC-TV show with the singing Skylarks. What doesn't show is that Dinah has a B.A. in sociology from Vanderbilt University, is a photography bug, an expert cook, an artist who paints in oils. Further, along with her husband, George, she is a winner of a number of tennis tournaments.

cue card set on the TV camera, she declined. The show went on and Dinah sang one song as she bought post cards from a little shop in the Casbah. Then she sang another as she sat at a sidewalk café.

### Cue to Sing Made Her Laugh

As she approached the spot where she was to sing her final song, the same number that had been giving her trouble, Ticker, out of the camera's range, asked her if she knew the lyrics.

Dinah frantically said she didn't, and Freeman immediately sang the first few bars. With a sigh of relief she continued down the winding street, but just before the musical conductor gave the down-beat, her mind went blank.

Ticker, quickly sizing up the situation, grabbed a cue card he had prepared "just in case" and dashed for the camera. He put the card on a mount, and Dinah immediately smiled. The smile turned into laughter as she approached the card, which had been purposely printed in Arabic script.

As the tension eased off, she remembered the words and continued the song, laughing all the way through it. Those who saw the show will never forget it.

In one respect, Dinah is one girl in fifty million. Like two generations of American girls, she fell in love with the screen image of a movie actor; but unlike any of the others she met her man and,

not very long afterwards, married him.

It began in 1942. Dinah was in a vaudeville show emceed by Milton Berle and playing at the Steel Pier in Atlantic City. With nine shows a day there was hardly time to go out between performances, so Dinah would rest by sitting in one of the movie theaters on the Steel Pier. "The Cowboy and the Blonde" was playing, starring George Montgomery. By the time she had seen the picture fifty or sixty times, Dinah was in love with him.

### How to Catch a Cowboy

She made no bones about it, either. Immediately she announced to her roommate that this was the man she was going to marry. When she got to Hollywood she made the same revelation to Bing Crosby, with whom she was singing at Army camps. "He used to kid me a lot about it," she recalls, "especially when he found out I hadn't even met the man." Later Dinah sang at the Hollywood Canteen, where her first question was, "Is George Montgomery here?" He was, and in uniform, too; so they met, and neither of them dated anybody else from that time on. A year later, when George came back on a furlough, they were married.

George and Dinah make as logical a couple as Hollywood ever saw; they are the sob sisters' delight. George is a man of parts: as an architect, he designed their new house, and as a skilled lathe

hand, he made all their fine furniture and now runs a flourishing factory in his spare time. But he is also as genuine a cowboy as you'll ever meet off the screen. He has the authentic background, having been born and raised on a Montana ranch. His speech is the cowboy's drawl; he is the strong, silent type personified, and, lady, don't be surprised if he calls you "ma'am." George is currently working for Columbia Pictures and United Artists, and is in the throes of working on his own production, "Red Blizzard," with Bud Guthrie, the author of the screenplay of "Shane."

Aside from radio, television, recording dates, and an occasional motion picture or night club act, Dinah also manages to find time to be a good mother to her two children—Melissa, eight, and Jody, one year old. Dinah is a fond mother. The twentieth-century child never ceases to amaze her. Thoughtfully she recalls the time she took Missy to see the stage production of "Brigadoon." This was a special treat; when the curtain rose, Missy grabbed her mother and said, "Mommy, it's just like television in technicolor."

### They Planned a Large Family

George and Dinah always planned on having a large family, but since Missy's birth they have not succeeded in having any more children. They applied at a great many adoption agencies, but were

stymied because they had a child of their own. George and Dinah finally found an agency that felt they were ideally mated, and, therefore, would be excellent parents. Jody was born March 3 and brought to the Montgomerys' ten days later.

### Good Egg in Hard-boiled Business

Dinah, after half a generation spent in the most hard-boiled business on earth, is still the naïve girl who came out of Tennessee fifteen years ago. At RCA-Victor there was consternation among the top brass (who unanimously proclaim that Dinah is their favorite recording star) when someone assigned her to record "Sweet Violets," a traditional bawdy song with cleaned-up lyrics. But they needn't have worried. Dinah had never heard the original of that song, and if she had, she would not have had the slightest idea what it meant. At radio conferences, most of which begin with an exchange of everyone's latest off-color jokes, someone occasionally slips when Dinah is present; but after he stops himself with a gasp, a glance at Dinah is reassuring. It has passed completely over her head.

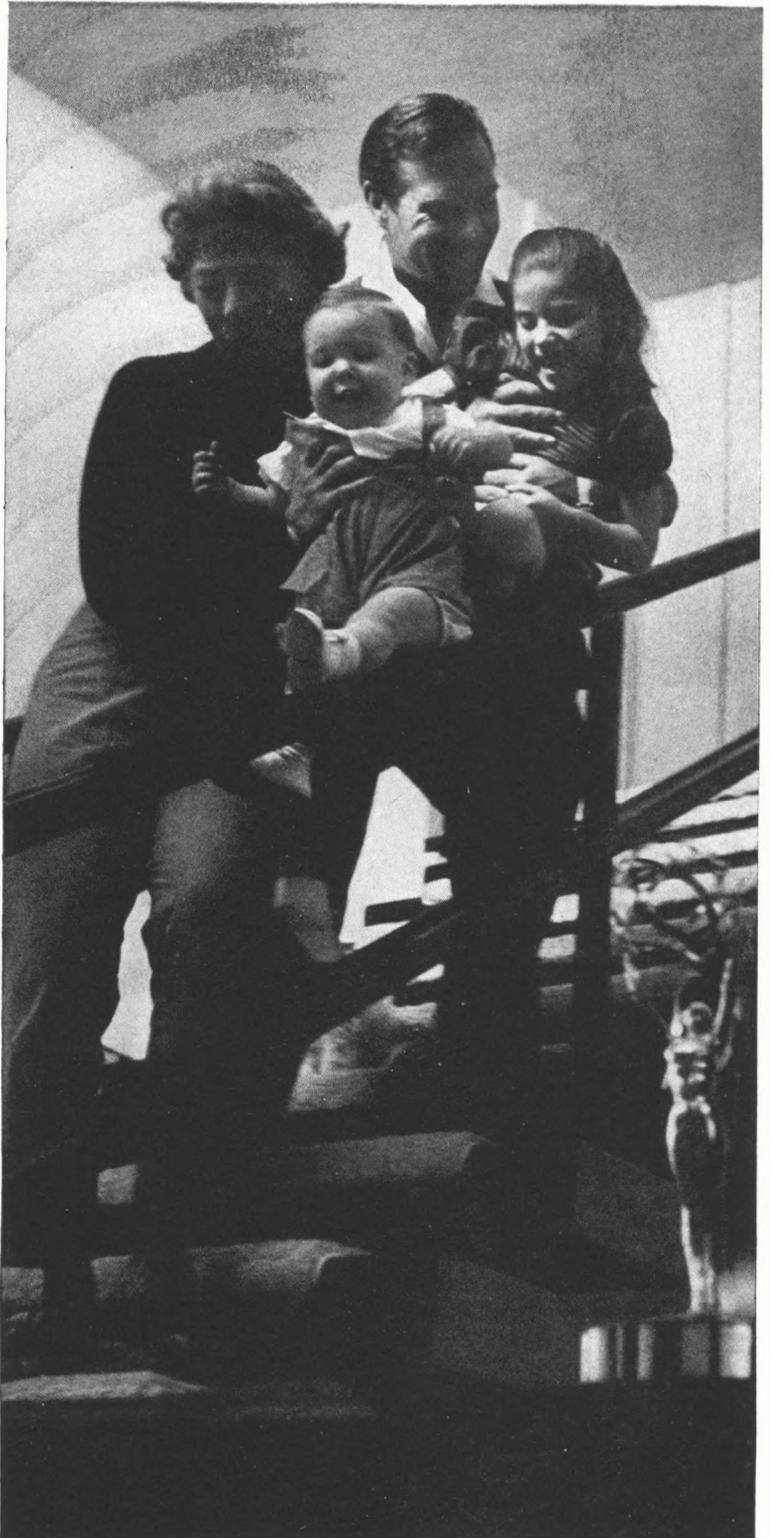
Despite the fact that Dinah's naïveté and her position as a good Hollywood wife and mother are real and not just publicity gags, it would be a mistake to underestimate her shrewdness and toughness in business dealings. Dinah has the best deal in the country on phonograph records. She gets full royalties with no deductions. This makes quite a difference, especially when there is a twenty-seven-piece orchestra at a minimum of \$41.25 a man and a seven-man chorus at \$64 each.

Furthermore, Dinah is a businesswoman, although she is certainly never ruthless. Though she may fly into rages when she thinks someone is trying to put something over on her, she is pretty forgiving about it after a half hour or so.

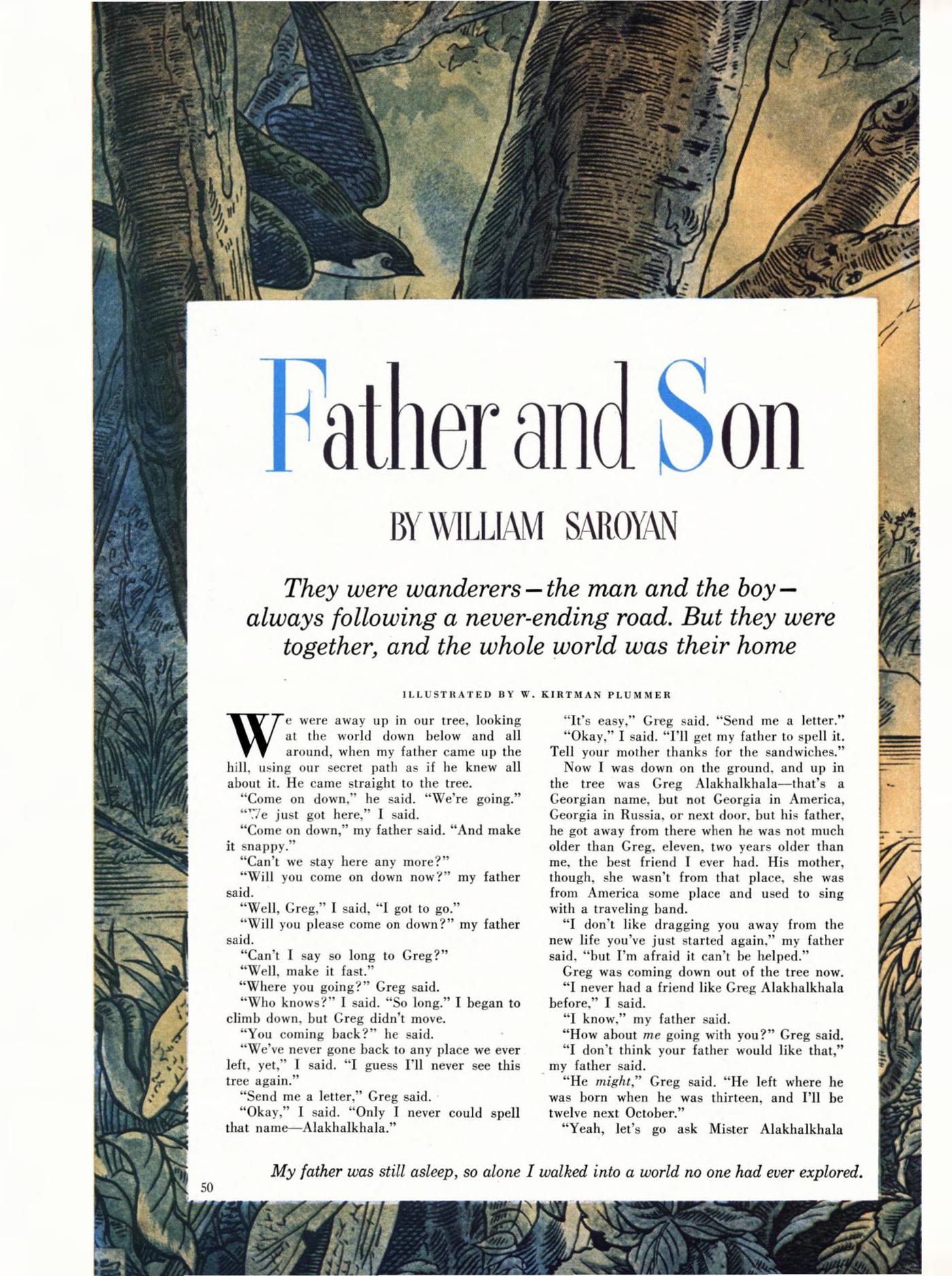
When business doesn't interfere, Dinah and George like to pursue their hobbies. They are both tennis enthusiasts, and whenever possible they play a few sets. Painting also takes up their spare time, and Missy joins in this. Jody is too young to dabble, but Dinah says, "Give him time." She has expressed a genuine desire to attend school and study serious painting, while George, on the other hand, has a yearning to study architecture.

If her present routine lasts, though, the art studies will have to wait, because today Dinah works on a six-day-a-week, fourteen-hour-a-day schedule that brings in a golden tide. And, as things stand now, there is no sign at all that this tide is receding. Instead, it just keeps on rising with each passing year.

THE END



**DINAH'S MAJOR INTERESTS:** husband George Montgomery, adopted son Jody, daughter "Missy Ann." George designed their Beverly Hills home and also designed the furniture. At right is Dinah's TV award, "Emmy."



# Father and Son

BY WILLIAM SAROYAN

*They were wanderers—the man and the boy—  
always following a never-ending road. But they were  
together, and the whole world was their home*

ILLUSTRATED BY W. KIRTMAN PLUMMER

**W**e were away up in our tree, looking at the world down below and all around, when my father came up the hill, using our secret path as if he knew all about it. He came straight to the tree.

"Come on down," he said. "We're going."

"We just got here," I said.

"Come on down," my father said. "And make it snappy."

"Can't we stay here any more?"

"Will you come on down now?" my father said.

"Well, Greg," I said, "I got to go."

"Will you please come on down?" my father said.

"Can't I say so long to Greg?"

"Well, make it fast."

"Where you going?" Greg said.

"Who knows?" I said. "So long." I began to climb down, but Greg didn't move.

"You coming back?" he said.

"We've never gone back to any place we ever left, yet," I said. "I guess I'll never see this tree again."

"Send me a letter," Greg said.

"Okay," I said. "Only I never could spell that name—Alakhalkhala."

"It's easy," Greg said. "Send me a letter."

"Okay," I said. "I'll get my father to spell it. Tell your mother thanks for the sandwiches."

Now I was down on the ground, and up in the tree was Greg Alakhalkhala—that's a Georgian name, but not Georgia in America, Georgia in Russia, or next door, but his father, he got away from there when he was not much older than Greg, eleven, two years older than me, the best friend I ever had. His mother, though, she wasn't from that place, she was from America some place and used to sing with a traveling band.

"I don't like dragging you away from the new life you've just started again," my father said, "but I'm afraid it can't be helped."

Greg was coming down out of the tree now.

"I never had a friend like Greg Alakhalkhala before," I said.

"I know," my father said.

"How about *me* going with you?" Greg said.

"I don't think your father would like that," my father said.

"He *might*," Greg said. "He left where he was born when he was thirteen, and I'll be twelve next October."

"Yeah, let's go ask Mister Alakhalkhala

*My father was still asleep, so alone I walked into a world no one had ever explored.*



# Father and Son (continued)

can we take Greg with us," I said.

"I'm afraid not," my father said.

Now Greg was out of the tree.

"I certainly wish you fellows could stay together," my father said. He put his arms around Greg and Greg said, "A month ago when you moved here him and me started out by having a fight, but right after that we've been like brothers."

"I expected to stay longer," my father said.

"You want my knife?" Greg said. "You can have it now." He fished the knife out of his pocket and held it out to me. I wanted that knife, but I couldn't take it, because my father said you've got to give other people stuff but not take anything from them when they offer it to you.

"That's your knife," I said.

I fished the Mexican dollar out of my pocket that my father gave me on my seventh birthday and I said, "Here's that Mexican dollar, Greg."

I expected him to grab it because he was always asking to look at it again and once he borrowed it overnight, but maybe his father told him something like what my father told me about giving and taking, because he didn't grab the dollar.

"No, sir," he said. "You can have this here old knife, but I won't take your Mexican dollar."

Well, then my father fished into his pocket and brought up a handful of keys and coins. He picked out half a buck and he took Greg's hand and put the half a buck in it, and then he took my hand and put a quarter in it, and then we started walking down the secret path, down the hill, around the new houses, to the road that wasn't even paved yet, on our way to the place where we had lived for a month in a furnished room, with my father's Ford out front.

I thought Greg would walk along with us, but he didn't, and when I turned around I saw him climbing back up into the tree.

When we got to the car I looked back up the hill and I saw him away up in the tree again, higher up in it than we had ever gone together.

I waved at him and hollered. "So long, Greg," and he waved back and maybe hollered something, too, but I didn't hear anything, and then we got in the car and started to move again, about six o'clock in the afternoon.

I took one last look up the hill, at the tree, and I saw it again, the sun going down behind it, and Greg away up in the tree, waving.

"Well, I'm sorry," my father said.

"That's all right," I said, but I guess my voice cracked. My father put his arm around me and didn't say anything. I got mad at myself for almost starting to cry—my father had enough trouble without

having a nine-year-old boy going around with him, bawling—so I made me stop. I went over the front seat to the back and stretched out there. My father turned on the radio. It was a cowboy singing about his lonesome life, and I said to myself, "Well, there isn't anybody anywhere who isn't lonesome, I guess."

Now, one more time, all the things I had planned were changed, and all the things Greg and me were going to do we'd never do. I'd never see him again, or his father, or his mother, or his two little sisters, or his little baby brother.

And that hideaway we had in the tree, that was gone forever, too, and the secret path up the hill, just past where they were putting up the new houses, and the workmen Greg and me knew and talked to and helped a little sometimes for pieces of wood and bricks and leftover pieces of pipes, and linoleum, and shingles, and nails, and the beer bottles they left lying around that Greg and me put up and threw rocks at and got real good at, where we could hit a bottle and break it first crack, or second or third anyway, and the school we walked to every morning, now it was all gone again because my father had to move again.

After the cowboy, a girl sang about a man who cheated her, but not in money or anything like that, he cheated some other way, and she sounded lonesome, too, and I said to myself, "This old world is sure one big place of trouble."

I got up front again and sat beside my father, but he didn't say anything, and I didn't say anything. When we were out on the highway he said, "You get hungry, there's some stuff in a paper bag somewhere in the back there," and I said, "I'll eat when you do."

"Cigarettes take away my appetite," he said, "but you don't smoke, so don't wait for me. I may not want anything for a long time."

Now, a fellow came on the radio and talked about war prisoners, and my father and me we listened to everything he said. Any man who ain't a war prisoner, he's a lucky man. My father wasn't a war prisoner, and neither was I. I felt real good about that. We weren't prisoners of anybody or anything. I was almost glad we were on our way again where a minute ago I was broken up about it.

"Old Chugger," my father said, which is one of his favorite names for me. He put his hand on my head and tightened his fingers real hard and rubbed my hair around and laughed a little, and I did, too, because if Greg Alakhalkhala was my best pal so far in this life, my father—well, you don't find them like that every day.

So we were on our way again, rolling

along real good. I began to think ahead to what kind of a place we would live in next, who would be there, what the school would be like, and it wasn't half bad, but I couldn't forget Greg Alakhalkhala and I never will.

It was a state highway with only a few trucks on it. Around was open country, lakes in the fields made by rain, little black mud hens sitting on top of the water, now and then a white heron standing in it. Once in a while, we'd come to a little house with a couple of trees, a barn and a fence, a horse and a cow, and a dog. One place had two sheep and a cat on the front lawn, the three of them standing there together. There were hawks going around real slow in the sky, too. Pretty soon it was almost dark, and the whole world seemed still and faraway.

"Well," my father said, "what do you think? I mean, the three years we've been alone, we've never stayed anywhere more than a month."

"Every place we ever went to was okay, though."

"But you'd rather stay in one place a year or two, wouldn't you?"

"I guess so."

"We'll do it one of these days."

"Where we going this time?"

"I thought we might try a little town instead of a big one for a change."

"Which little town?"

"Oh, any little town that looks okay."

"Far from here?"

"Well, not too far, because we haven't got enough money to go very far."

"How much have we got?"

"We've got the twenty dollars we try not to break into—that's our reserve, for hard times—and then all we've got is a couple of dollars. And of course our car."

"Suppose we had to sell our car, or somebody stole it, then what would we do?"

"Buy another."

"We couldn't get along without a car, could we?"

"You wouldn't want to, would you?"

"I don't know."

"We'd only have to travel by bus or train, and that's not half as much fun as traveling in your own car."

"I guess so."

We drove along another three or four minutes until we came to a little bridge over a little creek. My father stopped the car and we got out and we put the paper bag with the food in it on the railing of the bridge and brought the stuff out of the bag and put it on the railing, so we could see what we had. There was half a loaf of French bread, a piece of yellow cheese, two apples, a carton of milk, and a little jar of mustard, so my father got out his pocket knife and made a cheese sandwich for me, and then made one for

himself. I drank from the carton, and after we had eaten all the cheese and almost all of the bread we each ate an apple, and my father said, "If we'd gone to a restaurant that meal would have cost us a dollar each. We save a lot of money that way."

It was a fine supper, standing on the bridge and chewing the food and looking at the water flowing in the stream.

"We live everywhere," my father said. "When I was your age I hadn't been more than ten miles away from where I was born. New York is a great place all right, but a fellow likes to get around and have a look at the rest of the world, too. I always planned to travel the minute I could afford it."

We went back to the car and got in and began to go again, and my father said, "All right, now, Chugger, I'd like to hear you sing," so I began to sing the song I'd heard the cowboy sing, only I put new words to it. My father laughed and said, "You got a lot of comedy inside your head, Chugger, a whole lot of nice laughter in there."

A car is a good thing at that, I guess, because you can make it take you anywhere any time, fast or slow. Many times we had our car going more than a hundred miles an hour, but only for a minute or two when the highway was empty and straight and level, and many times we had it going almost as slow as a man walking, so we could look at everything all around.

My father bought our car second-hand in New York when my mother and sister and my father and me were separated. We all sat down together and talked the whole thing over like intelligent people, as my mother said. There were a lot of things to agree on and in the end my sister voted to stay with my mother and I voted to stay with my father and everything was polite and nice but at the same time a little strange and sad, and my father and my mother shook hands and smiled and even laughed a little, and then my father picked up my sister and hugged her, and my mother hugged me, and my father picked up the two suitcases that he had packed our stuff in, and we all said goodbye—six or seven times each, I guess—and then my father and my mother hugged quick and polite one last time, and then we went out of there and walked about six blocks to the place where they sold secondhand cars.

We looked at a lot of them but we kept going back to the Ford because according to my father it was the kind of car we ought to have, being what they call a Ranch Wagon.

"It's red, too," my father said, "and red's just about the liveliest color there is."

I didn't exactly understand what a

thing like that had to do with anything, but I believed it must have a lot to do with it.

My father sat at the wheel, started the motor, listened, got out, lifted the hood, looked at the motor, then got inside the car and pushed the rear seat down, making a big flat place just behind the front seat.

"Back here," he said to me, "we can stretch out and sleep if we feel like it."

The car was a thousand dollars but my father talked to the man, and after a while he bought the car for nine hundred dollars cash. He put our suitcases in it and we drove out into the streets of New York and began to go, about sundown of a day in March, three years ago.

We'd been going ever since.

After a year my father told me one day that my mother had gotten a divorce, and a year after that he said she had gotten married again, and six months later he said she had separated from her second husband, too, and was going to get a divorce from him, too. Whatever all that marrying and separating and divorcing meant was hard to figure out. Sometimes I asked my father about it and he tried to tell me, but pretty soon it seemed to me he was talking about something else.

He said I had a right to know that any time I wanted to go and live with my mother, he would take me to her, but I told him I wanted to stick with him and the Ford. One time I thought maybe he wanted to get rid of me, and after thinking about it two whole days and nights I finally got up enough nerve to ask him straight out if he wanted me to go and live with my mother and it took him a few minutes to tell me the things he wanted me to know. He said a lot of things that made me feel awful good, and a little proud, too.

"I want you to know one thing," he said, and then he told me a hundred different things, but I knew what they all came to. He didn't want me to go and live with my mother.

I felt better after that and no matter what happened I never again believed he wanted to get rid of me.

Sometimes we had arguments, and once he got real mad at me and shouted at me—I forget what it was about—but I knew he didn't want to get rid of me, and that's all I ever needed to know.

During school vacations we slept in the Ford, moving around a little if there was gas in the tank, or if we had money to buy some, but just as soon as school opened we took a room somewhere and lived there, so I could go to school from an address instead of from a car.

I learned a lot at school, I guess, but I never learned anywhere near as much

at school as I learned from my father. I guess that's because he's read so many books. He likes to read them aloud, so I can find out about them too.

He explained about the difference between people in a story and people themselves, such as him and me and my mother and my sister, and I think I almost understood what he told me. He said everything in every story was about the four of us, because that's all the whole human race is: a man, a woman, a boy, and a girl, old or young, happy or sad, here or there, good or bad, wise or foolish, lucky or unlucky, and all sorts of other things.

Now, we were riding along in the night, going away from San Francisco to another place. After singing cowboy songs for about an hour, I got sleepy and stopped singing, and then I must have fallen asleep, because when I woke up it was morning. My father was still asleep.

I didn't know where we were, but wherever it was, it was real nice, high in the hills, with big trees around, and the ocean right in front of us.

I sneaked my way out of what my father called our "parlor and bedroom," so I could go to the bathroom. I found a nice private place in a whole place that was private anyhow, and then I went to see if there was anything alive around.

I found a hill of ants, small and red, and watched them to find out what they were doing. Some of them were moving out of the hill and down, and others were moving up and into the hill. I guess they kept moving that way because it was all they knew how to do.

One line of them was going to a dead butterfly, and they were picking it to pieces, but they weren't eating the pieces, or taking them back to the hill, they were just getting the butterfly broken down, as if it were a wrecked airplane.

I saw something like that happen once in New York, only it was men, and instead of a butterfly or airplane, it was an old office building.

You could see the offices in the building and the wrecking men working in them until another whole floor of small places wasn't there any more, and finally the whole building was gone, and after that there was a big hole in the ground, and then a new building began to go up where the old one had been—and the new building went up three times as high as the old one, and a lot cleaner-looking, too.

But these busy little ants, alive and working hard and keeping themselves in line all the time and probably even picking the butterfly to pieces by proper turns, they seemed to be using up a lot of time doing something that wasn't worth doing in the first place. Why bother with a poor

# Father and Son (continued)

old dead butterfly in the first place? If it was a matter of food, why not eat something nicer to eat? There were plenty of fresh green leaves around, plenty of flowers, seeds, pods, and things like that, and these things ought to be better to eat than a living thing which had died at last of old age or by accident.

All the same, the ants were funny, and interesting, because you could imagine they were saying things to one another. Maybe one of them was saying about one of the feelers of the butterfly, "Now, look at this tree, if you want to see a big tree," and another was saying back, talking about one of the butterfly's eyes, "How about this search light? Ever see one as big as this?" The ants made me laugh, and kind of like them, even if they did seem awful busy doing nothing.

I decided to look around for something else alive to watch, and found a lizard taking a sun bath on a rock about the size of a cantaloupe. He was a real good-looking fellow and not too frightened, either, although he wanted to know who it was. He looked at me, looked away, looked back again, and then just kind of relaxed.

I said to him, "Morning, little old lizard old pal old flat and low and like a dragon made small by magic, how do you feel in the sun this morning old stranger and friend?"

I saw the lizard turn and take another look and I almost heard him say in the most thundering voice I ever heard but at the same time the softest, most nearly silent, too, "All right for you to say morning to me and stuff like that but don't forget who I really am, a dragon, because we're still here, we ain't finished yet, you come back a year from now and you'll hear a big crashing in the trees of the forest, and that'll be me, a thousand times bigger than I am now, walking around looking for a fight."

Then, I heard him crashing but didn't see him, and it scared me, so I had to show him I wasn't afraid, now or next year. I took a sunflower growing right there and put the flower end of it out to the lizard until it was not more than two fists away from his nose. I kept putting it closer and closer, because now, besides wanting to show him I wasn't afraid, I wanted to find out if he was interested in the shape and color of flowers at all, or the smell of them—the sunflower has a fine smell, not sweet, but very satisfying just the same—and the idea of a flower being sent to his face out of a clear sky. He turned his head and watched, but when I moved the flower just a little closer, he took off so fast you could barely see him go. Down the side of the rock he went and into the grass, and that's the last I saw of him.

I went walking around some more and came to a little stream with a bed of big rocks, lots of moss, skippers on top, and, if you looked carefully enough, little fishes in the water, real quiet and neatly made and clean and not caring much about anything.

Finally I went back to the Ford and saw my father doing bending exercises. I began to do them, too, because we believe in bending exercises. They don't cost anything, anyway. After the bending exercises we did push-ups, and then my father said, "Chugger, there's nothing like health in all the voyald." My father says words his own way, like voyald for world, which I think is just as good anyway. When he first began calling the world the voyald, I did, too, and of course I thought that that was the proper way to say the word, but a teacher at school thought I spoke with an accent and told me how to say the word properly. But whenever I talked to my father I said the words the way he did. Even when he read aloud from books he said old and new words his own way.

After the exercises we got in the car and began to drive to a place for a little food, because we had almost nothing left.

We were about sixty miles past Monterey, my father said, going south. We rolled along, up, down, around, not going too fast, so we could see everything. After about an hour or maybe an hour and a half we came to a place called Lucia where there was a restaurant and a store and a gasoline station all in one.

My father asked the man to put a dollar's worth of gasoline in the tank, and then we went into the store to buy something for breakfast, lunch, and supper.

"We've got a dollar and seventy cents after I pay for the gasoline," my father said.

"And a quarter," I said, showing him the quarter he had given me last night when he had given Greg Alakhalkhala half a buck. "And this Mexican dollar."

"We may have to go to Mexico to spend it," my father said. "We can't buy much with it in California."

"Well," I said, "a dollar seventy and a quarter, that's almost two dollars. We can buy a lot of food for two dollars, can't we?"

"Well, plain food," my father said.

"That's the only kind we eat, isn't it?"

"We had steak once back there in San Francisco, didn't we?"

"Well, steak's plain, isn't it?"

"Not as plain as bread."

My father bought a loaf of sliced rye, another of unsliced pumpernickel, and a carton of milk.

"Sixty cents," the lady in the store said. That left a dollar ten in my father's

pocket, and a quarter in mine, and of course the Mexican dollar.

We went outside. My father handed me the crust and two slices more of the rye bread, and he took a slice, and we ate breakfast. I drank milk out of the carton, and he drank water from the hose near the gasoline pump.

The man put water in the car, and checked the oil—it was a little under full, but my father said it would do. Then the man put battery water in the battery, and thirty pounds in the tires. Then he sprayed something on all of the windows and wiped them clean and bright—all for a dollar's worth of gas, which was the only thing we bought from him.

"What's a good little town down this highway?" my father asked the man.

"Morro Bay," the man said. "Straight south about a hundred and twenty miles."

"Good school there?"

"Good school?" the man said. "I don't know, but I guess it's as good as any."

"Any orchards of any kind on the way?"

"Well, not exactly orchards," the man said, "but every now and then you'll see some fruit and nut trees growing somewhere, but of course they've been neglected, so the fruit never amounts to much."

"What kind of neglected fruit trees are they?" my father said.

"Well, about thirty miles down the highway you'll see a couple of dozen apple, and a couple of pear among them."

"What about truck gardens?"

"There's a few now and then all the way to Morro Bay."

"What are they growing?"

"Carrots, cabbage, onions, and stuff like that."

Then my father paid the man a dollar, and we drove off.

"There won't be any fruit on the trees, will there?" I said.

"Not in May," my father said, "but sometimes you find some fruit from last season, and sometimes they're pretty good, too."

"I hope we find two apples and two pears."

"So do I," my father said, "but if we don't, we'll see the trees, anyhow. Trees are good to see, especially fruit trees. You'll be interested in the difference between an apple tree and a pear tree."

"I'll be interested in any tree with anything on it good to eat."

"Eat all the bread you want," my father said.

I took another slice of rye and began to chew some of it.

"Taste good?" my father said.

"I'll say."

"Like those little seeds in there?"

"I'll say."

"Same price with or without seeds." my father said, "and the seeds are like something else with the bread. There's about two dozen seeds to a slice, I'd say."

"What are they?"

"Rye seeds," my father said. "We've got enough gas to get us to Morro Bay. We've got enough food for the rest of this day, and if we like the town, well, we'll stay there a while."

"Let's stay in the car, though," I said, "instead of in a room."

"Did you sleep all right?"

"I sure did."

"It wasn't too cold, was it?"

"I didn't feel cold."

"Well, maybe we'll stay in the car, then," my father said. "The reason I'm driving slow instead of fast is that a car uses up less gas when you drive slow."

"And you get to see more, too," I said.

"Eat some more bread," my father said, so I took another slice.

My father watched me bite into it and chew, so I took a slice and held it out to him, but he said he didn't want it, only I knew he did but didn't want to eat too much of the bread, so there'd be plenty for me in case we couldn't buy any more bread for a while.

"You know, Pop," I said, "sometimes I think you're crazy."

"Is that so?" my father said.

"You know what I mean."

"I think so, and I think it's nice of you to say so."

We both busted out laughing at the same time, and before I knew it I'd finished my slice and the slice I had held out to my father.

It was a fine day. The bread tasted better than I had ever before noticed that bread *could* taste.

The car rolled along nice and slow and easy, and I wondered what kind of a place Morro Bay would be.

Morro Bay was a place beside a cove, with an island in the cove, sticking up like a hardboiled egg, half above the water, half under, the water blue, cool, and giving off a smell of sea that made you feel good.

We drove around town, up one street and down another, looking at everything, including the school, the three churches, the people, and everything else there.

"You want to stay here a month, Chugger?" my father said.

"Sure, if you do," I said.

"I do," my father said, "and I'll tell you why. First, we'd have to break into the twenty dollars if we were to keep going, and we haven't done that yet. Second, I like the looks and smell of this place. Third, I think we can sleep in the car all right here. Fourth, I've got an idea the surf fishing is good here, and that means a little something in the way

of free food. Fifth, when we first started rolling down the slope of the highway into this town I got the feeling that we were driving into Heaven itself, without needing to be dead and buried first, and without passports from any church or religion, and without fuss of any kind. Sixth, I like the looks of the cats and dogs in the streets—they're not nervous or excited, and that always means the people around them are easy-going. Seventh, I want to keep my eye on that island in the bay. Eighth, I've got an idea the school here is very good, and that you're going to like going to it."

My father stopped numbering and naming his reasons for wanting to spend some time in Morro Bay, so for a joke I said, "How about ninth?"

"Ninth," my father said, "we've got to stop whether we like it or not, and on top of that I want to know about the name Morro, too. Could be from the Moors of North Africa and Spain, for instance, and if so, how did the name get so far from home, and why was it put to use here?"

"Isn't it a man's name?" I said.

"Could be," my father said, "but if it were, chances are it would be Morrow, with a doubleyou as the last letter of the name. Could be for a tribe native to the Philippine Islands, too, or so I've heard. I think there is a tribe there referred to as the Morros, although I don't know much about *them*, either."

We found a side road that went close to the south curve of the cove, and there my father stopped the car. We got out and stood on the sand with tufts of weeds, straight up, here and there. My father got out his red trunks and put them on. Then, he got out his fishing pole, and put the leaders and hooks and sinkers in place, while I got into my trunks.

We walked down to the beach and I kept my eyes open for anything around that might do for bait, and pretty soon I had a live mussel that my father broke on a rock. He brought out some of the orange-colored inside of the mussel and put a little on each of the two hooks. He cast the line out into the water, and just as I expected him to do he handed the pole to me, because he knew I liked fishing even more than he did, maybe. Now, my father began to look the beach over, walking off about a hundred yards, coming back with different stuff for bait, another mussel, two little sand crabs, and something else that might have been part of an octopus, something like a piece of squid.

My father sat on the sand and began to study the island in the cove.

"Hope I get a big one," I said.

"So do I," my father said, "but if you

get a little one, we'll both give a prayer of thanks. I could eat a little fish broiled over a fire."

"So could I."

I didn't get a bite, though, not even the makings of one, so after about half an hour my father told me to reel in and have a look at the hooks and bait. Well, nothing had been touched, so my father told me to go ahead and cast out, because he knew I wanted to, even though I couldn't get the hooks out as far as he could. I took it easy and made a pretty good cast, a little away from where the hooks had been, and less than five minutes later I got a nibble and got ready to hook the nibbler.

Half a minute later I felt him take the bait real strong, so I tightened the line and had him. My father jumped up and got ready to take over, but he knew I wanted to bring him in, so all he did was watch without saying anything, and pretty soon I had us a perch, about fourteen inches from head to tail. It wasn't much, but to me and my father it looked awful good, and my father said, "Chugger, that's going to make a real nice morsel of fish for supper. See if you can get another."

"Another?" I said. "Pop, I'll get us six or seven."

Well, I fished three hours, but the hours went awful fast. It *was* Heaven itself around there, and even if I didn't get six or seven, four wasn't too bad, either, considering one was a two-pound bass, another a two-pound cabezon, and the other two perch. After they'd been cleaned they wouldn't weigh anywhere near as much, but they were the makings of a pretty good supper just the same. I was glad my father had come and got me out of the tree in San Francisco, and brought me here to the beach at Morro Bay.

And I was glad that we lived in a Ranch Wagon and the whole voyald, instead of in a house stuck in the mud somewhere. THE END

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# The Clean Slate

In New York she'd had everything — except the ability to refuse a drink. In Rome she'd had a second chance. Why, then, on this most important of all days — with her husband arriving — should she wake with temptation insidiously whispering in her ear?

BY JEROME WEIDMAN ILLUSTRATED BY FREDRIC VÁRADY

It was not the headache that bothered her, even though Irene could tell that soon it would be worse than a headache. Nor was it the fact that Irene could not understand why she should have one. It was not even the annoying look of sympathy on Seraphina's good-natured face as she listened to her mistress' instructions for the day. What bothered Irene was that she should have allowed herself, on this of all days, to wake up in anything less than the absolute pink of condition.

"Have you got all that straight, Seraphina?"

"Yes, Mrs. Creel," the stout, middle-aged, Italian woman said. "I understand."

Irene wondered irritably if she did. Holly Trait, when she found Seraphina for her soon after Irene arrived from New York, had insisted Seraphina was the best all-around servant in Rome. After almost a year, during which Seraphina had not only done all the cooking and kept the apartment spotless but had also taken complete charge of the children, Irene saw no reason to alter Holly's excellent reference. There were times, however, and this morning was one of them, when Irene wished that the motherly Italian woman, who was all heart, was also just a little quicker at grasping simple instructions.

"I think perhaps you'd better repeat the whole thing back to me," Irene said, trying to keep the impatience out of her voice. After all, the fact that she had a splitting headache at eleven o'clock in

the morning of this day, when so much depended on her physical appearance, was not Seraphina's fault. "Just to make sure you've got it right."

Seraphina nodded eagerly, the way she did when the children asked her to join in one of their games. The reason she was probably so good with Connie, aged three, and Petey, aged four, Irene thought as she tried to remember where she had left the aspirin bottle, was that Seraphina, for all her fifty-odd years, was still something of a child herself.

"Today, this afternoon, three o'clock, when the lessons they are finished, Seraphina does not go to the school as she does every day to bring home the *bambinos*," she said. "Today, this afternoon, three o'clock, when the lessons they are finished, it is Mrs. Creel who will go to nursery school to meet small Peter and small Constance, because today is special."

That was the word, all right. Special. "Yes," Irene said, closing her eyes slightly against the dull throbbing ache in her temples, and trying not to sound hurried. The trick with a headache like this one was to nail it fast with aspirin, before it got away into something worse. But Irene did not want to upset Seraphina. It was important on this very important day that everything go smoothly. "And while I'm taking the children from school out to the airport to meet Mr. Creel's plane," she said to Seraphina, "you'll be shopping and arranging flowers and cooking and doing whatever you have to do to make tonight's dinner special enough to match this special day."

Seraphina bobbed her head quickly.

"I will do," she said, and then the annoying look of sympathy reappeared as she asked, "The signora does not feel good?"

"Nonsense," Irene said sharply. "I feel wonderful. What made you think . . .?"

The telephone bell saved her from completing the question she wanted neither to ask nor to have answered. If she looked the way she felt, the thing to do was not discuss it with Seraphina. The thing to do was swallow some aspirin fast and go back to bed for a couple of hours so that, by the time she drove out to Ciampino with the children at three o'clock, she would look the way she had been reminding herself night and day she *had* to look when Frank stepped out of that plane from New York. Irene moved across the living room toward the telephone near the window through which, if you twisted your neck hard to the left, you could get a fairly respectable view of an attractive slice of the Borghese Gardens. She picked up the phone.

"Hello?"

"Hi, sweetie," Holly Trait's high-pitched, slightly nasal voice said. "How do you feel?"

It was the question Holly asked every morning.

"Fine," Irene said, because that was the reply she made every morning. "How do you feel?"

"Great," said Holly. "Which makes me as bad a liar as you are." She giggled.



"Let's all meet Frank," Holly giggled. Holding their drinks aloft like torches, they paraded gaily out to the cab.

"Actually, I feel the way Pocahontas would have felt if, while she was trying to save Captain John Smith's life, some bad-tempered Indian had run a knife around the top of her skull and lifted her scalp exactly one half inch from its normal resting place."

In spite of the throbbing in her temples, Irene smiled. Holly Trait didn't have any money, and if her failure to make a dent in Hollywood and on Broadway was any yardstick, she didn't have much talent as an actress, either. But she certainly had a gift for vivid verbal imagery. She and Irene had met and become friends during Irene's first week in Rome, and since Holly called her every morning and the conversation always started in

exactly the same way, it meant that the bouncy little blonde from Poughkeepsie, who had come to Rome three years ago to find a career in television films—or so Holly said, anyway—had managed to describe her hangover graphically more than three hundred times, without once repeating herself.

"That's exactly the way *I* feel," Irene said. "Except that I can't figure out why."

"Let me fill the gap for you," Holly said dryly. "You laid the groundwork at the Vitibellis'."

"The Vitibellis'?" Irene said.

"Sweetie," Holly said through another giggle, "don't tell me you don't remember being at the Vitibellis' last night?"

Irene didn't tell her because, for several awful moments, Irene was incapable of speech. Once again, without warning, she had been plunged into the now familiar terror, the recurrent fear that had touched her for the first time two years ago in New York, on the dreadful morning after her twenty-third birthday party when Irene Creel had realized for the first time that a sliver of her life had vanished without trace, that a segment of time through which she had lived had disappeared without leaving a record of its contents. It was one thing to hear other people discuss their condition and make jokes about it. It was something else again—at any rate, it had been for Irene Creel on that first morning of her

twenty-fourth year—to know that you, too, had blacked out.

"Holly," she said now, in this room half a world away from that first numbing shock. "Holly," Irene Creel said at eleven o'clock in the morning of this crucial day in her twenty-sixth year. "did I do anything bad at the Vitibellis' last night?"

"Of course not!" Holly said with a touch of indignation that, a year ago, when she first arrived in Rome, Irene would have found reassuring. Now she was not so sure.

There were quite a few girls like Holly Trait living in Rome. Not all came from Poughkeepsie, but all were Americans. They were photographers or fashion experts or free-lance journalists, or so they claimed, the way Holly claimed she was an actress in television films, although Irene had never seen any of them click a shutter or sketch a dress or write a word, any more than she had ever known Holly to act in a television film.

These girls had no jobs in Rome, and no visible means of support, and they were not what Irene's mother, when she was alive in Battle Creek, used to call naughty. But they were always beautifully dressed, and they always ate in the best restaurants, and they always went to the most fashionable parties, and they were always present at the chic openings. And while Irene, who lived on the fixed allowance that Frank had agreed to provide for her and the children for one year, didn't know exactly how these girls did it, she had learned from twelve months of intimacy with Holly Trait that doing it involved a certain flexibility of definition, if not of conduct: what was naughty to Irene's mother in Battle Creek, and might have raised an eyebrow in Poughkeepsie, was apparently perfectly all right in Rome. If you were a girl like Holly Trait, that is.

So that when you asked her if you had done anything bad at the Vitibellis' last night, and she said with indignation, "Of course not," it was sensible not to conclude that this comment closed the subject.

"Holly," Irene said, "how did we get to the Vitibellis'?"

Holly's voice rose in a small shriek of amused incredulity.

"Sweetie, you mean to say you don't remember how we . . .?"

"Holly," Irene said again, very carefully, "how did we get to the Vitibellis'?"

"Why, we ran into Vittorio and Sylvia at the 'Sundown' opening, and then later, when we were having supper with the Bakers at Nino's, Vittorio came in with those three movie people, you know the ones, the tall man with the red

mustache and his two partners, and it turned out the Bakers had met them in Capri last summer, so Audrey asked them to join us, and then Vittorio said. . ."

The throbbing pain in Irene's head seemed to take a spurt upward, like a garden fountain that has suddenly been turned on full.

"Holly," she said, "how did I get home from the Vitibellis'?"

"I dropped you," Holly said, and in the sudden surge of momentary relief that came with knowing at least *that* much of the vanished time was accounted for, Irene lost track of Holly's voice. When Irene picked it up again, Holly was saying, "Gosh, sweetie, I knew you'd hoisted a few last night, but I didn't realize you were *that* crooked!" Holly paused again, and she added with a hint of disbelief, "I'll bet you don't even remember the date?"

"What date?"

"To have a drink this afternoon with Mr. Peccarari."

"Mr. *who*?"

"Honestly, you *were* stoned, weren't you?" Holly said. "He's the movie man, the tall one with the red mustache. He asked us to meet him at the Hassler at five, and he said we'd discuss the—"

"You'll have to meet him alone," Irene said. "I can't make it."

"But sweetie! This guy is—"

"I don't care who he is!" Irene said. She didn't mean to speak sharply. She was genuinely fond of Holly. Without Holly's friendship, those first weeks in Rome a year ago, when Irene had been still numbed by the enormity of the decision that had brought her and the children to Italy, would have been an agony. It was Holly who had helped her find her feet in her new surroundings. She had no business talking like that to Holly, even if she *was* desperate to get to the aspirin before her headache got out of control. "I'm sorry," Irene said more calmly. "I won't be able to have a drink with you and Mr. Peccarari today."

"But sweetie, why not?"

"I'm going out to the airport with the children at three," Irene said, wishing she'd had the courage to ask Seraphina to find the aspirin and bring it to her. The throbbing pain was becoming unbearable. "Frank gets in from New York this afternoon."

"Oh!" Holly said. The single syllable, and the moment of silence that followed, were eloquent. In the excitement of meeting Mr. Peccarari, whoever he was, Holly had obviously forgotten temporarily how special this day was for Irene. "Jeepers," Holly said. "That's right." There was another pause; then she said hopefully,

"But maybe, sweetie, after you and Frank get back to the apartment from the airport, maybe you could sneak away for a little while? After all, the plane gets in at four, and this date with Mr. Peccarari is at five, which would give you a whole hour with Frank, and he'll be so crazy to see the kids, he probably won't mind being alone with them in the apartment for an hour or so while you run over to the Hassler to meet me and the Peccarari guy, and—"

"No, I'm sorry," Irene said as firmly as the pain in her head would allow. "You know how important this visit of Frank's is. Everything depends on it. I can't take a chance on his getting any wrong impressions his first day here. You go meet this Mr. Peccarari if you want to, Holly, I'm not leaving Frank for a minute. Not only today, but for the entire week he's going to be here in Rome."  
"Sure, sweetie," Holly said slowly, making no effort to conceal her disappointment. "I guess you're right."

"I'll speak to you in the morning," Irene said. "I've got to hurry and have my bath now."

She hung up, and she did hurry, but not toward her bath. Irene hurried to the bedroom, and then to the medicine cabinet in the bathroom, and then back to the dresser drawers in the bedroom, and then out to the foyer for the pillbox in the purse she had dropped when she came in last night, but the frantic hunt proved fruitless: the pillbox, like the medicine bottles in the bathroom cabinet and the bedroom dresser drawers, were empty; there was no aspirin anywhere in the apartment.

"Seraphina!" Irene called as she came back into the dining room. Aware that the rage in her voice was directed at herself, because the pain in her head was now unbearable, and her knees felt weak, and she was on the verge of tears, "Seraphina, for heaven's sake, where the devil did you put the—"

The swinging door from the kitchen groaned open.

"Signora?" Seraphina said in a frightened voice. "Signora, you are sick?"

"No, I'm *not* sick! And will you please get that damned look off your face? All I need is a . . ."

Irene's voice stopped. That wasn't what she needed. Not any more. This headache was now beyond aspirin. Irene made a tremendous effort and, in spite of the pain, she managed a small smile.

"I'm sorry, Seraphina," she said quietly. "Please pay no attention to me. You can go back to the kitchen." But Seraphina did not move. Not immediately, anyway. And it became necessary for Irene to say more sharply, "I said you can go back to the kitchen, Seraphina!"

This time she did, her large, shapeless body moving backwards, her simple, innocent face creased by a troubled frown. Before the swinging door had groaned shut, Irene had stepped swiftly across the room, to the silver tray on the sideboard, and even though her hands shook badly, she managed to pour the stiff shot of whiskey without spilling a drop, and she drank it off without pausing to set the bottle down. She was pouring a second shot, when, unexpectedly, without warning, the sound of the bottle rattling against the rim of the glass tripped a trigger of memory.

Irene looked up, startled, into the mirror over the sideboard, wondering what it was her mind was trying to disgorge, and then she saw the reflection of the swinging door at the other side of the room, and the dreadful picture came back.

It came back so fast, roaring at her like a wave rolling up a beach, that it seemed to carry Irene with it, hurling her backward in time and space, from this moment in her apartment near the Borghese Gardens in Rome, back to that morning just a little more than a year before, the morning in the apartment overlooking Central Park into which Frank and Irene Creel had moved the week after he became the youngest and brightest vice-president at Shenton and Shaw, the oldest and biggest advertising agency on Madison Avenue.

It was still early, not quite ten o'clock, so that Frank had not yet left for the office. But it had been a bad night. Really bad. One of the worst Irene had gone through since that frightening morning after her twenty-third birthday party when she realized she had blacked out for the first time. It had happened often enough since then to blunt the edge of that initial terror, but on this morning all Irene could remember of the night before was an argument with a man on the sidewalk in front of the Stork Club while Frank was paying the taxi driver who had brought them there from the theater. Irene couldn't remember who the man was, or how the argument had started, or where she went after the Stork Club, or whether Frank had gone with her. All she knew was that this was one morning when she couldn't wait until Frank left the apartment for the office.

As soon as he disappeared into the bathroom, she slipped out of bed, hurried to her dressing table, opened the bottom drawer, pawed about under the neatly folded nightgowns, and pulled out the bottle. She had gulped down the first stiff shot, and she was pouring the second, when the sound of the bottle rattling against the rim of the glass caused her to glance up nervously into

the dressing table mirror, and then she saw Frank.

He was standing at the other side of the room, in the bathroom doorway, holding the empty aspirin bottle, the irritated and still unuttered comment on its emptiness forgotten as he stared across the bedroom.

In the long, long moment of silence, even as she struggled desperately to summon up plausible answers to the questions Frank had not yet had a chance to ask, Irene was grateful for that first stiff shot she had managed to get down before she was caught. Already, even before Frank started across the bedroom toward her, the whiskey had begun its healing work.

"How long has this been going on?" he said.

"You're a fine one to talk!" Irene snapped. "If you haven't a hang-over yourself from here to here, what are you doing with the aspirin bottle first thing in the morning?"

"Aspirin bottles first thing in the morning are bad enough," Frank said. He tapped the whiskey bottle. "How long have you been dipping into this kind before breakfast?"

"Don't you give me that holier-than-thou tone of voice! Just because I happen to take a drink before breakfast for the first time in my life, that doesn't mean you have the right to—"

Frank leaned over, shoved aside the nightgowns in the dressing table drawer, and pulled out the other bottle.

"First time in your life?" he said. Irene didn't answer. Frank held the bottle out to her. "I asked a question," he said. "How long has this been going on?"

"None of your business!"

"Anything is my business that starts kicking holes in my job," Frank said.

"What are you talking about?"

"Your little performance last night on the sidewalk in front of the Stork Club."

"That drunk!" Irene said.

"That drunk was not only cold sober," Frank said. "He happened to be T. B. Jarvis of Jarvis Razor, Shenton and Shaw's biggest client and my special account."

"Oh," Irene said.

"Yes, oh," Frank said. "It was bad enough calling him names on the sidewalk in front of the Stork, but two hours later, when we ran into him again at the St. Regis—"

"At the St. Regis?"

As soon as the words were out, Irene realized they were a mistake. But it was too late. Frank was staring at her in a funny way.

"You really don't remember," he said quietly. "Do you?"



The cop thought it odd that two American kids were wandering alone in the rain.

"Of course I remember!" Irene said. "It's just that . . ."

Her voice stopped. So did her anger. It wasn't accomplishing anything.

"I've suspected it for over a year," he said. "Ever since your twenty-third birthday party."

Irene's heart leaped as though she had been punched.

"Suspected what?"

"That the drinking has been getting away from you," Frank said. "That you can't handle it. That you've been blacking out. I haven't said anything because I'm not a teetotaler myself, and it hasn't done any harm. But now—"

"It's not as bad as you think," Irene said quickly. "No man would be childish enough to take his account away from an agency just because—"

"I wasn't thinking of T. B. Jarvis," Frank said. He turned to glance across the bedroom, toward the door that led to the nursery. "I was thinking of Petey and Connie."

"There's nothing wrong with them!"

"Not yet," Frank said, and he seemed to know that the quick anger leaping in

# The Clean Slate (continued)

her eyes and to her lips would spend itself, because he merely waited. When it became obvious that she had no reply, Frank said, very quietly, "What's happened to us, baby?"

Irene didn't know, though she stayed in the apartment all day, trying to work out an answer. From the very moment Frank left for the office she sat slumped in a chair near the window, staring out at Central Park, hearing the sounds of the household around her, the clatter of the cook in the kitchen, the hum of the vacuum cleaner, the voices of the children, the clucking words of the nurse, the slamming of doors as they came and went. All day Irene sat there, listening to the bits and pieces of the life she and Frank had fashioned between them, picking them apart, rearranging them, trying to put the pieces

together into an answer to Frank's question, but it wasn't any good.

Irene could see herself and Frank in Battle Creek High School, and then at the state university. She could hear her mother saying she certainly didn't believe in long engagements, not as a general rule, and if a boy and girl were in love, why, they should get married, that's all, but didn't Irene think it would be wise to wait just a *little* while, at least until Frank got a job? She could see Frank's face, the day he came up the walk to the porch where Irene was sitting with her mother, shelling peas, and she could hear his voice as he told her about Butler and Gottschalk, and how much they were paying him to start.

Irene could see the church on Faragut Avenue, and she could hear the voice of Reverend Brewer, and she could see the way the lump in Frank's throat

moved when he looked into her eyes and said, very quietly, "I do!" Irene could see the one-room cabin on the lake in Minnesota where they had spent their honeymoon, and the small frame house on Truesdale Road where they lived until Petey was born. She could see the roses Frank brought her the day Butler and Gottschalk promoted him to copy chief, and the bottle of champagne they ordered in Feberwalter's the night the offer came through from Shenton and Shaw.

Irene could see the face of the stewardess in the plane that carried them to New York, and the stoop of the brownstone on Barrow Street in which they had lived until Connie was born. She could see the apartment on Park Avenue in which she had gone to her first cocktail party, and the walk-up on East Forty-eighth in which, now that Frank had brought the Renshaw account into the office and had been suitably rewarded by a salary boost, she had given her first sit-down dinner party for which the help had not been hired just for the evening.

Irene could see the faces of all the men she had danced with during her first visit to the Stork, and the dress she had worn to her first Rodgers and Hammerstein opening, and the decorator who had recommended the chartreuse carpeting for the living room of this apartment the week after Frank had been made a vice-president.

Sitting at the window, staring at Central Park, Irene could see the pieces; each as she looked back on it still retained its special glow, the touch of brightness that had made it memorable. But there was something wrong with the memory, just as there was something wrong with the glow. It provided no illumination.

It did not help to explain what had happened along the way between Battle Creek High School, when she and Frank had been seventeen, and this chartreuse-carpeted living room, now that she and Frank were twenty-four. It provided no answer to the question Frank had asked before he left for the office: "What's happened to us, baby?"

"I don't know," Irene said to him when Frank came back from the office that night. "But I know this," she added in a low voice. "I don't want any more of it to happen."

"Neither do I," Frank said.

"I don't want you to think I'm blaming anybody," Irene said. "I'm not trying to duck the responsibility. But I've been sitting here all day, trying to figure it out, and the nearest I can come to an answer is that it's not us. It's not just you and me. It's the life we lead."



He seized the drunken little blonde and heaved. "Now that the garbage is out," he said, "I'll go get the kids!"

"Other people lead that life," Frank said. "This town is full of advertising executives. Cocktail parties and dinner dates and Martinis at lunch and night clubs in between are part of our jobs. It's a rat race, sure. But I can't stop doing what I have to do to make a living."

"You don't have to stop," Irene said. "The drinking hasn't gotten away from you. You can handle it." She paused. "I can't."

Frank stared at her for several silent moments.

"I've got a solution," he said finally. "What's that?" Irene said.

"None of this happened until we hit New York," Frank said. "Let's get out of New York."

"And go back to Battle Creek?"

"No, of course not," he said. "We couldn't afford to do that. But why can't we give up this apartment and buy a house in the country and move out to the grass and trees? I wouldn't mind commuting. Lots of guys do it. It would be healthier for the kids, and you'd be—"

Irene shook her head.

"No, I wouldn't," she said. "I know a dozen girls who have moved to the country thinking they were escaping the New York rat race. All they do is carry the rat race with them. Any place that's within commuting distance of New York is just an extension of it. All those girls are staying up just as late and drinking just as much on all that grass as they drank on Fifty-second Street. And a lot of them are seeing even less of their children because they have to keep dashing into New York to go with their husbands to the parties the husbands can't stay away from if they want to hold onto their jobs." Irene shook her head again. "Moving to the country and turning you into a commuter is no solution," she said. "I'd only be kidding myself if I did that."

"What do you want to do?"

"Wipe the slate clean," Irene said quietly. "I want to start all over again."

Frank looked puzzled.

"Where?" he said. "How?"

"I want to go some place far away," Irene said. "Some place where they never heard of a Madison Avenue advertising executive's wife and where nobody knows me. I want to take the children with me, and settle down for a while, and give myself a chance to get to know them, and give the children a chance to know me."

"For how long?" Frank said.

"Until I stop being what I've become here in New York," Irene said. "Until I get back to being what I used to be in Battle Creek."

"But what about me?" Frank said.

"It's you I'm thinking of," Irene had

said quietly. "It's for you I want to wipe the slate clean."

She had meant it. She had meant every word of it. That was why, soon after she arrived in Rome and she met Holly Trait and Seraphina had been established in the apartment and Peter and Connie were set in the American school to which all the embassy people sent their children. Irene had decided to try for a career in TV films.

It wasn't that she needed the money. The allowance Frank had agreed to provide for the trial period of one year was enough to keep her and the children comfortably. But the mere fact that it *was* an allowance troubled Irene. If you were going to wipe a slate clean, then you ought to do it with a damp cloth for which you had paid with your own money. She wanted to do something she hadn't really been doing since Battle Creek: stand on her own feet.

Besides, soon after she met Holly and Holly started introducing her to Holly's friends, it occurred to Irene that one of the things that had been wrong with her life in New York was that she didn't have anything to keep her busy. Servants had taken care of the apartment, and nurses had taken care of the children. No wonder there had been all that time for boozy three-hour lunches and cocktail parties and night clubs.

Here in Rome, however, if she had any sort of luck, and Holly had assured her that a girl with her looks should have no trouble at all finding as much work as she wanted to do, Irene would not only find a career that would give some meaning to her days, but she would earn enough money, if not completely to support herself and the children, then at least to enable her to tell Frank to reduce the amount of her allowance.

The fact that it hadn't worked out that way, the fact that after a full year in Rome she had not yet earned a single penny, did not change the fact that she had tried and was still trying. It was true that American TV films were being shot on every street corner in Rome, but it was equally true that most of them were pilot films that were being shot on shoestrings. The producers couldn't afford to pay very much even for established actresses, so they could hardly be expected to pay anything to people like Irene. If she had not actually earned any money, however, she had accumulated a good deal of experience, and this in time would pay off, because it had served one of the purposes for which she had come to Rome: she had learned how to stand on her own feet.

Irene was certain Frank would see that. And the certainty made her feel a good deal better about this crucial day than

she had felt when she had first waked up.

In fact, as she turned from the sideboard in the dining room toward the tinkling of the telephone bell in the living room, Irene realized that her headache was gone. She did not realize, however, until she reached the window from which you could catch a glimpse of the Borghese Gardens, that she had carried the bottle and the glass in with her. Before touching the phone, just to be on the safe side because she knew from experience how tricky these headaches could be and how important it was to nail one in its tracks so it couldn't return, Irene poured herself a second shot and swallowed it quickly. Then she picked up the instrument.

"Hello?" she said.

"Hello, sweetie, it's me again," Holly Trait said. "Are you feeling any better?"

"Much," Irene said. "Why?"

"Because I called Mr. Peccarari—"  
"Who?"

"Mr. Peccarari," Holly said impatiently. "That film man with the red mustache that we met last night at the Vitibellis?"

"Oh, him," Irene said. "What about him?"

"I called him up and told him you wouldn't be able to have a drink with us at the Hassler at five because your husband was coming in from New York on the four o'clock plane, and he said okay, how about switching the date to lunch at one o'clock, and I said I'd call you up and ask."

"Lunch?" Irene said.

"Why not?" Holly said. "You don't have any other date, and you've got to eat somewhere, and this guy, honestly, sweetie, he's absolutely loaded, and he's got a whole string of films planned—fifty-two of them. Vittorio Vitibelli said last night—and he's taken a kind of shine to you, and he said he was pretty sure he could work us both into his program, but he wants to have a talk with both of us first, and, oh, God, sweetie, do I have to draw maps for you?"

"No, of course not," Irene said irritably. "I just wish it wasn't today, that's all."

"But what *difference* does it make?" Holly said. "You don't have anything to do between now and the time Frank's plane comes in, and besides, for what you want to discuss with Frank, you'll be in a much better position to get what you want if you can say to Frank you've got a job lined up with a guy like this Peccarari, so why not . . .?"

Why not, indeed? After all, now that the headache was gone, there was no necessity for going back to bed until plane time.

Irene hesitated. "All right," she said

finally. "But only on one condition."  
"What is it?"

"That it's clearly understood I can break away at two-thirty, because before I go out to the airport I've got to go over to the school and pick up the kids."

"Okay, sweetie. I'll tell that to Peccarari," Holly said. "Capriccio's at one."

As soon as she got there, her last doubts fell away; they always did at Capriccio's. It was so much like the Stork and "21" in New York that it made her feel at home.

Irene nodded and smiled as the hat check girl waved a greeting across the shoulder of the Mexican bullfighter who had come to Rome to play Count Rostov in Cinecitta's production of "War and Peace." Irene said Hello, as she crossed the foyer, to Felice Baker, who was at a small side table with the American magazine editor to whom, Felice had told Irene the night before at the "Sundown" opening, she was trying to sell the idea of sending her to Moscow to do a series of candid camera shots of the Russian people at work and play. And Irene blew a kiss to Vittorio Vitibelli, who was standing on the top step just outside the entrance to the bar with the British playwright in the Italian adaptation of whose last three plays Vittorio and his wife Sylvania had appeared on the Roman stage but whose name Irene could never remember.

"You look lovely, darling," Vittorio said as she passed, and he dropped his famous eyelid in a wicked wink. "Quite an achievement after last night. Holly is waiting for you in the bar."

She was doing it. Irene saw as soon as she stepped down into the bar, in a manner that Holly herself identified as The Full Treatment.

"Sweetie!" she cried as soon as she saw Irene. "This is the most heavenly man!" Holly put her hand on his arm, which was resting on the bar. And she batted her eyelids at him as though he were not merely a reasonably attractive, heavy-set male of middle years with a red mustache, but an incandescent bulb of such overpowering brightness that the human eye could not contemplate it without shrinking. And in the voice of a starved and shivering urchin begging alms on a wintry street corner, Holly said, "Please, Mr. Peccarari, do tell Irene what you just told me about Carbo!"

Mr. Peccarari—who was clearly endowed heavily with one of Italy's great natural resources: charm—bowed over Irene's hand, brushed her knuckles with his mustache, signaled to the bartender, and told Irene what he had just told Holly about Carbo. This proved to be a highly improbable account of a contractual arrangement, allegedly made the

preceding day, by which the great Swedish movie star had agreed to return to the screen under Mr. Peccarari's banner in a series of half-hour TV films devoted to the lives of history's great mistresses, all to be shot on the streets of Rome.

The waiter came back with three Bloody Marys, two of which Mr. Peccarari distributed to his female guests in a manner that compared favorably with newsreel shots Irene had seen of the Archbishop of Canterbury placing the crown upon the head of his sovereign at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

"Well," Irene said, hesitating as she took the glass, because she remembered the two healing shots of whiskey she had downed before leaving the apartment, and then she figured oh, well, there was no point in being stuffy as long as she remembered to be careful. "Just this one drink," she said. "I've got to leave at two-thirty."

"I know," Mr. Peccarari said through his charming smile. "Miss Trait has told me."

Holly had quite obviously also told him that neither of Mr. Peccarari's two luncheon guests would be insulted if he could manage to find parts for them in one or more of the films he was on the verge of producing. At any rate, Mr. Peccarari soon made it plain that in several of the stories, particularly the ones dealing with Sir Walter Raleigh, Leif Erickson, and John Cabot, all of whose careers had touched the shores of North America, he would need a couple of American actresses to support Carbo. After the second Bloody Mary it became even plainer that, while he had not yet reached any final decision, Mr. Peccarari had no violent objections at this stage to considering for these supporting roles none other than his two charming luncheon guests.

"I won't speak for myself," said Holly with a modest smile, "but I can tell you this: Irene would be just great in the Walter Raleigh story."

In view of this generous comment, it seemed only fair to Irene to point out to Mr. Peccarari that, while she might seem prejudiced, since Holly was her friend, she was stating no less than the simple truth when she said Mr. Peccarari could hunt all over Rome, and indeed throughout Italy, without finding an actress who could do half the job Holly Trait could do in the Cabot story.

"I am sure of it," Mr. Peccarari said through his charming smile, signaling to the bartender. "Let us have one more of these, and then we will eat."

But they didn't, because by the time they finished the third round of Bloody Marys, the contractual arrangement that

Peccarari claimed he had completed with Carbo did not seem improbable at all. In fact, it seemed a damned shame to Irene that a man with so much ability, a man who had succeeded where every producer in the world had for years failed—namely, getting the great Swedish star's name on the dotted line—and a man who had the intelligence to see practically at a glance what so many other producers had thus far been blind to—namely, the talent that Irene and Holly so obviously possessed—it seemed a shame to Irene that such a man should be prevented from carrying out his great design merely because he was having some silly trouble with his financing, and she said so.

Several times, in tones so indignant that they attracted the attention of two men farther down the bar. These, to everybody's astonishment, turned out to be none other than Mr. Peccarari's own partners, the two men with whom Mr. Peccarari had wandered into Nino's the night before while Irene and Holly were having supper with the Bakers after the "Sundown" opening. This chance meeting naturally called for another round of Bloody Marys, during the course of which one of Mr. Peccarari's partners tried to reassure both Holly and Irene, who were now quite worried that the whole project, not to mention the roles they had been offered in it, was doomed to die a-borning because Mr. Peccarari might not be able to raise the money with which to get it under way.

"Nonsense," said this partner, who so resembled the other one Irene couldn't tell them apart. "There is nothing to worry about," he said, speaking with almost, but not quite, as much charm as Mr. Peccarari. "As you Americans say, there are more ways than one to skin a cat. If we cannot raise the money here in Rome because our Italian compatriots are too blind to see a gold mine when it is offered to them, we will raise it elsewhere, from people with courage and foresight. In New York, for example, a city I know intimately, there are hundreds of people who would leap at the opportunity to . . ." He paused, and his face brightened, as though he had been struck by a sudden thought. "Your husband, for example, madame," he said to Irene. "Did you not say last night at the Vitibellis' that Mr. Creel is the president of Shenton and Shaw?"

"Did I?" Irene said.

"Of course you did, sweetie," Holly said with a warning frown.

"That's right," Irene said at once. "I did." She giggled. "I mean he is."

Mr. Peccarari and his two partners giggled with her, and then all five of them burst into loud peals of laughter.

and Mr. Peccarari signaled the bartender again. They were all bent in a huddle over the bar, on which Mr. Peccarari with a swizzle stick was scratching the breakdown of production costs on the pilot film for the series which would be shot with the money to be put up by Frank Creel, when somebody tapped Irene on the shoulder. She looked up. It was Vittorio Vitibelli. He had apparently come across from the table at which he was lunching with the British playwright, because Vittorio was carrying his napkin.

"Darling, I don't mean to interrupt," he said. "But didn't you say last night that you were meeting the four o'clock plane from New York?"

Irene looked at him with annoyance. Why couldn't some people mind their own business?

"Thanks," Irene said coldly. "I'm perfectly capable of keeping track of my own . . ."

Her voice stopped. Her glance, swinging away from Vittorio and back to Mr. Peccarari, had paused on the clock over the bar. It showed twenty minutes to four. At once Irene's annoyance shifted from Vittorio Vitibelli to herself. It was at least a half hour by taxi out to Ciampino, maybe longer, so that even if she left this minute, she was bound to be late, and one of the few things Frank could be really sticky about was tardiness. It wouldn't surprise her one bit if he should be annoyed enough by her being late to refuse to put up the money for Mr. Peccarari's pilot film, and thus deprive Irene of her first real chance to show what she could do professionally. If that happened, Irene thought angrily, she would have nobody to blame but herself. Holly must have been thinking more or less the same thing, because all at once she snapped her fingers.

"I know what let's do!" Holly said. "Let's *all* go out to meet Frank's plane! We'll be a little late, but you can tell him you wanted to make it a real welcoming committee, sweetie, and it took a little time to get the gang together!"

"Splendid!" said Mr. Peccarari. "Let us go!"

"But we ordered a fresh round of Bloody Marys!" Irene said.

"Let's take them with us!" Holly said.

They did, holding their glasses aloft like torches as they paraded out of Capriccio's and up the street to the Via Veneto, where they found a cab. It was old and the jump seats were broken, so Irene sat on Mr. Peccarari's lap and Holly sat on the lap of one of his partners. The other partner kept insisting they stop and pick up a girl to sit on his lap, but Holly calmed him by pouring part of her drink into his collar.

"When Irene came to Rome" Holly

explained, "Frank said she could stay a year. He would support her for that length of time, Frank said, and then he would come and get her. A couple of months ago, though, Irene decided a year wasn't long enough. She didn't write and tell this to Frank, because she knew he'd say No right away if she asked him to let her stay longer. She figured if she didn't say a word, if she just waited until he arrived, and he saw how wonderful she looks—" Holly paused, and she tipped her head to one side, beaming with alcoholic admiration at her friends, and she said, "Irene *does* look wonderful, doesn't she?"

"Yes, indeed, marvelous," said Mr. Peccarari, beaming at Irene as he gave her an affectionate pat and moved her into a more comfortable position on his lap. "She looks lovely."

"As soon as Frank sees her," Holly continued, "Irene and I figure he'll realize right away that living in Rome is wonderful for her, and so when she tells him she wants to stay another year, Frank will just have to say Yes, that's all."

Holly took a long pull at her drink. The cab swerved and she emitted a small, involuntary, guttural sound.

"Oop," Holly said. "Sorry." She giggled and burped again and took another swallow. "Anyway, that's been the plan

for the past couple of months," Holly said. "But now . . ."

She paused, and she beamed first at Mr. Peccarari and then at the partner on whose lap she was sitting.

"Now that we've got this new thing," Holly said, "now that we've decided to let Frank put up the money for the pilot film for this series in which Irene and I are going to be co-starred with the great Greta Garbo . . ."

Holly paused again, and even though her attempt at an eloquent shrug was spoiled somewhat because the cab, swerving this time in the opposite direction, poured part of Mr. Peccarari's drink down *her* neck, she managed to enunciate clearly enough.

"So you can see that this very important day in Irene's life has now become a very important day in *all* our lives." Holly reached across and tweaked the cheek of the Peccarari partner on whose lap nobody was sitting. "It certainly is no time to risk making a bad impression on Frank by stopping to pick up chippies off the street just because your knees are cold," she said. "Especially since we're late already."

But the plane was late, too. So when they got to Ciampino there was time for another Bloody Mary, which they had out on the terrace overlooking the landing field, where a few people



. . . "Why Clara Dugelveis, I was just this minute thinking of you"

# The Clean Slate

(continued)

were waiting. When the plane finally did come in, and the disembarking platform was rolled against its huge silver side, and the door opened, and the passengers started coming out in single file, Irene suddenly found she had stopped listening to the small, charming sounds Mr. Peccarari had been murmuring softly through his red mustache into her ear.

All at once, for no reason she could figure out, it seemed a warning bell had sounded, and Irene found herself waiting, all the muscles in her stomach drawing together slowly in a tense, hard knot. Then Frank came through the door of the plane, carrying a large square package and stooping slightly, because of his height. He straightened up on the platform, and he paused for a moment on the top step to squint against the sun toward the terrace railing at the far side of the landing field where friends and relatives were watching the disembarking passengers, and then Irene knew why her stomach had tightened and what it was she had been waiting for.

It was as though the curtain of alcoholic haze, which had begun to build up with the two healing shots of whiskey in the apartment and had slowly grown thicker with the accumulation of Bloody Marys at Capriccio's, had suddenly been slashed so that, through the narrow slit, Irene could get a clear glimpse of her husband. Seeing Frank standing there, so tall and straight and clean-looking in the afternoon sunlight, she remembered all at once, with a sense of shock that was almost physically painful, how much she loved him, and how much she had missed him, and then she had a moment of rage and self-loathing for allowing herself to be drunk at this moment, but it did not last long. The slit in the curtain had closed.

"I'll bet that's him!" Holly squealed. "I've never seen him, but I'll bet that's him! The tall, good-looking one carrying the package!"

She was right, but she continued to squeal, while passports were examined by immigration officers, and luggage was routed through the customs shed, and Irene was finally allowed to run across toward Frank. He met her halfway, and dragged her into his arms with an impatient, almost harsh pull, so that the package he was carrying dug painfully into her back, but Irene didn't say a word. She couldn't. He was holding her too tight. Then he released her, and he pushed her away, and he held her at arm's length, and he grinned.

"Hi, baby," Frank murmured. "It's been a long time."

Irene swallowed hard, trying to think

of something to say, but just then Holly came up with Mr. Peccarari and his two partners, and Irene didn't have to think about what she had to say. She just introduced Holly, and Holly introduced Mr. Peccarari, and Mr. Peccarari introduced his two partners, and then they were all talking at once, telling Frank about Garbo and the pilot film and the role in it that was being reserved for Irene and what a wonderful investment TV films were for a man like Frank because it allowed him to avoid the high tax brackets and take a capital gain instead. Frank smiled and listened politely, but all the time they were talking at him he seemed to be doing something complicated with his hands, and after making a determined effort, Irene managed to bring him into focus and she saw what he was doing. Frank was undoing the wrappings of the package.

"Okay," he said finally, holding up a great big doll in a pink dress and a brand new yellow catcher's mitt. He looked around impatiently, with eager expectation, across the heads of the chattering Holly and the charming Mr. Peccarari and his grinning partners, and Frank Creel said to his wife, "Where are the kids?"

The innocent syllables, so lovingly uttered, might have been a savage blow across her face. Once again, as Irene stood there in the customs shed at Ciampino, she was reminded of that dreadful morning following her twenty-third birthday party when she had realized for the first time in her life that she had blacked out. Except that this time, in addition to the terror, there were the despairing words, drilling relentlessly through the alcoholic haze that blanketed her mind: *How could I have allowed this to happen? How could I have forgotten Petey and Connie?*

Perhaps because she was not personally involved, or because she carried her liquor better, it was Holly who recovered first.

"They're waiting for their daddy," she said brightly. "At the apartment!"

All the way back to the apartment in the taxi, through the terror that fought with the alcohol for possession of her senses, Irene prayed that Holly was right. *The children*, she kept saying to herself over and over again as though the words were a talisman, *the children, oh, God, please, do anything You want with me, I deserve any punishment, but please, God, please, don't let anything happen to Petey and Connie!*

"Signora!" Seraphina said happily through her enormous smile when she opened the door, and then, disregarding Holly Trait and Mr. Peccarari and his two partners, the motherly Italian woman

turned the smile on Frank. Bowing slightly, Seraphina said, "Signor Creel, welcome to Rome!" Then she seemed to become aware of the doll and the catcher's mitt in Frank's hands, and the smile disappeared. Seraphina's voice rose with sudden concern. "Where are the bambini?"

"The *who*?" Frank said sharply and apparently without thought, because a moment later he obviously didn't need an answer. Not to that particular question. A moment later he had stopped being a polite visitor. A moment later, his face tight, the doll and the catcher's mitt discarded on the table in the foyer, his voice flat and hard, Frank said, "Where are the children?"

"I don't know!" Seraphina said in a frightened voice. "Every day, three o'clock, after the lessons, I go to the school to meet them! But today, today the signora said No, today Mrs. Creel said it is special, today the signora told me. . . ."

She turned appealingly to Irene, who was trying desperately to cut through the alcoholic haze, find a rent in the fog through which the insane confusion by which she was surrounded could be viewed with some sort of clarity. But it was not easy. She couldn't seem to make her mind work. All she could do was repeat the prayer, over and over again. *Please God, please, not the children, not Petey and Connie!* She scarcely saw Holly, whose presence Irene had forgotten, step forward and put her hand on Frank's arm.

"It's just a little misunderstanding," Holly said in her high-pitched, nasal voice, and she gave Frank the seductive smile that was the cornerstone of her Full Treatment. "There's nothing to worry about," Holly said. "The kids are probably—"

With a short, sharp, seemingly effortless movement of his arm, as though he were brushing away a fly, Frank sent the drunken little blonde from Poughkeepsie reeling to the other side of the foyer.

"The school," he said to Irene in his flat, hard voice. "What's the telephone number of the school?"

The question seemed to come from far away, and then everything in the foyer—the table, the walls, the people—everything seemed to be jumping crazily from side to side. When she realized what was happening, when she understood that Frank was trying to shake her sober, Irene wanted to cry out. But she couldn't seem to make her tongue work, either. She could hear, though, with surprising clarity.

She heard Seraphina's voice saying, "In this book, Mr. Creel!"

Frank snatched the book, and he picked up the phone, and he had rapped out the number and told the operator to hurry, before he apparently realized he was not making himself understood.

"Here, you better do this," he said, thrusting the phone at Seraphina. "Quick!"

Seraphina took the phone and told the operator in Italian what she wanted and then she waited, while Irene, breathing heavily, trying fiercely to lift herself out of drunkenness by a sheer effort of will, could feel the tension in the crowded foyer mounting slowly and steadily, like flood water in a cellar. *Please, God, she prayed, holding onto the words that were the only oasis of sanity in the whirling web by which she was surrounded, please, God, not Petey and Connie!* Finally Seraphina made a small, gasping sound in her throat, and holding the phone, she turned with wide, terror-stricken eyes to Frank.

"There is no answer, signor!" she said. "The school, it is closed!"

"Is it far from here?"

"Perhaps a mile, signor."

"Do Petey and Connie know the way?"

"Si, signor. Every morning for a year I take them, every afternoon I bring them back. They know the way."

"Then even if they started walking home alone," Frank said, looking at his wrist watch. "It's now a quarter after five. They'd have been here long ago?"

"Si, signor."

Frank rubbed the side of his jaw hard, two swift strokes, one up and one down, and then he turned back to Seraphina.

"How do you call the cops in this town?"

"Signor?"

**T**he cops! The police! How do you . . . ?" He shook his head. "No, wait!" He shoved the telephone back at Seraphina. "Get me the American Embassy!" She did, and then Frank snatched the phone back. "Look," he said into the mouthpiece. "I don't know if I'm calling the right people, but this is an emergency, and I don't know anybody else to call. Can you connect me with somebody who . . . ?" His voice stopped, and there was a pause while the connection was made, and then Frank said, "Hello? My name is Frank Creel. Listen." He recited the facts swiftly and then, in answer to a question at the other end, he read off the telephone number on the instrument. "I'd like to come along and . . . oh. But couldn't I help you? Oh, I see. All right," he said through a scowl, "I'll wait here for your call. Thanks."

He hung up, and with his clenched fist he made the two hard rubbing motions along the edge of his jaw, once up

and once down, and then he turned to look at Irene. She was slumped in a chair near the window through which, if you twisted your neck hard, you could catch a glimpse of the Borghese Gardens. But not now. Not at this hour of the evening. Not in all the rain that had suddenly begun to come down so hard. And not while you were praying. Irene made another effort. There was something she had to add. *Dear God, she said, take me instead. Don't let anything happen to Petey and Connie, and You can have me instead. I'm no good, anyway. Please, God, take me instead of the children.* She could feel the hysteria bubbling inside her, like the lid of a simmering pot, cutting through the alcohol, giving the numb prayer new meaning. *If anything happens to Petey and Connie, she decided, I'll kill myself.* The decision seemed to help. At any rate, she was able to turn and meet Frank's glance.

"I know," she said in a thick, hopeless voice. She sounded as though she were talking through a mouthful of food. "I know what you want to say."

"No, you don't," Frank said quietly. "You don't have any idea what I want to say."

Perhaps not. But she had a pretty good idea what he was thinking. In Frank's place, if their positions had been reversed, she would have been thinking the same thing. Assuming that she was capable of thought, that is. Which at the moment she wasn't. Not with what was beginning to happen inside her head. Soon, very soon, Irene knew, it would be worse than a headache. But there was nothing she could do to stop it. Because she knew, too, that there was no aspirin in the house. It was the one thing she remembered clearly. There was no aspirin in the house.

"Frank," she said, "I want to say something."

"I don't want to hear it."

"You must," Irene said. "Because in a little while, very soon, I won't be able to say anything. My head is very bad, Frank, and it's getting worse. There's something I have to say while I can still say it." She paused and drew a deep breath. "If anything happens to Petey and Connie," Irene said, and even in her own ears her voice now seemed to be coming from an incredible distance, "I want you to know whose fault it is."

"I know whose fault it is," Frank said.

"No, you don't," Irene said. "You can't know."

**B**ut it was terribly important that he should. And there was nobody else who could tell him, not a soul from whom Frank would ever learn the truth, because nobody else knew it as Irene did: *it was Holly Trait's fault!*

If she had not met Holly Trait, if a year ago, during her very first week in Rome, Irene had not run into this girl who was so exactly like all those other girls with whom Irene had done all her running around and drinking in New York, if there had been no Holly Trait in Rome to befriend Irene Creel when she arrived and introduce her to the Vitibellis and the Bakers and the rest of the crowd at Capriccio's, none of this would have happened. If it had not been for meeting Holly Trait, Irene's year in Rome would have been different. If there had been no Holly Trait to lead her astray, Irene Creel would not be sitting here now, listening to the hammer strokes in her own head, waiting for a dreaded telephone call that might—

"Hello?"

**H**er heart leaped as she turned and looked up. It was Frank, talking into the phone. Irene forced her mind to push its last tentacles of awareness through the pain in her head. She had not heard the ringing of the bell. She had to hear the rest.

"Yes, this is Mr. Creel," Frank said, and he paused to listen, holding the phone with two hands, as though it were a weight that required all his strength to support. "I see," he said finally. If there was any expression in his voice, Irene could not read it. "How long?" Frank said. "I see." There was another pause, and then he said, "Thank you."

He hung up slowly, and Frank Creel turned to his wife.

"Connie and Petey are all right," he said. Irene sagged back in the chair as the tears of relief began to burn down her cheeks. "When you didn't show up this afternoon at the school the way you promised," Frank said, "the kids decided to go out to the airport on their own." He swallowed hard, but the expression on Frank's face did not change as he said, "It seems they didn't want to miss meeting their daddy's plane." Frank paused



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again. "So they started to walk to Ciampino. They didn't have any idea where it is, of course, or how long it would take, but they kept on walking. By the time it started to get dark, and a policeman who saw them thought there was something peculiar about a couple of kids their age in American clothes wandering around all alone in the rain, they'd been soaking wet for a couple of hours. The cop took them to a hospital, where they were put to bed. That's where this man I just talked to at the Embassy located them when he started a telephone check of all the police stations and hospitals in town. He says there's nothing wrong with them, except maybe a couple of bad head colds, and if I come down to the Embassy right away, he'll go over to the hospital with me to pick them up."

"Thank God!" Irene said in a whimper. "Thank God!"

"That's right, thank God," Frank said quietly. "We were lucky this time."

He started for the foyer where Seraphina, who had heard it all from the doorway, was anxiously holding out his hat.

"I will go with the signor to the hospital?" she said pleadingly. "Please?"

"All right," Frank said. "Get your coat."

She hurried away and Frank, turning back to wait, stopped with the hat halfway to his head.

"Oh, now, don't run away!" Holly Trait said petulantly as she appeared with a glass in the doorway from the dining room and leaned drunkenly against the jamb. "Seraphina can go get the kids by herself," Holly said. "She takes care of them all the time, anyway, and besides, we have things to talk about!"

"Yes, important things!" said Mr. Peccarari, appearing beside Holly with a drink of his own. "We have not yet had the opportunity to present you with a breakdown of the costs for our pilot film," he said, smiling with alcoholic graciousness as he made room for his two partners, who came weaving out of the dining room carrying drinks and scraps of paper. "Here, let us show you how we propose to make you rich, Mr. Creel!" Mr. Peccarari took the slips of paper from his partners, and the charming smile rose to new heights of incandescence as he came toward Frank. "Surely, at a time like this, Mr. Creel, you are not going to allow a small children's escapade to interfere with your wife's future?" He thrust the papers at Frank

and said. "May I suggest that you—"

He never finished the suggestion. Frank Creel's fist caught the words at their source. Mr. Peccarari, with an astonished grunt, fell back into the arms of his partners. To receive him, they were forced to drop their drinks, which caused Holly Trait to scream and run toward the foyer, where Seraphina had just appeared in her coat.

The motherly Italian woman stared in amazement as Signor Creel, firmly grasping the collar of a Peccarari partner in each hand, dragged the two charming but oddly helpless men across the room. Seraphina stepped aside quickly. Frank thrust the two TV film impresarios out into the hall, came back for Mr. Peccarari, and shoved him after his colleagues. Holly Trait, who had preceded her friends under her own power, now poked her head back into the apartment to hurl a drunken insult at the man who was, at least technically, her host. This proved to be a mistake.

Frank, just straightening up from the disposition of Mr. Peccarari, seized the drunken little blonde from Poughkeepsie by the shoulders, spun her around, and sent her on the way to join her producers by placing his foot vigorously against what is, in any country, an extremely popular target.

"Now that we've got the garbage out of here," Frank said to Seraphina, "I guess we can go get the children."

"Si, signor!"

Frank clapped the hat on his head and turned back to Irene.

"We may not be so lucky next time," he said grimly. "So I'm fixing things to make sure there won't be a next time," Frank said. "You can start packing their stuff now," he said. "I'm taking the kids back to New York with me on the first plane tomorrow."

For several moments after the door slammed shut behind him, the words meant nothing. They were so many stones dropped into a pool. Very soon, however, in the space of time that it took Irene to get from the chair near the window in the living room to the silver tray on the sideboard in the dining room, the words started to come back to the surface. After the second shot, when the sharpest edge of the pain in her head had already been blunted and she was pouring the drink that Irene knew from experience would rout it completely, the full meaning of what Frank had said struck her. Irene's hand shook. The neck of the bottle rattled against the glass.

"Back?" she said aloud, in a frightened voice, to her reflection in the mirror over the sideboard. "To New York?"

But she *couldn't* go back!

Going back meant admitting to herself that the year had been wasted. That her failure was not Holly's fault but her own. That what had happened to her after she left Battle Creek was not the result of the life she and Frank had led in New York, but was due to some weakness within herself that she had brought from Battle Creek to New York and had then carried with her from New York to Rome. Going back meant confessing that no matter where she went, because the flaw would go with her, she would always find a Holly Trait to make friends with.

"No," Irene said firmly to her reflection in the mirror. "I'm not going back."

She poured the third shot, looked carefully at the level in the glass, added another half inch of whiskey, drank it off, and waited. She did not have to wait long. In a matter of moments, or so it seemed, the solution came to her. It was so simple that Irene wondered why it had not occurred to her at once.

"I won't say a word tonight," she said craftily to her reflection in the mirror. "I'll wait until tomorrow, when he's all calmed down."

Then, casually, across the breakfast table, or perhaps later in the morning, when they were walking with the children in the Borghese Gardens, she would tell Frank what she had really known from the very beginning, a year ago, the moment she set foot in this city, but had lacked the courage to write and tell him then.

"Rome isn't any good," she would say with the sort of complete and disarming candor that Frank had always respected in her. "It's the wrong place. It's full of too many of the same kind of people we used to know in New York."

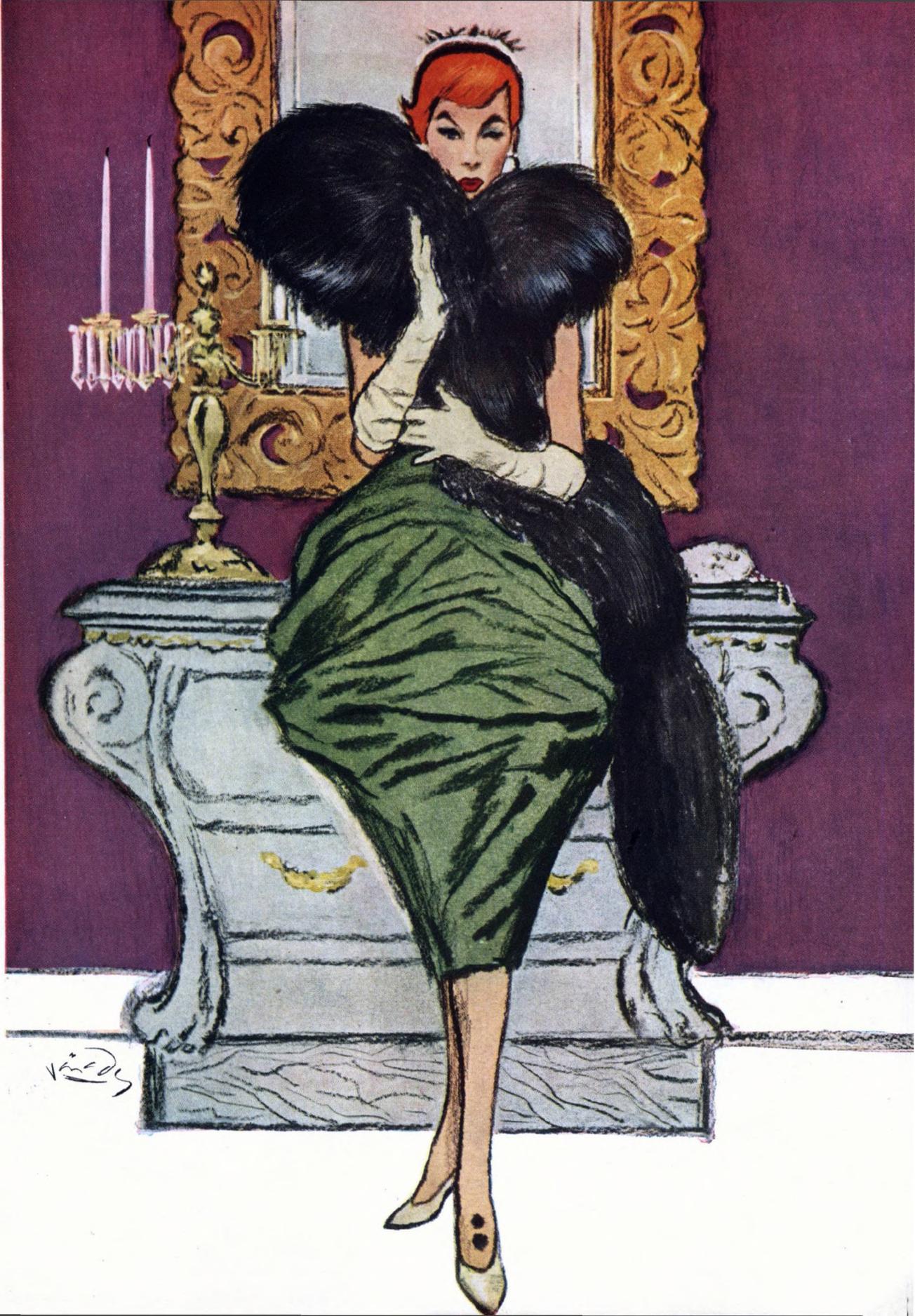
Pouring herself another drink, Irene chose her next words with care.

"The thing to do is start all over again," she said. "As though this past year hadn't happened. In some place that's *really* different. Some place where they never heard of the New York rat race, where I can settle down quietly for a while with the children, and relax and give myself a chance to get to know them, and give the children a chance to get to know me. Some place like Madrid, perhaps. Or London. Or even Paris."

The place didn't matter. As long as she got a chance to wipe the slate clean.

THE END

For a split second she faced herself. But then she whispered, "I won't go back. He'll have to give me another chance."



*aparker*



# “Rosemary’s Eloped!”

My beautiful sister was in love—a new, strange feeling that compelled her to leave us—but Mother wouldn’t give her up. While the two struggled with love, old and new, there was no comfort in our house

BY ANN CHIDESTER ILLUSTRATED BY AL PARKER

**D**uring those days before my sister, Rosemary, eloped there was no peace in our house. The trouble lay in the love she and Mother had for each other, but suddenly they became two women in the same household who no longer understood each other. In this curious trickery of love, they were evasive, speaking only half-truths, and guilts and secrets made them blush easily. At night they worried about each other. Mother’s restless murmur to Father made a sad sea-sound in the darkness.

“If she’d only *try* to understand. I’m no child. I’m nineteen now, and Fred needs me. That’s the point,” Rosemary moaned to me. “What makes a woman of Mother’s age so utterly, utterly pigheaded?”

“So are you. Pigheaded.” I said wearily. Love was supposed to be like bread, a simple and daily thing, the staff of one’s interior life. That year I was sixteen, and all my life I had heard enough

about love to feel myself something of a precocious authority on the subject. We had grown up as a delighted, marveling, and greedy audience to our mother’s philosophy of love and marriage.

“A woman’s no use until she comes to love a good man more than she loves herself,” Mother used to say, though at the time she had never heard of Fred Hogan. “Romance?” she would arch her black eyebrows like a very wise witch. “Men are romantic. Women must be practical to keep *some* order in this confusing world.” In her own day she had been terribly romantic. We still heard about it—particularly at weddings when people studied Rosemary and me to discover what they best remembered of our mother as a girl.

“Tell me one thing, one beastly, nagging, inconsequential thing, she can object to in Fred,” Rosemary demanded. It was too complicated a question to have any real answer.

“He’s still in college. Only a student.”

“I’m going now,” she whispered. “Tell Mother I’m sorry. I couldn’t help it.”

"But that's the point. He *needs* me now. Not tomorrow or three years from now when he's established."

"But he can't take care of you."

"Was Daddy a rich man when she married him? How often has she told those stories about the leaky pipes and the windows rattling every time the train passed? And the time she had only three dollars left?"

"That's different."

"How?" She stabbed the air with a long forefinger. She looked like a woman prophet, sitting up in bed with the sheet wrapped tight around her.

"Because it was Mother. Not her child but herself. She's killing me inside."

Nothing that Mother said these days sounded right to Rosemary, and everything that she said to Mother sounded awfully awkward and full of hidden meanings. Even when she was very small, love could hold a power, a discipline, over her rebellious nature, but this new, strong feeling she had for Fred Hogan was even greater than anything she felt for us—even for Mother. The spell of the family was waning, but Mother could not see that. She refused to think of giving Rosemary up and found curious excuses to keep her home.

During all this time, Father took sensible shelter behind his paper and under a blue smoke screen. He reasoned that it was best to stay out of the fracas and that since Mother and Rosemary loved each other, the outcome would be a

good one. This was the only attitude in which he could find peace after the enduring, heavy silences that fell over the dinner table, the shrieks that now and then came out of the kitchen, and the muffled sobs that shook the house.

The three younger children—all boys, mercifully—walked through this heavy air soundlessly, blinking like owls, wise enough to see nothing. They escaped into the cool spring air and had to be herded like sheep into the house late at night. There was no comfort anywhere.

I liked Fred Hogan, but my idea of a husband for Rosemary was one of the Burlington boys she had known all her life or Bill Harding or Allan Straight, our neighbor. Mother had set her heart on Bill Harding. She said she admired his family, and he had gentle eyes. Rosemary had agreed with her until she came to know Fred Hogan. He lived with his older sister and her family and went about tagged by a gypsy band of nieces and nephews. His father had been a rogue who had died leaving his widow and two children impoverished, and then Fred's mother had died, too. He'd worked in a garage when he was in high school, and later he had worked in a lawyer's office. He was studying law. Because Mother, remembering the hard early days of her marriage with amusement, had still made a big point of keeping life very easy for all of us—particularly for Rosemary, the eldest—she could not endure the idea of

any of her own children facing hardships.

"I'm sure he's a good boy," she muttered, "but Rosemary has *no* idea. Why, I remember when your father and I were first married, Jody. That leaky little apartment and the awful stove. How I used to cry, secretly, over the checkbook. Rosemary's never known hard times. She's still a child in many ways, and the boy cannot take care of her. A girl must not be foolish." She refused to think Rosemary could be serious about the tall, vague young man who had looked like a college professor when he was only fifteen. "What does she see in him?" Mother asked, banging away at the stove. In a bad mood, she attacked it as though it were alive, a primitive beast to be kicked and battered into a sullen, hot servility. "She's acting like a schoolgirl. With all these young men hanging around who could take care of her. She has no idea of anything."

I swallowed, stirring my coffee and leaning against the big kitchen table. "She doesn't know what to think of you these days, either. Mother." I said weakly.

Mother stopped dead. I think she made a kind of spitting sound, but she said nothing, and that night at dinner she was even more silent than usual. It was that same night Rosemary woke me, kissed my cheek, and put her hand to my mouth for silence. I could smell her perfume but could not see her face. She paused only a moment in the doorway to look at the old room that was slowly turning pale yellow with dawn.

"I'm going now. Jode," she said. "No use to explain to Mother. No use to expect her to give in. She doesn't think I can make any plans of my own. I've tried. You know I've tried! Every time Fred comes here, it gets worse. Oh, not that she's rude or anything. But—tell them I'll be all right."

"But what can I say?"

"Say we've eloped. And—I can't help it. He needs me."

I wanted to stop her and yet I wanted her to go, even though I knew it was the end of many things for both of us. In that moment, I could well appreciate the division in my mother's heart, too. Still, I admired my sister for going off like this into an unknown life. Surely Mother would see this as proof of Rosemary's love for Fred. I lay listening, but there was no sound anywhere. I imagined her meeting him at the end of our driveway, and I could not sleep again for wondering about them and about whether, some day, I could be so sure of my own heart. What would I say to Mother and Father? I wished Rosemary had left a note. She had been the one to manage things, and I was uneasy, as if I had just lost my shadow or center of gravity, thinking of facing them without her.



"This always starts off as a friendly game, but stick around a few minutes . . . it's worth watching."

"You look terrible, Jody," Mother said at breakfast. "Not enough proteins. Isn't Rosemary down yet?"

"Umm, unnh," I said vaguely, and Father looked at me sharply. His glasses fogged over. He took out his handkerchief and wiped his hands very slowly, and I knew then that he knew about Rosemary, too. I waited until the three boys had finished stuffing themselves in their usual, barbaric fashion. As soon as they left, banging doors, I cleared my throat. I felt my heart was going to break inside me because at that moment Mother looked very small, very fragile, and almost exactly like Rosemary when she felt miserable and pretended to be full of jokes. "Sporting," she called it.

"Rosemary's eloped with Fred Hogan," I said. "She went over to Greenton, but she said to tell you she'll be all right. And I know she will!"

Mother put her hand hard to her mouth and stared at Father. He got up and bent over her, pulling her head against him as if she were a child of his who had taken a nasty fall and needed his comfort. She moaned and moved her head from side to side in pain and kept saying over and over again that she did not believe it. "It's impossible," she said. "Why, I think it's even illegal. And she can't do it. She doesn't remember the simplest things—always losing her green umbrella and half the time she needs help with her zippers and things like that! She'll never be able to keep a checkbook. Why, she can't do the nines." For Mother, this was a bad dream that must pass if she continued to disbelieve it and to protest violently against it. Tomorrow, surely, Rosemary would be back at home. Mother would not listen to us.

"I have heard only good things about him," Father said. He was taking it calmly, having decided that what he could not hope to change he would accept.

"Going over to another state like bandits. Or rumrunners, without dignity or sense. It proves my contention about the young man. And Rosemary's still a child. Not a towel or table cloth to her name."

Just then the phone rang, and Father answered it. "Rosemary's calling from Greenton now," he said, but Mother refused to move. She sat there, slowly shaking her head, looking white and frozen. But I went to the phone. Rosemary said, sounding both happy and sad, "Tell Mother—when she finally will listen to sense—tell her we're settled only a few blocks from the university. We have three nice sunny rooms above a garage behind old Professor Luddmore's house. I wanted to tell her ages ago, but you know. . . . We have a new electric stove, too." She hesitated. "Try to talk some sense into her, Jode. So she'll come to see us."

Mother pretended a complete lack of

interest in the entire affair. She felt she had been betrayed even though she had no logical reason for thinking so. She refused to ask questions. I said, "Mother, she *had* to do it this way." She darted me a look of intense anger, almost like hatred. She did not seem to realize that the rest of us felt the loss of Rosemary, too. Father walked about making queer bear sounds in his throat, and the boys stared wide-eyed at her empty chair, trying very hard to understand. Since Mother herself did not understand why she acted this way, she couldn't explain to the boys.

"He can't take care of her," she reasoned. "And Rosemary's had no training. She hasn't had a sufficient girlhood, either. Why, she's only a child."

"So were you," Father said calmly. "You couldn't boil water. And the very first thing you sewed—those kitchen curtains—you bawled and scared the life out of me, and in the end you had to throw them out."

She glared at him. "That was different. I was old for my years, and we had a roof over our heads. You had a steady job, and between us we saved up over three hundred dollars."

"But, Mother," I said, "*they* have a place to live. Three sunny rooms over a professor's garage. They've even got a new electric stove. Besides, Rosemary told me once she'd get a job."

She was stunned at this. She had supposed the elopement was unplanned, a wild scheme of the moment. Now that she faced the broader picture of Rosemary and Fred settled in their own apartment, she was even more deeply hurt. She had always looked forward, dreamily, to Rosemary's marriage, imagining her in a house not too far from our own, planning how she and Rosemary would decorate it—and all the advice Rosemary would ask her to give. Indeed, Mother saw herself as a very prominent character in this romantic scene.

"Why, the girl uses every smitch of butter in the house when she makes those white cookies. And butter isn't cheap these days. She has no idea how difficult marriage can be." She went on like this all week, worrying and muttering, but she did not reveal and could not seem to put into plain words her real hurt—that she firmly believed Rosemary had turned her back on us and our way of life, showing plainly to all of us and to the entire town that she could live very nicely, thank you, without her family. No matter how hard Father and I tried, we could not make her see she was wrong. She covered her hurt and her sense of loss under an air of injury that was very like mourning. She refused to speak Rosemary's name, and her manner—the way she grimly pretended that she never even gave Rosemary a thought—suggested to



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## "Rosemary's Eldest!" (continued)

my mind one of those bitter, unforgiving women of the Old South I had read about in an historical novel. Even Father, who had known her for years, after all, was now baffled.

"Did Rosemary kill someone?" one brother asked in a hoarse whisper. "No. Just married Fred Hogan. And that's no crime."

"Are the cops after him?"

"No."

"Why's Mother acting like her feet hurt all the time?"

"Because this marriage wasn't *her* idea for Rosemary," I said, though I knew this was not the whole truth.

"Well, I never," he said and went off to find Father, hoping that an experienced man might know what had changed Mother so much. In public, her manner was even more extraordinary. Old friends felt that it might be wiser not to mention the marriage, and they sent wedding presents to Father's office or directly to Rosemary. Twice a week, Father would drive over to her with the gifts. It was only sixty miles away. Usually I accompanied him, though we said nothing to Mother. By that time, I think she did not know herself why she had to continue

to act like this. It was one huge, confused hurt inside her, a kind of chaos of her heart and an inability to yield her eldest, her first, to a life she herself had not planned for her. Whenever Father, in despair, tried to reason with her, she shook her head violently and said, "I know my place. Rosemary no longer needs me—obviously! Very well, then, I shan't interfere. The day may come when she has children of her own—and then!" She shrugged, making a gesture that ended all talk.

"It might become an enduring feud, Father," I said.

"I don't understand women! Your own mother's a stranger to me these days. And Rosemary talks silliness about *never* forgiving her. If your mother could see how they're managing . . ."

"Look at Judy Sutton. She can't go home because her mother calls her husband a moron. Something about politics. And she has to see her father secretly."

"I don't care *who* you girls marry! Big weddings and all of that—just so you're happy, I say. But then I'm only a simple-minded man."

There was a difference in Rosemary, too. At first, she had been very high-handed about Mother, saying that Mother

had no right to talk about Fred as though he were an illiterate or a sharecropper. But her attitude began to change, so that each time I went to visit her she would ask me to do something for her—bring Mother's recipe for rolls or walnut cake, find out how Mother kept her towels white and what was that white powder she put on meat to give it added flavor. Fred and Father went to the kitchen to talk and drink beer by themselves. They both seemed to believe firmly in their wives—that someday very soon this silly misunderstanding would pass.

"Does she ever ask about me?" Rosemary asked, turning her face from me.

"No," I said. Father and I had agreed not to talk about our visits, though we felt sure Mother knew we saw Rosemary, particularly on the nights her bridge club met. Father's idea was not to satisfy Mother's growing curiosity. "For example," he reasoned, "there are the infernal curtains. Your mother's been obsessed with curtains ever since that first pair she made failed. So, we won't describe the furniture or anything else. Nor what we had for a snack." The moment would come, he said, when they would come together happily.

"I . . . I *do* miss her, Jode," Rosemary admitted.

"She misses you, too," I said.

"Nobody's stopping her from coming to see us," she said firmly. By this time she imagined that Mother had insulted Fred frequently, right to his face. "As though I wanted or needed a husband who could give me mink. Did she marry for mink? Besides, I never liked it."

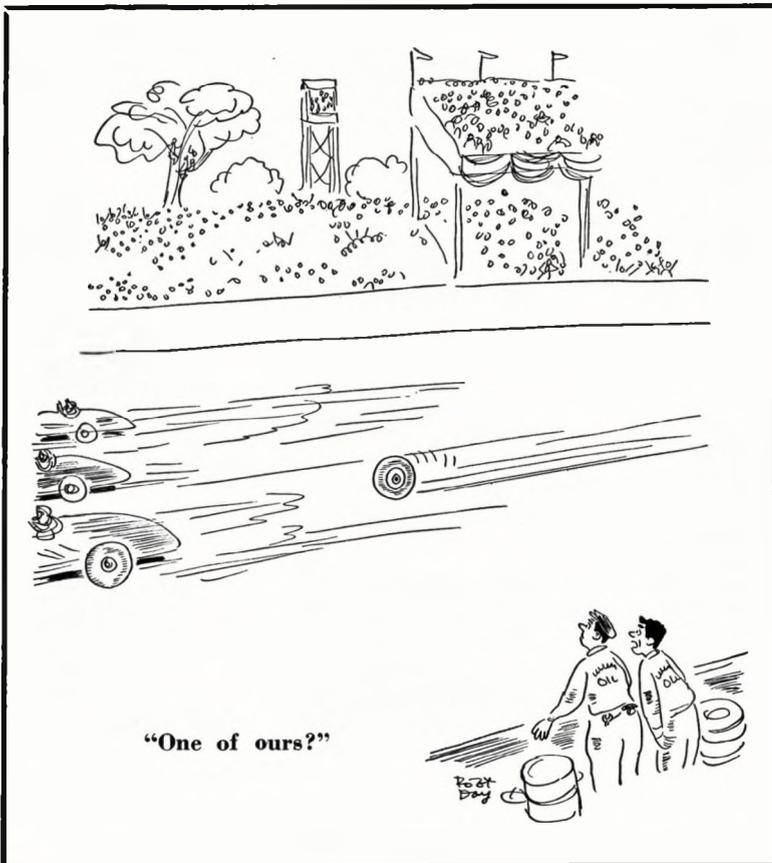
I could remember nothing Mother had said about mink. Rosemary was nineteen, and Mother was forty-three, and I could imagine them both growing older and older without making their peace. It was not a pleasant thought. Soon it would be Christmas, and Rosemary had been married almost eight months, and Father had come to the end of his patience. "We're not going to celebrate Christmas without Rosemary. She's still a member of this family. And that's final." He muttered crazy threats, too. "I'll go away from this house for a month. Somewhere in the deep South, where I can enjoy civilized peace far away from silly, strong-minded women. I swear I'll go, if peace isn't made in this family by Christmas."

"Peace? Who's making war?" Mother asked, biting her lip, for she was tired of her attitude, too.

"Do they *still* hate each other?" the boys asked.

"Is Rosemary coming home for the holidays?" people in town asked. But neither Rosemary nor Mother gave any signs of breaking down.

I marvel now at the small thing that happened to bring them together. In my



mind, I used to imagine what it might be—perhaps a baby. Mother would never, never let Rosemary have a baby without going right over to see it. Or, perhaps Rosemary might lie between Life and Death, feverishly crying out for Mother. I never once imagined it would be a very ordinary, everyday kind of thing that would bring them together, finally.

Early in December it happened—just when Father's mutterings and threats were approaching a righteous roar, and when we were all plotting together exactly how we could have Rosemary and Fred with us for Christmas dinner. It was almost suppertime when Mother and I were bustling about the kitchen and dining room. We were alone in the house. When the phone in the hall rang, I answered it. Rosemary spoke in a rush, out of breath. She had run across Professor Luddmore's back yard to use his telephone.

"Jode? Listen, Jody, is Mother there?"  
"In the kitchen."

"I *have* to talk to her. You have no idea. I'm ruined. I . . . I wouldn't blame Fred right now if he left me and never, never came back. He can't forgive me in a million years, Jode. Oh, hurry up. Don't stand there like a stone!"

"Mother," I said. "It's Rosemary. Something awful has happened, I think."

"Dear God help us," she breathed and came bolting from the kitchen like a player with the ball, making desperate gestures of wiping her hands and smoothing down her hair. Her knuckles showed white as white as she clutched the phone, but as she listened, the breath went out of her slowly. "Yes, dear? Yes . . . tell me what it is," she demanded, and then, weakly, she leaned her head against the wall and made a sign to me that everything was all right.

"Rice?" Mother was saying. "But, dear girl, I've told you and told you about rice, though I must admit I had the very same experience. It can fill the kitchen like a blizzard." She was growing more and more pleased by the moment. "French cookbooks? Oh, I *know*. I tried them, too, dear, but the best thing is to stick to something simple, something you've done well many times before, though I can't blame you for trying." She darted a quick glance at the hall clock. "Well, now, don't you worry. I hear your father driving into the driveway right now. I dare say we can be over there in about an hour the way he drives. And you can have the soup hot and the table all set. I'll take care of the rest, never you fear!" She was like a soldier going into battle, dedicated.

There was a little weak sound from the other end of the phone.

"There, there, dear," Mother said, blinking her eyes furiously. She hung up

and turned to me. "Imagine it. The poor girl with Fred's law professor coming for dinner, and you can imagine how important it is. The silly little thing just plain overreached herself, and of course she wants everything perfect. Oh, I know well all about it, the whole situation. And how much it may mean to Fred, too. A scholarship or something, no doubt. A very bright boy, Jody, very bright and enterprising." As she spoke, she was running up the stairs, snatching her handbag off the dresser and then her hat and even her gloves, as though hurriedly preparing for a formal occasion. All the while I was trying to follow her. She called down the stairs to Father, who stood waiting, half-dazed and trying not to hope too much.

"Get the steak out of the refrigerator, Jody. And those lovely green peas. Strawberries! Do we have strawberries in the freezer? Something simple. You can give the boys soup and sandwiches for supper, Jody."

"Who's starving?" Father asked.

"Now, nothing's wrong, dear. Rosemary needs me over there to help her, so I said we'd drive over at once. Her kitchen is full of rice, and I'm simply dying to see what she did for kitchen curtains. She's having guests for dinner. Don't stand in front of the mirror, dear. I want to get my hat on right. Remember the night we had the Olivers in that leaky old apartment, and I tried the complicated lobster dish with wine sauce? My, how things repeat themselves." She was tugging at his sleeve, giving me orders to bring this or that from the kitchen, and handing packages to Father to carry out to the car. Her face was glowing, her eyes full of fire, and there was such eagerness in her she seemed about to burst.

Standing at the window, I watched them go out to the car, Mother chatting happily and Father still a little dazed, muttering something about the impossibility of ever understanding anything and how hard it was for men to live with mysterious women. I had the vague feeling, as in a dream, that all of this had happened before—long ago when I was a child. Perhaps it had happened to Mother herself at one time when my grandmother was alive. I went out to the kitchen, feeling the house enormous in silence about me. I was going to give the boys sandwiches and soup for supper, since Mother had taken our dinner with her, and as I worked out there alone, I felt something begin inside me—a small itch of excitement. The first marriage was hard on any family, I reasoned, but by the time of a second marriage, even the boys would be more understanding. And Mother, as well.

THE END



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# MAN'S MOST PRECIOUS GIFT

No doubt, it had been magically bestowed. With it he could do things no other man could do—

BY ROBERT STANDISH

A few months ago I was at one of those huge, impersonal cocktail parties—there must have been 150 guests where fifty might have been comfortable—where nobody seemed to know anybody else, or just what the party was in aid of. Observing a familiar face in an alcove, I began to push my way through the scrum towards it, moving at the rate of some three feet per minute.

"Who," said a woman's voice close to my left ear. "would you consider the most interesting, or perhaps I should say the most striking, person you have ever met?"

I doubt, looking back on it, that the question was being put to me, but I

"He was aiming straight at me. What could I sag to keep him from firing?"





Between the American lady and the murderer,  
there could have been nothing in common. Yet how  
gladly each of them gave money to Pancho!

heard myself reply without hesitation: "Pancho de Sandoval, of course!"

Just then the key log in the jam shifted, with the result that my questioner moved in one direction while I moved in the other. I never even saw her face.

Later that evening I pondered the question, coming to the conclusion that, even if given some hours for thought, my reply would have been the same. I won't say that Pancho de Sandoval is the most interesting, but I will say that he is the most striking person I ever met.

Let me begin at the end by recounting the circumstances of our last meeting:

Nearly three years ago, hot and dirty after a long drive to the south of Mexico City, nearing the border of Guatemala, I braked my car to a stop near the top of a high pass. In the middle of the dusty road, almost underneath a sign which said, "Hotel Posada de Potaltec," was a strange and horrible sight. A dead horse lay where he had fallen, while four or five mangy dogs disputed with a flock of vultures for his entrails. At least a hundred of the vile birds were feeding on the carcass. There was just room for me to pass and then swing out in order to enter the gates of the hotel.

I was soon grateful for the restful twilight of a huge, vaulted bedroom. The bleached landscape, bathed in the strange lemon-colored light characteristic of the high mountains in Mexico, was trying to the eyes. A cool shower and some cold beer soon worked wonders, and while the long shadows filtered away, filling the valleys with purple darkness, I set out to explore the posada and its lovely gardens.

The posada is not, frankly, an establishment I would recommend to my more fastidious friends, but the building is old and graceful—authentic sixteenth century—built of mellowed reddish sandstone. The plumbing, I would judge, was considered substandard in the time of Cortés.

Dinner made me decide to get on the road early the following morning, but then I did not know that I had burned out the generator of the car. The main dish for dinner consisted of a lot of unidentifiable objects swimming in an unholy liquid which looked like black strap mo-

lasses and tasted like hell fire. I ate an omelet, some bread, and fruit.

Choosing a chair with a good reading light, I made myself comfortable in the patio. The night was full of pleasant sounds. A donkey brayed. Dogs barked. There came the thin wail of an infant crying, while in the background, inseparable from Mexico, was the gobbling of turkeys disturbed by lights, and the distant tinkling of a guitar, an instrument which has to be distant to be tolerable.

Then out of the darkness, swelling like organ music, came a baritone voice of infinite sweetness, singing a song with a familiar Spanish lilt. I had heard the song—and the voice—many times before. But when and where?

The voice went from song to song, sometimes pitched low and at others filling the night with joy and melody. It was not the voice of a paid performer, but rather that of a man singing strictly for his own pleasure, uttering the joy that was in his heart. Where, where, where had I heard that voice before?

Then I remembered and was reminded of the swift passage of the years.

In Greenwich Village, a little before the end of Prohibition, were three small restaurants next to each other in a terrace of brownstone houses. One of them was called the "Blue Danube," another "Le Petit Coin de France," while the third was called "Old Mexico." What the general public did not know, and I learned only recently, was that these three restaurants shared one kitchen. The cook, who was Chinese, would make a stew. A ladleful of this, well sprinkled with paprika, appeared at the "Blue Danube" as Genuine Hungarian Goulash. The same stew, decorated with a sprig of parsley and served on a tricolor tablecloth, was sent up to "Le Petit Coin de France" where, after the waiter had said *abracadabra* three times, it was called *Ragout à la Catalane*. At the "Old Mexico" some hell-fire sauce, some burned sugar, and a dash or two of God-help-us turned the same stew into a "Typical Mexican" dish, served with two alleged "tortillas" which resembled beige rubber bathmats (these did duty as *crêpes Suzette* at "Le Petit Coin de France"). The wretched victim upstairs would skin the roof off

his mouth and pretend to his girl friend that he enjoyed it. But *she* would enjoy herself, sipping bathtub gin and orange juice and listening to Pancho de Sandoval's resonant baritone and reading into its passionate tones meanings which were not there. Every woman who went to the "Old Mexico" thought that Pancho was singing to her. But he wasn't. Pancho was singing . . . to Pancho.

In those days Pancho had a story which he told to everyone. He told it to me at least four times. It seems that on the day he was born his father went out into the garden and climbed into a hammock, completely exhausted by the ordeal. Suddenly, from the bough of a jacaranda tree in full bloom there flew a strange bird whose back and wings were bright blue and whose breast was a brilliant yellow.

"Ho there, you fat Mexican man," the bird said to Pancho's father. "How is that newborn son of yours?"

"Mind your own business!" replied Pancho's father, composing himself for sleep.

"Hey there, wake up!" called the bird loudly. "I have a gift for your son, so open the window of the room where he sleeps."

"What is this gift you have for him?" asked Pancho's father suspiciously.

"It is the most precious gift a man can have . . . the gift of saying the right thing at the right time. Hurry, because I must give it to him before he awakens from his first sleep."

"All right," said Pancho's father, pointing to the house. "That is the room and the window is already open . . . but don't wake the child . . . and don't wake me!"

And with that Pancho's father went to sleep, without ever being quite certain whether or not the bird had conferred The Gift upon Pancho.

Pancho must have told that story to hundreds of people, but although they believed much less probable things every day of their lives, most of them were inclined to laugh it off as a fairy tale. What do I think? Well, I am not even now quite sure, but in the light of subsequent events I am inclined to give Pancho's father the benefit of the doubt.

Up at Potaltec, in the patio of the posada, I sat entranced while Pancho's voice—which had become a little seedy with the years—filled the night with sweetness and sound, dredging to the surface of memory people and incidents lost for many years. Voices and perfumes! What potent spurs they are to memory!

The voice came closer until it seemed to fill the patio. "Hullo, Pancho," I said softly between songs. "Is this the garden

where the blue bird with the yellow breast brought you The Gift?"

Pancho's chubby face became wreathed in smiles. "It is you, señor, and after all these years!" he said caressingly, maneuvering to get on the other side of the light in order to see who I was, because my face was completely in the shadow. "Only a few days ago I was thinking of you, señor, wondering what had happened . . . and now . . . what joy! Let us drink a glass of tequila together and talk of old times."

"I'll stick to beer, thanks!" I said hastily. To me tequila tastes like Grade C embalming fluid and caustic soda, with an overtone of chlorinated drains. People who have had their taste buds completely cauterized by eating Mexican food tell me that it is delicious.

Three beers and six tequilas later I was prepared to go on oath he didn't know me from the proverbial hole in the ground, but after he wormed out of me the admission that in my undiscriminating youth I had been misguided enough to eat at the "Old Mexico," he was on safer ground. We chatted amiably of this and that, and at ten o'clock I went to bed.

By using plenty of DDT, I managed to keep all but the most ferocious bugs at bay, and was fortunate enough to doze off several times just before dawn. I was mercifully spared the knowledge then that my generator was burned out and that I would have to spend another night at the posada.

When I went for an early morning stroll, the dogs and the vultures were making their breakfast off what was left of the horse. I suggested to Pancho that this was perhaps not the best possible advertisement for his posada.

"God sent the dogs and the vultures, señor," he replied equably, "to save poor people from paying taxes for street cleaning."

Inwardly, I damned Pancho. Perhaps it was The Gift which enabled him to say such unarguable things. In countries where there were heavy taxes for street cleaning, dead dogs and cats were often left to rot where they fell for a much longer time than the vultures would have left them.

That afternoon, when I learned the bad news from the garage, I returned to the posada at the hour of the siesta. Pancho was snoring in his hammock on the shady side of the patio. A son was in another close to him, while a grandson named Tomas, the apple of Pancho's eye, sat scratching himself by the fountain. He was a handsome, sultry-looking boy of some seventeen years of age.

I found a chair behind a clump of

rubber plants, where I could see without being seen. I was soon rewarded.

Around four o'clock a cloud of dust came through the gates and a car bearing Kansas plates stopped in the shade of a spreading tree. Four women got out of the car and entered the patio. One was a pretty girl of around twenty-two years of age. Two others, a year or two older, were plain. The fourth member of the party was a middle-aged woman with sad, disillusioned eyes and the deeply etched lines of discontent around her mouth. She was, I judged, around forty-five, with the bleak look of those who believe that life has passed them by.

The posada slumbered on. "Don't we get any service around here?" asked the youngest member of the party in a sharp voice.

One of the plain girls walked across to where the old mission bell rope dangled invitingly. She pulled it hard, filling the afternoon with its mellow tone. Only Tomas awoke. He disappeared into the back premises, returning a moment later combing his black, greasy hair and carrying a tray on which were displayed some

trumpety silver ornaments. Simultaneously, a maidservant arrived and took the order for four beers.

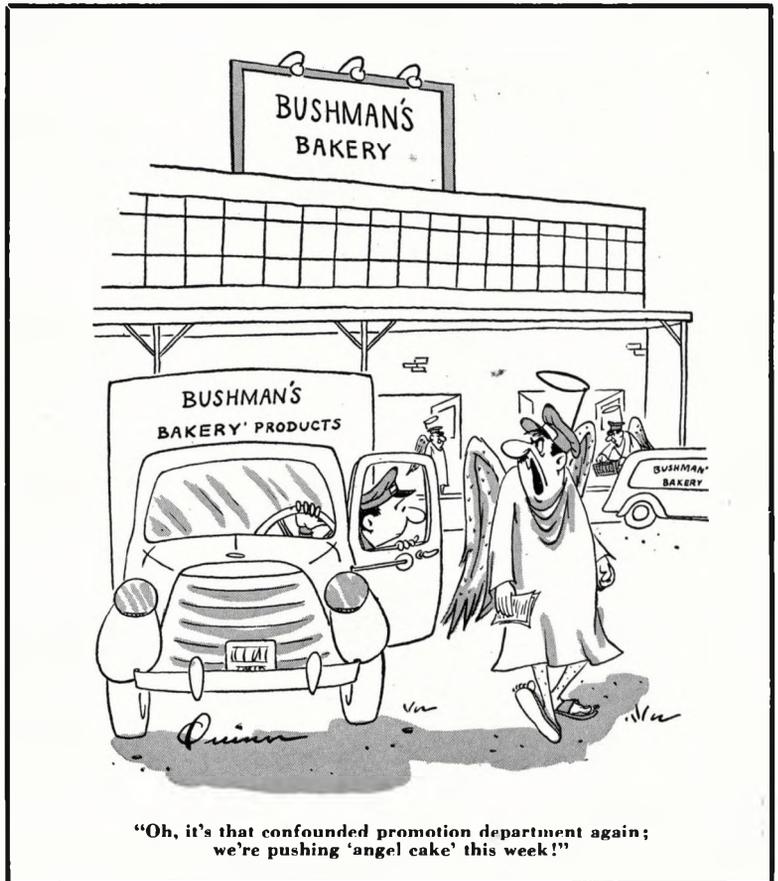
Tomas advanced with his tray. "You want some silver t'ing . . . ver' cheap? I show you."

"Go away!" said the oldest woman. "Beat it!" said another. "Scram!" said the youngest almost ferociously.

Tomas rang up "No Sale" and went back to sleep. But he was soon awakened by Pancho, who had been feigning sleep and had evidently witnessed the entire incident. Although I could not understand what passed between them, it was quite evident that Pancho was trying to improve the lad's selling technique. The boy would have starved to death ringing doorbells.

I watched Pancho take from the tray a pair of silver earrings which Tomas had tried to sell to me for forty pesos. At that time forty pesos was nearly five dollars, which was at least twice their value.

The women, meanwhile, had finished their beers and were ordering something





At ease in his hammock, Pancho watched the four tourists refuse to buy. Then, evidently, he decided it was time to exercise his gift.

to eat. Pancho, fingering the shoddy pair of earrings lovingly, watched them through the long lashes of his half-closed eyes, waiting for a favorable moment. This was going to be good. Then, climbing slowly out of his hammock, he proceeded to give his grandson a lesson in the ancient art of salesmanship which is not, if you will reflect upon the matter, so very far from The Gift.

I count myself privileged to have seen what followed. It was salesmanship of

such a high order that it was almost devilish. There was something about the way Pancho handled those tawdry earrings that invested them with an altogether fictitious value.

The women looked up from their revolting food with a lack of interest amounting to blank hostility. Tomas, lurking in the background, had a malicious glint in his eyes. He knew how tough this was going to be and he was

anticipating with pleasure his grandfather's rout at the hands of the Kansas party. Smiling his gentle, serene smile, Pancho advanced unflinchingly.

"Excuse me, señorita," said Pancho, addressing himself to the oldest woman at the table. "but my grandson is young . . . and foolish. You are not angry?"

"Why should I be angry? He wasn't rude . . ."

"It is rude, señorita," said Pancho in gentle reproof, "to offer to a lady like

yourself the . . . rubbish he sells to the tourists who come by the bus. It is foolish also, for there is a man in the village who makes truly beautiful things of silver. Look at these earrings, *señorita*. They were made by an artist. The Mexican silver-worker, you must understand, inherits the ancient skill of his Aztec ancestors as well as that of Africa, left behind in Spain when the Moors were expelled. They are beautiful, are they not, *señorita*?"

**N**ow for the first time since she had stepped out of the car, the woman's eyes shone with interest. She smiled gently and the lines of discontent around her mouth seemed to vanish. "How much are you asking for them?" she asked softly.

"I did not bring them for you to buy, *señorita*," said Pancho, his voice full of reproach, "but only to admire."

"They are beautiful . . . and they are not for sale?"

"Most things are for sale in Mexico, *señorita*," said Pancho sadly, "because we are so poor. These were made by a silversmith in the village as a gift for his daughter, who now lives in Tampico. He is proud of them and he wanted me to admire them. It is possible that he would sell you these and make another pair for his daughter . . . but I warn you, *señorita*, that he will probably ask a foolish price."

"Please find out for me how much they are, *señor*," said the other, trying to conceal her eagerness. "I would like to buy them."

I don't know what Pancho said to the small boy who was scratching himself by the gate, but he soon trotted off in the direction of the village, his feet sending up spurts of dust as he ran. He returned seven or eight minutes later with a packet of cigarettes which, I am convinced, was the sole purpose of his errand. "It is as I said, *señorita*," said Pancho sadly, "the man asks a foolish price . . . a price which I cannot permit you to pay. It shall not be said that Pancho de Sandoval forgets his duty to his guests."

"How much does he ask for them?"

"Such foolishness, *señorita*! He asks four hundred pesos . . . four hundred! They are not worth more than half of that. Why, I know a silversmith in Mexico City on the Avenida . . ."

"Would he accept two hundred, do you think?" asked the other wistfully.

"We can ask, *señorita*, we can ask."

Once more the small boy trotted off to the village.

While awaiting the answer from the mythical silversmith, the Kansas woman sat twisting her scarf nervously. I do not think she was conscious of the fact that from the first moment that Pancho had

addressed her as "*señorita*" she had so twisted the scarf around her left hand that it concealed her wedding ring. Consciously or not, that is what she did.

More than once I was tempted to intervene and to tell that sad-eyed woman that the identical earrings had been offered to me for forty pesos. But I am glad now that the little streak of wisdom in me made me refrain.

It is hardly necessary to add that the price of two hundred pesos was acceptable to the. I am certain, nonexistent silversmith and that the earrings changed hands at that figure.

While Pancho was exploiting his Gift I felt faintly sick. It put me in mind of a rabbit being hypnotized by a snake.

"Why aren't you a millionaire, Pancho?" I asked him when the Kansas car had disappeared into the dust whence it came. "You should be living in a Park Avenue apartment with a country home on Long Island."

"And the ulcers . . . what of them? To be rich is not my ambition, *señor*. Me, I sleep ten hours every day because I have a good digestion. I do not sell things to tourists, you know. Today it was just to give a lesson to Tomas."

"If he learns the lesson," I said coldly, "he will end up a millionaire, or in prison."

"You think I am a big thief, *señor*," said Pancho, wrapping the mantle of his dignity around him, "but it is not so. Two hundred pesos!" I wish I could convey the contempt in his voice. "What is that? To me it is nothing. You forget that it was the lady who made the great bargain. Do you not understand that during the years to come, whenever she puts up her hands to touch those earrings, or sees them in the mirror of her bedroom in that lonely Kansas farmhouse, she will remember a posada on a mountain pass in Mexico, the smell of the dust, the pale blue of the sky and the dark blue of the jacaranda . . . yes, and the bones of the horse at the gate. But more than these, she will remember a fat Mexican man who smiled at her, and at those times she will blush and she will whisper, 'That fat man who smiled—he called me *señorita*!'"

"The two hundred pesos, *señor*, are nothing, nothing to me and nothing to her. But the memories—ah! the memories, they are everything, and she will have them long, long after the two hundred pesos have gone to buy tequila."

**A**nd the devil of it was, I realized, that he was right. In exchange for a trifling sum she had bought an imperishable memory. To that sad-eyed woman who had come in a cloud of dust, Mexico would not spell bullfights and

chili con carne, vast open spaces bathed in lemon-colored light, the harsh reds of the poinsettia and the bougainvillea, or the little towns where small pigs squealed in the cobbled streets as they pounced on unspeakable delicacies. No, Mexico, as Pancho had had the wit to realize, would always be the place where a fat Mexican, contrary to established custom, had ignored three young women, one at least of whom was pretty, and had been, in all earthly probability, the last human being to address her as *señorita*. And as proof there would always be the silver earrings.

In a week Pancho would have forgotten the entire incident, just as he had forgotten me, although there had been a time when he had known me well enough to give me credit. But Pancho would remain enshrined in that lonely, embittered heart until it beat for the last time.

Well, you tell me. Did Pancho, or didn't he, possess The Gift?

**I**t's funny the tricks memory plays. During the rest of that day I remembered all kinds of small incidents about Pancho, trifles in themselves, which came back fresh and bright over the gulf of the twenty years which had elapsed since I had last seen him. But I was conscious all the time that, while the trifles remained in my memory, something big, something intensely dramatic, had faded from mind.

The sun had dipped behind the jagged mountains before I remembered, and then I marveled that it had been possible to forget; for the story had made the headlines before it, like Pancho, had dropped out of sight. A bright young reporter had been the first to sense the inwardness of the story, and his editor had asked in flaring type:

WHAT DID PANTHO SAY TO  
SOURPUS GUARINO?

The police had asked that, too, asked it a thousand times with a bright light



## MAN'S MOST PRECIOUS GIFT (continued)

shining in Pancho's eyes and leaden weights on his eyelids. But The Gift, which enabled him to say the right thing at the right time, had also given him the wit to know when silence was golden. But, knowing a little about policemen when they are curious, I imagine that it can't have been too easy.

The night it happened I had taken a girl to dine at the "Old Mexico." Her name has slipped from memory, but she was a nice girl. She worked in the art department of one of the big advertising agencies . . . well, it doesn't matter now. We arrived at the "Old Mexico" to find it closed. From a group of excited people in the street we heard various garbled and embroidered accounts of what had happened a couple of hours before. We learned the rest from the morning papers.

Pancho had been on his way to work, walking along one of the turnings off Washington Square. Some twenty yards ahead of him he saw a man cross the street toward a parked car in which were three men. What startled Pancho was the pistol in the man's hand . . . and then he recognized the man. It was Sourpuss Guarino, who was at that time enjoying his little moment of fame. He bore the

reputation of being a ferocious killer but, thanks to a clever lawyer, nobody had been able to prove that to the satisfaction of a judge and jury.

There was plenty of time for Pancho to duck for cover, but he did not do so. Instead, as he explained afterwards, fascinated with horror and seemingly unable to control his muscles, he walked on slowly towards the impending tragedy. Then, according to an onlooker who saw everything from a fourth floor window, Pancho stopped dead a few feet from the car, standing rigidly at attention with fingers by his side extending downwards. He remained like that. Sourpuss Guarino, meanwhile, opened the door of the car and fired three shots at the occupants, killing all three instantly. He then turned to see Pancho standing near him, the only witness close enough to identify him as the killer.

People on the street held their breath waiting for the fourth shot. So, one may believe, did Pancho.

The fourth floor witness, closely questioned by the police later, stated that he saw Pancho's lips move as he said something to the killer, whose face he never saw. The killer's arm dropped and Pancho, still in the same curiously rigid

posture, as if paralyzed with fright, remained motionless.

Sourpuss Guarino was then observed to reach into his pocket, withdraw something which looked like paper money and stuff it into Pancho's breast pocket, before turning on his heel and making his escape in a car which was waiting a few yards away with the engine running and a confederate at the wheel. Pancho remained quite still until the car was out of sight, when he was seen to glance at the money in his breast pocket—two bills each of \$100 denomination, by the way—and put it in his left-hand trousers pocket. Another witness said that at this moment Pancho was smiling.

The police arrived on the scene a few moments later, hustling Pancho off with them for questioning. Asked if he could identify the killer if he saw him again, Pancho said that he knew him to be Sourpuss Guarino. Why, the police wanted to know, since Pancho and Sourpuss apparently knew each other, had Sourpuss left him alive to testify against him? It was a reasonable question, to which Pancho replied that he was unknown to Sourpuss, who had evidently not believed that he had been recognized. How was it, the police wanted to know next, that Pancho was able to make the identification with such apparent certainty? To this, Pancho replied that Sourpuss was a well-known criminal whose picture had appeared in the newspapers several times.

The police laid a dragnet for Sourpuss, who, if Pancho had spoken the truth, would believe that he had not been recognized. The police located Sourpuss that night in a waterfront bar in Brooklyn and in the gun battle that followed he fell, riddled with bullets, dying on the way to hospital.

It was not until then that the fourth floor witness came forward to say that he had seen Pancho say something to Sourpuss. Pancho, now in grave danger of being regarded as a confederate, was called upon to disclose what it was he had said to Sourpuss to cause that merciless killer to drop his arm and refrain from firing the fourth shot.

For nearly a week New Yorkers were, like the police, asking: "What did Pancho say to Sourpuss?" They would have continued longer, probably, had not some other sensation come along to drive the story off the front pages. The question never was answered. The "Old Mexico" closed its doors after that and Pancho faded from sight.

That night, when Pancho's baritone was filling the patio of his posada, I invited him to drink some tequila at my expense. I stuck to beer.



"Your eyes are like deep mysterious pools. Your eyes are like glowing gems. Your eyes are like shining stars. Your eyes . . ."

"Why did Sourpuss give you that money, Pancho?" I asked later.

"Many people have asked me that, señor, but not for a long time."

"You had really seen him before?"

"Many times, señor, many times."

"But Sourpuss did not know you, Pancho. How was that?"

"It does not matter now, señor," said Pancho with a smile, "but then it mattered much. My sister, who was a nurse at the hospital where Sourpuss had been for six weeks, had pointed him out to me in the garden. His was a bad face, one which a man would not easily forget. It was for my sister's sake that I said nothing, for I did not want the vengeance of the gang to fall upon her."

A frown crossed Pancho's usually serene brow, transforming the amiable clown into a man wary and alert, like a wild animal. I had evoked unpleasant memories.

"Sourpuss was my sister's last patient," Pancho continued after a while. "She told me one night that she hated him so much that she hoped he would never get better, and that, I do not have to tell you, señor, is a bad way for a nurse to think. To a nurse, or to a doctor, it should not matter whether a man is good or he is bad. It should only matter that he is ill . . . is it not so?"

"What was wrong with him?" I asked.

"He had had an operation on his eyes, señor, and for a little time it seemed that he would go blind. That is why he did not recognize me in the street. For weeks, so my sister said, it was terrible to be near him, for he cursed God and said many evil things, and on the day when the doctors told him he would have his sight he forgot to thank God."

"What a strange coincidence," I murmured, "that you of all men should be there to see him commit murder!"

"It was for me a happy coincidence, señor, for it is because of what I happened that day that I am now the owner of this fine posada."

I could not follow the train of thought and said so.

"On the previous day, señor," continued Pancho, "although I did not know it then, Sourpuss had held up a bank in New Jersey, and a reward of \$25,000 had been offered for him, dead or alive. That night, after Sourpuss had been shot, the police found in Sourpuss's hideout the money from the bank holdup. There was much argument, but at the finish I was given half the reward; the other half went to the informer who had told the police of Sourpuss's hideout in Brooklyn. As soon as I had the money, because I was afraid. I brought my sister back to Mexico. But what does it matter now, señor? It all hap-

pened such a long time ago, you know."

Pancho helped himself to another glass of tequila.

"Only one more question, Pancho," I said coaxingly. "After all this time, as you say, it doesn't matter, but even so, I would like to know what it was you said to Sourpuss. What it was that caused him to lower his pistol and so leave alive the one witness who would be able to identify and describe him. What was it, Pancho?"

"I told you, did I not, señor," said Pancho, savoring his words pleasurably, "that on the day when I was born a beautiful blue bird with a golden breast flew down out of a jacaranda—?"

"Yes, Pancho. You told me that for the first time more than twenty years ago. I didn't believe it, but now . . . well, now I am not so sure."

"It is true, señor, it is true. I can take you tomorrow to see the jacaranda tree. It is still standing in the garden of the house where I was born, and you may believe that it was The Gift which saved my life and told me the right thing—the only thing—to say. One, two, three seconds and it would have been too late, señor, and only The Gift could save me. Believe me, señor, those were long seconds—you are sure that you will not take a glass of tequila? Well, each man knows best. And as I was saying, in those seconds I had to find the way to the heart of a man who had no heart, a killer—"

"What did you say to him, Pancho?" I asked, conscious that the tension was building up unbearably. I could hear the beating of my own heart, and all because of a forgotten street drama of twenty years ago that hadn't touched me.

"Sourpuss had his pistol pointed straight at me, señor," continued Pancho, "and though I was not so wide a target as I am now, he was so close he could not have missed. I had to say something which would stop him from pulling the trigger . . . but what? Then, like the sun as he comes up over the mountains, only many times more quick, I saw a great light and I was sure then, and for the first time, that my father had not lied and that the blue bird with the yellow breast had brought me The Gift. I was sure then, señor, quite sure!"

"What did you say, Pancho?" I asked in a cracked voice.

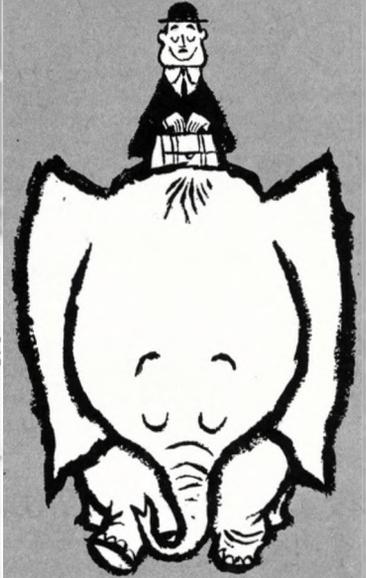
"There was only one way to that man's pity, señor," said Pancho in a strained voice, for I think the memory of his fear had dried his mouth, "and because I possessed The Gift. I found that way—"

"What did you say, man?" I shouted.

"Can you spare a few coppers for a blind man, Mister?" I asked him. Come with me tomorrow, señor, and I will show you the jacaranda tree." THE END

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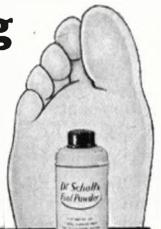


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# A New Drug Brings Relief for the Tense and Anxious

*Safe and quick, Miltown does not deaden or dull the senses, and is not habit-forming. It relaxes the muscles, calms the mind, and gives people a renewed ability to enjoy life*

BY LAWRENCE GALTON

"I get so tense and my muscles get so taut, I just can't sleep," one man complained. And he was troubled by another common ailment: "I have terrible, skull-splitting headaches." A thorough medical checkup revealed nothing wrong organically. The man was referred to a psychiatrist, and the stage seemed set for a long, drawn-out program of psychotherapy.

Instead, the same night found him sleeping well. Within a few days his tension had decreased markedly. Within weeks it had ceased almost entirely, and the headaches were only memories. Best of all, the man's whole outlook changed—he showed a capacity for calmer, more productive work, improved his relationships with his family, and found more enjoyment in life.

Behind his story lies a medical finding of great potential importance: a new drug, Miltown, which promises quick and safe relief for the tense and anxious. The state of tension suffered by these individuals is common and is the cause of many and varied problems. In its mildest degree, overtension makes life a little more frenetic than it need be, a little less enjoyable than it could be. But in more serious cases, it can lead to great irritability or deep depression. Not infrequently it is the sole cause of bodily complaints which hurt and hamper no less because they are induced by tension instead of by germs or injury.

Many attempts have been made to find a method of reducing tension quickly. Of the numerous drugs which have been tried, Miltown seems to come closest to being ideal. It relaxes muscles; it calms the mind; it blocks undesirable nerve action. And it accomplishes its over-all tranquilizing effect without deadening or

dulling the senses. The case histories of many patients testify to its effectiveness.

Recently it was administered to almost three hundred persons in two separate, independent studies. All had sought medical aid and had been referred for psychiatric help. Only a few needed psychiatric treatment; the great majority derived benefit from the drug. In fact, among those troubled by certain types of problems, the number who benefited exceeded ninety per cent.

Some of the most dramatic results came in the relief of tension-produced pain. Of twenty-seven patients whose main complaint was tension headache, located at the base of the skull and linked with "keyed-up" feelings, twenty-three either recovered completely or improved so much that they were no longer concerned with the problem.

In every one of a group of women with menstrual stress (their tautness, irritability, and other disturbances occurred only at the time of the period) the drug brought some relief from the beginning and soon ended the problem entirely.

## Stomach Illness Relieved

Stomach distress, a frequent manifestation of tension which is always unpleasant and sometimes acutely painful, was the primary concern of twenty-three patients. The drug eliminated it for most of them.

Within a few weeks Miltown cleared the skin of patients suffering from neurodermatitis, a nervous disorder which causes itching eruptions.

Results were equally impressive in other types of tension problems. There was the woman with a long-lasting spell of the "blues" who couldn't explain the reason for it; and, indeed, there didn't

seem to be any real one. She dragged herself through her work and found nothing in life enjoyable. The drug quickly restored her normal cheerfulness.

Tension-linked depressions responded equally well in many other patients. Curiously, some of the patients had been oversensitive to summer heat: it depressed them out of all proportion; they wilted under it. Some tense patients complained of easy fatigability, sometimes accompanied by other symptoms. A business man was worried about his inability to concentrate for long. He was tired at his desk before the morning was over, and slight physical exertion exhausted him. Another man complained of tremulousness and palpitations along with fatigue. One woman had all these complaints plus another, excessive perspiration. The new drug brought relief for all.

Many patients helped by the drug reported a gratifying phenomenon: increased social ease. They felt a far greater ability to deal pleasantly with people, to be comfortable in groups, and, in many cases, to speak before audiences.

In a group of ten restless, tense children with behavior problems, seven showed marked improvement after treatment with Miltown.

One of the most noteworthy qualities of the drug is its ability to correct poor sleeping habits. It doesn't force sleep; instead, its relaxing effect promotes natural sleep. Reports one investigator: "Since receiving my first shipment of Miltown for clinical trial in January, 1953, I have not needed to use a barbiturate or similar somnifacient to engender sleep in any patient." Even in patients recovering from electroshock treatment, who often go through weeks of insomnia and suffer from wild night-

## WHAT'S NEW IN MEDICINE

mares, the drug brought restful sleep without even mild dreams. Best of all, in any case and whenever used. "an interesting feature of therapy with Miltown is the lack of drowsiness [next] morning."

The search for a medication that could provide sedation and relaxation without exacting a toll has been a long one. As far back as fifty years ago it seemed that barbituric acid might serve the need. But the hazards of addiction and toxicity soon became clear. Later there were many derivatives, but all involved the same hazards.

Then, in 1952, mephenesin, a British-introduced drug which had proved useful as a muscle relaxant, was tried in tension states. Although it seemed to have some value, its activity was not consistent. However, it did serve to open up a new avenue of research. A synthetic drug had been found which was totally unrelated to anything previously tried in tension states and which worked to some extent.

Next came a drug related to mephenesin—one with the jaw-breaking name of 2,2-diethyl-1,3-propanediol. Although it was more consistent in controlling tension states, it still fell short because its effect did not last long enough.

### No Aftereffects

Miltown is the most recent derivative of mephenesin. Not only is it effective—it is also free of penalty. The usual dose is one 400-milligram tablet after each meal and one at bedtime. In some cases, it accomplishes its purpose in a few weeks and is needed no more. In others, it is used for longer periods, sometimes in reduced quantities. It has been used, in some instances, for as long as eight months at full strength. In no case does it affect breathing or other vital functions. Unlike usual sedative preparations, it does not cause dizziness and grogginess after a few days' use, and it is free of the overstimulating effect of many sedative-hypnotics. Happily, too, it is not habit-forming, and tolerance, (the need for increased dosage to produce the same effect) does not develop.

In addition to its other uses, Miltown has been of value in alcoholism, not only helping drinkers to stop drinking, and avoid serious withdrawal symptoms in the process, but also helping them to stay away from liquor afterward.

Experimentally, the drug has shown anticonvulsive activity and so may have some value in petit mal and grand mal epilepsy. This remains to be investigated. So does the possibility that its muscle-relaxing property may help in shaking palsy.

But the best news is Miltown's demonstrated ability to relax the harried, to bring healthy natural rest for sleepless worriers, and to soothe many oppressive manifestations of tension.

**Underweight** children who eat poorly may benefit from a milk fortifier containing lysine, an essential amino acid constituent of protein food. The tasteless white powder dissolves readily in milk and contains, besides lysine, all essential vitamins as well as iron and calcium. In tests on infants ranging in age from six to twenty-six months, it brought marked weight gains and improvement in body chemistry in those who were below par. It had no noticeable effect, however, on infants who had progressed well before.

**For Hearing-Aid Users.** a promising new development is a soft plastic ear insert developed by Army researchers. Individually made from a mold of the ear and its external acoustic canal, then stamped with a sound channel and recess for a receiver, the insert greatly increases comfort and fits so well that it eliminates interference with sound reception.

**Nausea and Vomiting** of pregnancy, which affect eighty per cent of all expectant mothers, have been controlled by Bonamine, a drug which relieves motion sickness. Used in forty-four patients—in some cases, for just a few weeks and in others, continuously into the fourth month—it helped forty, either completely controlling both nausea and vomiting, or eliminating vomiting and markedly reducing episodes of nausea. The drug has a prolonged action, and a single bedtime dose in most cases carried patients through the night, the difficult early morning hours, and the entire next day.

**Kidney Stones** are caused, in five per cent of all people who develop them, by overactivity of the parathyroid glands. When the glands, which produce a hormone that controls body distribution of calcium and phosphorus, secrete too much of it, increased amounts of calcium and phosphorus appear in the urine, favoring stone formation. In most cases, overactivity of the parathyroids is due to one or more tiny tumors. When these are removed, normal function is restored and stone formation prevented.

**Brief Fainting Attacks.** usually lasting no more than a few seconds, sometimes preceded by an aura or occurring along with convulsions, can be caused by a condition known as carotid sinus syndrome. X-ray treatment may be helpful. In a series of fifty-two patients, it brought complete remission for fifty-eight per cent and moderately benefited an additional twelve per cent. When successful, two or three x-ray treatments relieved the condition for long periods; in one case there

has been no attack in fourteen years.

**In the Eye Disease** retinitis pigmentosa, treatment with the anticoagulant drug, Dicumarol, may be helpful. Thirty-three of thirty-seven patients showed an increase in the field of vision and progressive improvement in seeing ability.

**Liver Disease** in alcoholics can often be treated effectively by rest, abstinence from alcohol, and a diet consisting of 350 g. of carbohydrate, 125 g. of protein, 100 g. of fat, and supplementary vitamins. The treatment often makes signs of fatty liver disease disappear and controls slight or moderate cirrhosis.

**Artificial Eyes** that move and twinkle are now being worn successfully by more than 150 veterans. Developed by Boston Veterans Administration Hospital doctors, they make use of two magnets—one implanted within the eye socket and attached to the eye-moving muscles there, the second set implanted in the artificial eye itself. When the magnets are properly aligned, the artificial eye cannot slip out of correct position, and the muscles move it in harmony with the living eye.

**For High Blood Pressure** that is severe or complicated, Ansolysen, a drug taken by mouth, sometimes along with reserpine, has proved to be safe and effective when used in nonhospitalized patients. In most of thirty-one patients it reduced extremely elevated pressures, also bringing notable improvement in manifestations of congestive heart failure and in any eyesight problems caused by high blood pressure.

**Recurring Canker Sores** in the mouth, which make chewing and swallowing difficult and sometimes produce excessive saliva that interferes with sleep, are often due to food sensitivity, according to a *Modern Medicine* editorial. A record of foods eaten before canker sore attacks may reveal the culprits. In some cases, these foods may produce no reaction except during emotional crises.

**Serum Neuritis.** an excruciatingly painful complication, develops in some people after they receive serums and vaccines. Believed to be an allergic reaction, it has been difficult to treat. Now cortisone has been used to bring prompt and dramatic relief. In one recent case, a patient with neuritis of the right shoulder and arm, who moaned constantly because of the intense pain, showed great improvement within twenty-four hours.

THE END

For more information about these items, consult your physician.

# THE JEZEBEL

*Where had her strange name come from? Searching back, she entered into a romantic, violent, faraway past*

**BY ELIZABETH ENRIGHT**

ILLUSTRATED BY ALEX ROSS

**B**onnadilla Benson never cared for the fact that she had been named for an apartment house. The time she resented it most, however, was the time when she resented everything most: when she was fifteen years old.

"They all call me Bonnie at school," she told her mother. "They always have. They think it's my real name and if they ever find out I'll die, that's all, I'll just die. How could you have done such a thing to me, named me a name like that, a little baby like I was!"

"Oh, it was that summer before you were born," said her mother with a certain soft remembering look that Bonnadilla simply could not stand. "It was the first time, it was the *only* time, that we ever lived in New York City. I've told you. That hot, hot summer. I used to go blocks out of my way just so I could walk through that one street to the grocery store. I went through it on purpose because there was a row of houses set back there with real little gardens out front: flowers with soot on them, and old raggedy bashed-in looking cats asleep under bushes, but gardens, anyway. I used to walk slowly, take my time. I was big as a house."

"Oh, *mother!*" said Bonnadilla.

"I didn't care. I guess I never was so happy, before or since. I was so happy I felt as if I was dreaming all the time. I loved that city, noise and all, dirt and all."

"I wish you'd had me there and stayed there. This old dump. Mason City's all I ever get to."

"They still had some horses then; and sometimes there'd be one, a milk one, drawn up by the curb with a feed bag on his nose that he'd blow into, and the oats would puff out and sprinkle on the street, and down would come the sparrows out of nowhere, scrapping and chirping in and out around his hoofs as if they were—I don't know—rocks or cliffs or something safe

*She'd been wild and bold and reckless, and the glorious silver-gold hair had streamed out like a flowing cape.*





# THE JEZEBEL (continued)

like that. And then in the gardens, towards September, if I got out early enough, I'd see the morning-glories before they had a chance to get sooty—perfectly clean, like country morning-glories. Dewy, too. I never thought they'd have dew in a city."

"But the apartment house. I mean."

"Well, it was there, next to these gardens. Just one of those old-style apartment houses trimmed with fire escapes, maybe eight, ten stories high. Bonnadilla Apartments. That's what it said on the front in gravestone letters, and on the doormat, and on the side of the building in big blue letters. Maybe they even had it printed on the roof for the planes to marvel at. I don't suppose it amounted to much, but I thought it looked just grand. There was a doorman, you know, and a tiled lobby and a switchboard; and the name—I thought it was a lovely name—was all mixed up with that last wonderful summer. So when you were born, a month after your daddy died—he died just a month before you were born—"

"Oh, mother, I *know* that," cried Bonnadilla with the furious adolescent impatience which is nourished by the words of parents. "You've told me that about sixty million times already."

"I don't know where you get your disposition. Anyhow, I just thought of that name for you and it seemed to mean a lot to me at the time. I still think it's pretty."

"I don't. It's had enough to be named for some old dead relation, but gosh, being named for some dumb old *apartment house*."

"Well, goodness, there was a boy back home in Harding whose parents had named him for a Pullman car. I think that's much worse. Royal G. Schermer, he was."

"It sounds like a real name, though, not like a horse or a disease or something."

"C was for Gorge. Royal Gorge. I think that's terrible. Royal Gorge Schermer."

Bonnadilla could not bring herself to agree out loud with her mother, but she did say: "My. What was the matter with his folks to call him that?"

"I believe it was the name of the Pullman car they took on their wedding trip."

"Oh, mother!" said Bonnadilla.

She never saw New York City until she was forty, when her husband was transferred, rather late in life, to the Eastern branch of his company. Harry and she (she had been Bonnie Herrick for many years now) had had their children young; all three were nicely out of the way, in college.

The first month or two had been spent finding a place to live in and then settling

it—trying to learn east from west and north from south. When Bonnie rode on the subway she was always coming up from under some river in the wrong place; and for a long time the noise bothered her, the daytime clatter and the nighttime grumble. But after a while, custom began to set in and then she found a wonderful new way to enjoy herself. She had not yet begun her city friendships. The apartment was all finished and smelled stingingly of fresh paint and fresh fabric; for the first time since her marriage there was nothing that she needed to do. It was April, and warm, for once; in the morning, when Harry had gone, she would leave the house and start walking, never bothering to choose a destination. Along the avenues, along the streets she walked, looking at all the faces among which there was so seldom a Face; staring into the shop windows, entering the great swarming stores, riding the escalators, touching the jewels. She found the scurried groves of the public parks and the Egyptian rooms at the museum where the faces of antiquity looked out at her with a strange sibling calm.

In her wandering she experienced a tranced contentment she could not remember having felt since her youth. She tried to describe it to Harry, but he, though he loved her, had long since become afflicted with a sort of domestic deafness; she could see his eyes glaze and his fingers twitch at the edges of the evening paper as she talked.

"Honestly, Harry," said Bonnie, "catching your interest is like trying to catch a wild coati-mundi. I give up. I swear I do give up."

"Why, listen, I heard every word you said. You said that when you were out walking and staring that way you forgot you were a person at all. You said you felt as if you were just a pair of eyes, walking . . ."

"Oh, I know you heard what I said, but you didn't *listen*. Never mind, I hear but I don't listen when you talk about consumer interest and the fiscal year."

One day, late in the month, she found herself in a downtown section of the city. The day was fine, with a filmy light, and on one corner a man stood beside a rickety little cart trimmed with flags and filled with tulips. Every now and then he cawed a word or two. Beyond him, to the left, there were trees, and Bonnie came upon a row of galleried, old-fashioned houses set far back from the street with dooryards in front of them. There the privet bushes were stiffly beaded with green, and out of the earth, amongst gumpapers, little bits of sedum leaves were showing, and crocuses shaped like egg-cups stood open to the sun. Crocuses!

Flowers! Bonnie stopped walking suddenly and looked up at the cliffside of apartment house which rose beyond the little gardens. There in huge, faded printing she saw her name: BONNADILLA, as if the Lord had spoken.

Slowly she put out her hand and took hold of a picket. So there had really been a time, a time past imagining, when she, unborn, had traveled through this street. One never quite believes in the myth of other people's lives before one's own began; but now this name in flaking blue, this aging building, and the tattered gardens, all her seniors, forced upon her the jarring consideration that once her mother had been a person in her own right; an ego with feelings, not just Mother (oh, you know *Mother*) but a human being with thoughts and wishes she could never guess.

There was a chatter and turmoil: three sparrows fell out of an ailanthus tree in a scuffle. Involuntarily she turned her head to see a horse and wagon at the curb, but there was nothing but a parked truck: *Pfanzner Bros. Dry Cleaning While U Wait*.

Half reluctantly she began to walk toward the apartment building. On the backs of her hands there were already age freckles, and she could feel the deep wrinkle between her eyebrows as if a finger had been laid there. Life was nothing but a minute after all.

Above the doorway of the building the name, as her mother had told her, stood out in gravestone letters; but the doormat was gone. She stood there, peering into the dimness of the hall. A breath of old discouraged air breathed out at her—a mortal breath, and she felt very mortal. "Yes, ma'am?"

Bonnie turned. A man leaned on one of the machine-made pillars: drink-worn face, soiled shirt, trousers that might have been part of a uniform.

"I was wondering about the origin of the name of this building. It interests me."

"Why it's named the name it is?"

"Yes. Is there anyone who might know?"

He scratched his head with the tip of his smallest finger, a gesture implying at the same time refinement and serious thought.

"Miss Pavane might, I guess. Her father was the one that built it. Likely he named it."

"Can I—does she live here?"

"Yeah. She lives here." He looked at her appraisingly, and Bonnie willed an air of respectability upon herself.

"I'll show you to her apartment," he decided, and she followed him across the dim lobby, where some of the tiles

had been chipped away, to the door of a ground floor apartment.

The woman who presently opened the door was short, fat, and elderly, with flame-colored hair and a flowered dress. The two squares of rouge under her eyes looked as if she had been slapped impartially on both cheeks. When Bonnie explained why she had come, the woman said: "But why do you want to know?"

"My name is Bonnadilla, too," Bonnie admitted for the first time since her childhood.

"Why, is it? Why, how interesting. Why, how interesting. Come in, come in."

Miss Pavane waddled chintzily into her choked living room and offered Bonnie a chair and a cigarette. The room was a hive of patterns and objects: the wall paper was patterned and covered with pictures, the rug was patterned and covered with smaller rugs, patterned. The couch and large crouching chairs were riotous with patterns of vegetation. In the windows, fierce as moray eels, aspidistra plants struck upwards from pots of varicosed majolica, and they were still trimmed with the red Christmas ribbons of years ago. This was the sort of place where the carnival Kewpie wound up its days, along with the signed photograph of General Pershing, the laughing Buddha, and the plaster-of-Paris cupid's heads on velvet plaques.

"Now how in the world, in the world, do you happen to have that name?" said Miss Pavane, blowing out smoke.

"My mother saw it on this building. Long ago. She liked it."

"Now, did you ever! Well, it's a lucky name. My father got it off a Pullman car."

"Oh, no!" said Bonnie.

"Why, yes, why not?"

"Just—it surprised me."

"My father was a farmer back in Oklahoma, see. And poor. Poor as Job's turkey. The land was no good, but how he worked, oh, nobody works like that these days. Well, we were so poor we didn't have anything. Anything. Bare boards and washtubs, that's everything I remember about our house—not one toy. Not one picture, only the calendar the feed store put out, and we stopped getting that when our credit ran dry. Well, when I get big I'm going to have things, I said." Miss Pavane's eyes, glossy as beetles, traveled over her storehouse of comforts and atrocities.

"And then, did you ever, one day when he was forty-six years old and worn raw, just raw, from work, and so was my mother, what did they do but find there was oil on the place. Oil! And overnight, almost, we had more money than we knew what to do with. My father said, 'What's the most different place

there is on earth from here?' And then he said, 'New York City'; and then he said, 'And that's where we're going to go and where we're going to stay at.' So we packed up our new clothes and put them in our new grips and he bought us all, all seven of us, Pullman tickets on the train going east. We'd never seen anything like it in our lives. The white tidies on the backs of the chairs, the porter with his whisk broom (colored, and we'd never seen a colored person before), and the dining car with a rose and a fern on every table. . . . Well, it was the other side of the world to us, just the other side of the world. And the name of our car. . . ."

"Was the Bonnadilla!" cried Bonnie.  
"Was the Bonnadilla Flats," corrected Miss Pavane.

Flats is the last straw, thought Bonnie, but she said nothing.

"And so because it was the first real differentness from our old life, the first new place, I mean, the name of that car was like a—what do you call it—like a symbol to my father. After he'd been here awhile he bought this piece of real estate and built this building. He wanted to call it just like it was on the car, Bonnadilla Flats, but my mother, who'd been doing some noticing, said, No, 'apartments' sounded better, and that's how it all was."

Bonnie stood up and thanked her, but Miss Pavane seemed reluctant to have her go.

"And it's been like a symbol to me, too," she said. "It's been more than a symbol; it's been my home and my bread and butter and my family; because when my father died, and the money was just about gone, he left me this building. All to me, because I was the only one of us that never married."

"Harry," said Bonnie that evening, "how do they name Pullman cars?"

"Hmm?" said Harry. "How do they what?"

"Name Pullman cars. How do they pick out the names for them?"

"Well, for heaven's sake. Why?"

"I was just wondering."

"I think they name them for places, mainly. Probably places along the route, something like that. But why?"

"I was just wondering."

The next day she bought herself a world atlas, and there, yes, in the index she found what she was looking for: *Bonnadilla Flats, Gopher, Nev.*; pop. 59.

"Pop. 59," said Bonnie. "Why, it's hardly a town at all," and when she closed the atlas, she thought that she had done with it for good.

But the idea of Bonnadilla Flats would not be done for. It lay just under her

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## THE JEZEBEL (continued)

thoughts, humming persistently, like a sea shell to the ear. The day came when, a reasonable pretext having been presented to Harry, she found herself in the air, seated for many hours among traveling salesmen and lonely widows. For the first time she was able to look down with the eye of patronage on wrinkled mountain ranges, cities, counties, prairies marked with rivers plain as gray trees, and at last she came to earth on a tilted, sun-baked land with her ears cracking and her eyes dazzled.

"Bonnadilla Flats?" said the man at the bus station. "Don't nobody much go out there any more, but I guess Verne can run a little ways off his route."

"I'm doing some research on that town," said Bonnie. "Is there anyone there who might help me? Tell me how it got its name, for instance?"

"Old Eli Carson could if anyone could. He's lived there all his life, right up against ninety years. He runs the post office and store. Did, anyways."

"Bonnadilla Flats?" said the bus driver later. "First time I've had a call for there in I don't know when. Go six miles out of the way to get you there at all. Dead," he said, looking at her curiously. "There ain't nothing deader than a shrunk-up town."

Still dazed from the heights and distances of her journey, Bonnie sat staring out of the window. Great wastes of sage were speeding by: miles of silver tufts like forests of tiny olive trees. The air was strong with their dry smell. Gophers stood praying at their doorways, and the sky was pale with heat. Far away, but drawing nearer, the mountains rose in blue, a sea arrested. How old the earth is, Bonnie thought; here it is, just as it was; no beauticians, no despoilers, have had a hand in this. Here's the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

What was left of Bonnadilla Flats stood on the level desert floor, but close beyond it were the foothills of mountains, no longer blue when one was near them: brown as army blankets, shabby and patched; and the wooden town was silvery from weather, like the sage.

She got down from the bus feeling stiff and disconcerted. What had she expected to see?

"Back at two," the driver said. "And we don't wait."

The stillness was shocking. In the blinding road lizards stood transfixed and panting; a beer can blazed in the sun. The air seemed stretched thin with heat, as if in a moment a sound would come from it, a resonance high and quivering.

Most of the houses were abandoned shells, but children's toys lay in the

yards of some, and there was a smell of food. The feeling of being regarded, of being watched, came from the close, overbearing hills. A chicken in a gateway stood on one large claw and made a querulous, noonday sound.

At the center of the street stood the Bonnadilla Flats Post Office and General Store, Elisha Carson, Prop. The letters on the dusted glass were old-fashioned, with thorns on them. A veil of flies danced winningly around Bonnie's head, and she opened the screen door quickly and stepped inside.

It was dark in there after the street, and it smelled of times past and the memories of merchandise. The old man, Elisha Carson, sat in the cave of his store; as she came in, he got slowly to his feet. In the shadows he had a sort of luster of age; his taut skin and polished scalp, the knuckles of his hand, all had a faint gleam to them, and his shirt was white, and his eyeglasses had gold rims.

"Yes, ma'am, what can I do for you?" His manner was courteous and, like the letters on his store window, old-fashioned.

"I thought that you might have the answer to my riddle. My first name, you see, is Bonnadilla. My mother took the name from an apartment house in New York City; the man who built the apartment house got the name from a Pullman car; the Pullman people named it for this town . . ."

"And this town was named for . . . why, yes, sit down. I'll tell you all about the name. It started here; you've found the source, ma'am."

The old man sat down slowly, attentive to his joints, and Bonnie sat too, beside his ancient roll-top desk. The string dispenser hung like a top in the air, and flies, indoors as well as out, buzzed on a desultory musing note.

Elisha Carson was silent for a moment as though gathering up strength, along with recollection, for the recital he was about to give. Many times, while he was speaking, he paused to clear the age away from his voice, or to listen for a memory.

"As I recall from what I've heard, the first settler, Percival Fortinbrass, came here about eighteen hundred and fifty, or fifty-one. He came prospecting; just up and left his farm back in Connecticut, to come out here and try his luck. And he found it. He struck silver ore just about first thing, staked out his claim, built him a house, and then the others came. Soon it was a town, and prosperous at the time. You'd never guess it was now, though, would you? Now, this Mr. Fortinbrass had nobody for his family but one little girl, three or four years of age, I would say.

The reason he had come west was that he'd lost his wife and three prior children from the typhoid fever; and he set all the store in the world by this one little girl. Her name was Bonnadilla. Bonnadilla Fortinbrass. Her mother had made up the name herself. She was a woman claimed she wanted each of her children to have a name that nobody else had. I don't recollect what all the other names had been, but one, I know, a boy, had been called Colossus Rhodes . . .

Of course, he was the first settler here, so he named the town for this little girl, Bonnadilla Flats. She was a good deal older than I was and I never exactly knew her, but she was the kind who leaves a lot of talk behind her, and leaves it for a long time. Her father, Mr. Fortinbrass, never married again, just seemed to concentrate his interests on this one child, and she grew up spoiled and wild. Maybe she would have been, no matter what, because she was different from other folks, or at least the ones in these parts. One thing that made her different—she was beautiful, but that's not much, all young folks are beautiful, as you can see when you get to my time of life—but she had this hair. It was the color—let me see—it was blonde, of course—but it was the color of—Well, when I was a boy we used to have taffy pulls. Molasses taffy was the kind we made, and when you had worked the material and worked it and twisted it, it got to be this very pale color, kind of silvery. That was the color her hair was, but the other thing about it was that it was so long that it reached clear down to her ankles. Silvery-gold, and long as a cape. Oh, I saw her! I wasn't any more than knee-high to a duck, but I remember her! Riding her horse like an Indian, or just switching along on her own two feet, with this hair hanging down her back, and every boy in town after her, and every man, married or not, helping himself just to the sight of her.

"Oh, but she was wild and bold, ma'am! She was bad. Reckless. Her father, Mr. Fortinbrass, got so concerned about her after a while that he married her off to a Mormon gentleman fifty-five years of age. He already had three wives, settled ladies, all of them, and twenty-two children, most of them older than this Bonnadilla was, herself. He was very well thought of in Salt Lake City. My father told me he was very well thought of, and so was all his family up to then. But when this young lady, Bonnadilla, came into the household, there was trouble. Well, she set two of these prior wives against each other to the point where one of them—Jemima? Kezia?—she was named for one of the daughters

born to Job after his trials, I recall—well, *she* took after the other with a hot flatiron! Fortunately they stopped her in time, but think of it, ma'am, these two settled ladies!

"The next thing was a quarrel over her between two of the Mormon gentleman's grown sons. Her sons, too, in the eyes of the Mormon church, I presume. Oh, that was a serious fight; one boy shot the other in the hip. The boy didn't die, but it killed the Mormon gentleman; he came down with a stroke and was dead in a day. Did she stay and mourn? Did she grieve? No, sir, not she. What she did was to light out with a wealthy consumptive come west for his health. It didn't take her long to finish him off, and then she was richer by something in the neighborhood of fifty thousand dollars."

"Good gracious!" said Bonnie.

"Yes, you are named for a Jezebel, ma'am, a real Jezebel," said Mr. Carson. "I am sorry to have to tell you."

"Oh, that's perfectly all right," said Bonnie, feeling wonderfully well and exhilarated; then she modified her tone. "I mean, since it's nobody I know or am related to, and since it happened so long ago . . ."

"Ah, but you haven't heard the worst of it, ma'am. The next thing anyone heard was that she had gone to Paris, France, and was married to a count or a baron or some one of those French titles they have over there. Her third marriage, and she wasn't twenty-five! Well, she had jewels, she had a kind of a castle or a palace to live in, and carriages and teams, and pet dogs, and I don't know what. That all came out later in the newspapers. Even over here it was in all the papers because it was such a scandal and, of course, because she came from here. I can remember it myself, though I was just a boy at the time. I remember the photo of her that they printed: all that hair was braided and coiled around and around her head like a kind of tower. Her face looked real little underneath it, with these great big eyes she had, and the dimple that was in her chin. Oh, yes, she was handsome, all right."

Mr. Carson paused. He gazed at his knuckles, raised his chin and gazed at the string dispenser. He cleared his throat again before speaking.

"Now it seems that Bonnadilla was not exactly—well, it seems she was not exactly *true* to her husband, this count or this baron or whatever he was. And he found out about it, and do you know what he did? Oh, he was of a very jealous disposition, and impulsive. Do you know how he punished her? The servant-girl peeked in

and saw it happen—being rich they had a lot of this French help. Well, sir, when she took her hair down one night—she wore it in a great big braid around her head, remember—he waited till it was hanging down her back, this big braid, and then, quick as lightning, he grabbed a pair of shears and cut it off! Right off close to her head. 'This hairdo should keep you home for a while,' he says, or some such thing, in French of course, and *she*, Bonnadilla, gave one scream, the servant-girl said, and then after that she didn't say a word, didn't cry. She just leaned over, and picked up that braid, and held it. He went into his room and drank himself senseless. But the next morning"—Mr. Carson leaned forward, gleaming frostily—"the next morning they found him, this count or baron, dead in his bed. Strangled. And you know what he had been strangled with? Yes, sir, ma'am, that is correct. With Bonnadilla's braid of hair!"

The old man leaned back in his chair, as if the recital had exhausted him pleasantly.

"But what happened to her, then?" cried Bonnie.

Mr. Carson spread his fingers. "Who

knows? She disappeared. They never found her; or if somebody did find her it never came to light. She had her ways with men, even crop-headed, I'll be bound. Who knows? Why, she may be alive today. But no," he said regretfully, as Bonnie rose. "No, probably not. She would have to be one hundred years of age at least, come to think of it. No, probably not," he said.

When Harry met her at the airport, he looked at her with pleased surprise. "Why, you look wonderful. Bonn. Bright and rested. So much better than you've been looking."

"That's not just the way a woman likes to have a compliment phrased, darling, but thanks anyway."

In the cab she took his hand.

"You know, Harry, I have a confession to make to you. Almost no one knows what I'm going to tell you; even Dr. Ogle didn't know it when he married us. I don't know why Mother let me get away with that unless she felt remorseful . . . you know how you've always thought my name was just plain Bonnie? Well, listen—no, now really *listen*, Harry, because this is interesting . . ."

THE END



"You talk about *your* husband losing hair."

Sweetly beautiful, innocently in love, the young

girl walked a London street. Yet, she was marked

# SO SOON TO DIE

Her hired killer, having something catlike

in him, would toy with her as with a mouse

BY JEREMY YORK ILLUSTRATED BY THORNTON UTZ

**I**t seems a waste," Lionel Amblin said. "She's very young to die." The man by his side did not speak.

They stood at the window of a room in the Strand Hotel, overlooking the Strand itself; its masses, its thronged roadways, its noise, its pale blue fumes from countless motor exhausts, its shops, its newsboys.

The girl walked, lithe and gay, by the side of an elderly man, whose step was springy enough. He was dressed in a black coat, striped trousers, a curly-brimmed bowler hat.

The girl was wearing a pleated gray skirt and a white silk blouse, with a high neckline and half-length sleeves. As she drew nearer, on the other side of the road, the men could see the brightness of her eyes and the gleam of her teeth.

"How old is she?" asked Amblin.

"Twenty-four. Does it matter?"

"She's got everything," Amblin said. "But everything."

He knew what he was talking about. Face, figure, carriage; she could make a man's heart start hammering just at the thought of . . .

Amblin turned from the window, and took a cigarette case out of the pocket of his sleekly fitting suit. It was of light gray, tailored by an expert. He was broad in the shoulders, flat at the waist, and narrow-hipped.

His eyes were pale blue in a lean, tanned face; his hair, corn-colored, was

cut close at the back and sides, but was thick and wiry on top. His nose was too thin, the nostrils slightly pinched, and his upper lip was very short.

"Take it from me," he said, "she's got everything."

"Take it from me," said his companion, "she mustn't be alive two weeks from today, or you'll be in bad trouble."

"Two weeks," echoed Amblin quite calmly.

"That's what I said." The other man was just one in a crowd; middle-aged, of medium height and medium coloring. Amblin did not know his name.

"How much do I get?" Amblin asked, and showed his teeth, big and white, in a smile which had no life.

"One thousand pounds."

"It's not much, seeing that I'm risking the hangman."

"It's as much as you get," the other man said flatly. "That, and some letters, and a passport in a name that isn't yours."

"How do I get paid off?"

"When the job's done."

Amblin looked into the other's eyes.

"I like my fee in advance," he said.

"You'll get an advance of two fifty. Ridler will be stakeholder for the balance."

"I'll believe it when I hear it from him," Amblin said. "I'll telephone him now and ask him if he knows about this."

"All right," the pale-eyed man answered. "Go ahead and call."

"I'll have to give him a name," said Amblin. "Your name."

"Just tell him it's the man who talked to him about you."

Amblin turned slowly toward the telephone, and as slowly sat on the bed. He lifted the telephone and gave a number, and it wasn't long before Ridler answered; the Glasgow accent in Ridler's voice placed him beyond any doubt.

"This is Amblin," Amblin said. "Have you been recommending me to anyone?"

"Aye, I have," Ridler said at once, "and ye needn't worry, he'll come across."

"Okay," Amblin said. "And you'll hold the stakes?"

"I've got them noo," said Ridler.

Amblin said, "Thanks," and rang off. "How much did Ridler tell you about me?" he asked the man whose name he didn't know.

"Enough," said the other. "You preferred an easier life to the stage you started on—and you've lived by cheating women who fell for your good looks. Ridler came across you because one of the women you swindled was a 'client' of his. Then you got to know the Mallory girl, and, among other things, you wrote letters to her. She found you out to be a cheat, and was going to tell the police. You strangled her, then searched her flat for those letters. But we already had them—Ridler had fixed it."

Amblin said, "How do I know I'll get the letters?"

"You have to take my word for it both

**She woke and knew he had come. She lay rigid—unable to think or move or scream**



## SO SOON TO DIE (continued)

ways—mine or Ridler's. If this girl is dead in time, you get them all, plus the passport, the money, and the ticket. If she isn't, Scotland Yard gets the letters."

There was another long pause. Then: "Okay," Amblin said. "She's on her way out."

The smaller man took a sealed foolscap envelope from his pocket.

"You'll find everything you need to know about her in this," he said. "She must die by Saturday week. Don't slip up, don't make any mistake."

"I've a lot at stake," Amblin reminded him.

The smaller man went out.

Amblin went to the table in this small room, with its bed against the wall, the telephone, the one armchair, the dressing table, all of it to pattern, all of it dreary. He sat on the edge of the bed, picked up the envelope, and felt it, finding it bulkier than he had expected.

He drew out some folds of paper and five packets of one pound notes, all used. He dropped the papers and counted the first packet: there were fifty.

He tucked some of the notes into his wallet, making it too full, thrust that into his pocket; it made his coat bulge. He distributed the other money about his pockets, then picked up the folds of white paper and began to read.

*Name:* Isobel Waring.

*Age:* 24 years.

*General description:* She is five feet, four inches tall, weighs about 9 stone, small waist, good figure.

*Eyes:* Blue.

*Hair:* Black, naturally curly.

*Complexion:* Olive-skinned

(pale shade.)

There were those things, and much more: the size shoe she wore, the kind of clothes she liked, her habits, her friends, the places she visited.

*Place of residence:* Flatlet at 49 Kilner Road, Kensington, comprising bed-sitting-room, kitchenette, and bath-room. Rent, £150 per annum inclusive.

*Telephone:* Kensington 97123.

*Place of business:* General office of Messrs. Cort, Lumsden, and Cort, Solicitor, Strand House, Aldwych, London, W.C.2.

Yes, it was all there: beauty and grace, vitality and love of life, set down in flat, unimaginative prose.

*Recreations:* Tennis, walking.

It was easy to picture her on the tennis court, lithe and swift. Amblin had an odd, jesting thought: that in the last ten days of her life, she ought to have a good time, she ought to enjoy everything, and—he ought to help her!

*Next of kin:* Not known. No close relatives known.

*Fiancé:* Engaged to marry Ronald James Muir, Civil Engineer, aged 27; temporarily resident (working) in the United States of America (Chicago, Illinois). Engagement officially announced to Muir's parents three months before he left for the U.S.A., where he has been for nearly twelve months.

So she was lonely, too.

The lonely kind was easy.

Amblin put down the dossier, and stared at the window.

Killing could be a profession as precise as any other. He had learned it thoroughly, first at the hands of a sergeant-major, and then in the kind of battle that Malaya had known for so many years, in the steaming jungle of kill or be killed. He had learned how to use a knife with the swift, silent savagery of a grinning brute; he had learned to look on a yellow-skinned face as a target for knife or bullet, on a neck as made for his strong fingers.

He could kill with his hands.

He could kill with a kick, or with a single blow from the butt of a revolver or a rifle. There was little about killing that he didn't know, and only one thing about his success in the jungle that his superior officers didn't know.

He enjoyed killing.

There was nothing so sweet to the mind of Lionel Amblin as the power over life and death.

Back in England after five years, three in Malaya and two in Korea, he had missed that power.

Sitting there, looking at the photograph which did Isobel Waring much less than justice, an odd thought came: that she might be of even greater value alive.

Would she be?

Amblin stood up, looked at the photograph again, and then tucked it into his pocket, with the typewritten dossier and the money.

As he had studied every crime he had committed, he had to study this: how to kill: whether to get to know the girl, or whether to strike out of the darkness.

He had another funny quirk of feeling that he would like to give her a good time in the next ten days. He would like to hear her laugh, watch her smile, see her move—in fact, there was nothing he wouldn't like with Isobel Waring. After all, the girl would be his last affair in England.

Isobel Waring said: "Really, it's been fun, but I must go now."

Colonel McKinley, the well-preserved, handsome, middle-aged man, a client of her employers, Messrs. Cort, Lumsden, and Cort, seemed a little sad at his dismissal, but he turned with almost military precision, using his furled

black umbrella as a sort of swagger cane.

"Of course," he said. "Good-by for now."

"Good-by," Isobel said.

When he had gone she waited in the long queue for a bus which would take her within walking distance of her flat. There she would have another evening on her own; she spent so much time on her own, waiting for Ronnie. Too much?

She tried to put the thought aside as disloyal. Ronnie was working for them both; with luck he would be home next year, and if everything had gone well they would be married at once. He'd been gone for nearly a year, though, and a letter every two weeks was just—a letter every two weeks, a flutter of excitement which soon died.

She felt unsettled and uneasy.

She did not realize that Colonel McKinley had really started the process, with his show of old-world gallantry, his obvious delight in her presence. He'd been fun, in a way; empty, hollow fun, amusing at the moment, but quickly dead. Not like fun with Ronnie.

She had almost forgotten that she was lonely when she reached Kilner Road. She liked it here. There were plane trees on either side, and paving stones had been moved to make room for the roots which grew imperceptibly larger year after year. The leaves were utterly still, and seemed to droop.

The houses were all alike: tall, gray-faced, slated.

Three stone steps led straight from the pavement toward the pillared porches, the tall, round, stone pillars supporting flat balconies. The windows were all tall and narrow, each with one bay window.

Number 49, halfway along the street, was painted black and white, like several of its neighbors. The front door stood open, as it often did when the tenants were due home.

It was half past six.

Isobel walked briskly up to her room on the third floor, finding it cooler in the gloomy house. She had her key in her hand as she reached the door, opened it, stepped in—and kicked against something which slithered across the floor. A letter. It had the red, white, and blue edging of air-mail letters from the United States—from Ronald. She bent down, snatching at it; this was the one moment of excitement.

The room was long and narrow. There was a window seat, covered in green corduroy, and she dropped onto it. Hair-cord carpet was fitted from wall to wall: everything—from the chairs to the gate-leg table, the divan bed with big square cushions at either end, the fire-side chairs, the plants growing in porcelain pots hanging on the wall—had an unmistakable

touch of Isobel's own distinct personality.

Ronald's writing was big and rather careless—but he used every fraction of space. The heading was *Chicago*. In a line, she was lifted to high heaven.

"Hallo, darling. I've golden news for you and me—I'm coming home! Fact. I can hardly wait. I HAVE BOOKED MY PASSAGE for a week next Monday. By the time you get this, I'll be home in less than two weeks. Reason for the sudden decision: to confer with the Powers That Be in London. I'll be home for at least THREE MONTHS. Shout loud huzzahs, and WAIT A MINUTE."

Isobel looked up at the window. Her heart had that queer, thudding sound which it always had when she thought intensely about Ronald.

She just stared, as if praying, then dashed her hand across her eyes.

"WAIT A MINUTE, I said! Darling, we—I mean, YOU AND ME (I!) can get married, if, if, if you'll come and live in America for a few years, with a chance that it will be permanent. I think you'll be fascinated by the place, but never mind that now. I'm offered (from here on I shall report the facts soberly, as befits a highly paid executive) a job with the Chicago factory of the Octopus, at fifteen thousand dollars a year, and while that isn't a fortune, we could live in comfort. Cross out comfort, read great comfort.

"IF YOU will take the chance, darling, I swear you won't regret it; you'd get on famously here and they'd love you (which goes without saying).

"The one thing, the ONLY thing I beg of you—make up your mind by the time I get home, my darling. Don't—but what a ludicrous fool I'm being! TELL YOU WHAT. SEND ME A CABLE, just the one word YES will do."

Half past seven rolled around. Isobel was sitting in the window seat. She hadn't had supper, she hadn't tidied up, or bathed, or mended, or done a thing, except send that cable.

"Twelve days," she said chokily.

She moved swiftly toward the radio, and snatched a photograph off it; and Ron smiled at her. She said huskily: "Darling, darling, darling, *twelve days* . . ."

It was still warm, although it was nearly one o'clock. Isobel lay sleeping, with her head to the window. She had one bare arm over the sheet, and lay on her right side, with her face toward the wall.

Ronald's letter was by his photograph, on the radio.

She did not hear the sound outside, the

faint footfall which was little more than a rustle. She was not aware of the other sounds, equally faint, which followed. The night fell silent again until, not far off, a clock struck one, and the second hour began.

She did not hear the sound at the door.

It was just a faint scratching sound which broke off, then started again; and after a while, there was a click, not loud and not enough to make her stir.

The door opened, and Amblin stepped in.

She felt a touch upon her forehead, as if something silky were being drawn across it. That was the first moment of awakening, and it was quite without fear. She was just aware of it; perhaps the sheet, perhaps . . .

It touched the back of her head.

She gave a strangled gasping sound, and her whole body heaved—and then fingers dug into her neck, thumbs pressed against her windpipe.

She tried to kick and to strike at the vague, dark shape above her. She made strange noises, felt the air in her lungs distending, as if it would burst, as if it must get out. She felt a different pain across her chest—one which spread from her neck, down, down, through her whole body, pain which she knew was great enough to kill.

She was *being* killed.

She wanted to scream, but could make no sound, could only thrust her body and kick her legs—but her movements became less violent, she knew that her effort was slackening, and believed that she was dying.

Then, fierce light followed by abysmal blackness filled her head, and she knew nothing else.

Amblin took his hands away.

He was breathing hard, harder than he liked. He had not relished doing that; she had wakened before he had expected. He stood back a little. He could hear his own breathing, but not hers. For a moment he was afraid that he had killed her too soon; but then he saw the movement of her lips.

He began to search the room. He found no papers or documents of special interest, but there was a bundle of letters, tied up with blue ribbon; he grinned as he untied the packet, and opened the first letter.

"My beloved—"

This ought to be good.

Shining his torch downwards, he skimmed the letter through. In a way it was disappointing: not juicy at all, not much in the way of heart-throbs; pure stuff! He read on. The Ron who signed it had a gift of descriptive detail, and told the girl about places he had visited, people he had met. There was nothing

about money, nothing to hint at the unknown man's reason for wanting her dead.

Amblin read more letters. Every now and then he glanced at the girl, who was beginning to breathe more freely, but was still unconscious. After the tenth letter, Amblin put them all aside and then tied them up again and put them back in the drawer. He'd learned a bit about Ron, his works, his hopes, his ambitions, his longing for Isobel; that was all.

Suddenly Amblin twisted the lens, so that the light was concentrated in a beam which struck the wall. It fell on Isobel's dark hair, then on her face.

He went back to the side of the bed, sat on it, and rested the torch so that it shone on her.

Yes, she was really something.

"They" wanted her dead, by Saturday week. There were ten days to find out how much she was worth alive. He took a brandy flask from his hip pocket and unscrewed the cap, then looked round for a spoon; he had to go into the kitchen. He found a spoon, brought it back, and put a little brandy to Isobel's lips. Some trickled down her chin to her neck, some found its way into her mouth.

Her neck moved as she swallowed: there were red marks and some puffiness where he had nearly strangled her.

Looking about the room, as he stood away from the girl, he saw a picture with a letter near it. He stared straight into the face of a photograph signed "Ron": so this was Ronald Muir. He had a round, wholesome face, not by any means handsome, but likable: one could imagine laughter in the eyes, a chuckle on the lips.

"I shan't forget him," Amblin said, *sotto voce*.

He put the photograph back, skimmed through this latest letter, then glanced at Isobel.

On her pillow was one of her own nylon stockings.

He picked it up, held it in his hands and stretched it tightly.

He felt the old, compelling sense of power, of absolute control of life and death. He could put this stocking round the slim neck, and twist and pull—until she died. He could kill her in other ways, too, ways which could not fail. She was utterly at his mercy.

He ought to kill her, now that it was so easy.

A thousand pounds, that passport, safety for the future—why wait?

*Why wait?*

How much was she worth alive?

Why not wait, talk to her, force the answers from her?

Amblin stepped back and began searching the flatlet systematically for a

## SO SOON TO DIE (continued)



**He wheeled the bike frenziedly into a doorway and crouched until the lights flashed by. If they had seen him . . . "Must get inside," he said in panic.**

second time, looking in the places where a careful woman might hide money. He found twenty pounds beneath the paper lining of a drawer, ten in an old shoe, four in her handbag.

What about her engagement ring?

He sat on the side of the bed again and pushed the sheet aside. She was wearing a sheer nightgown trimmed at the top with ribbon and lace. Very nice. Her left hand rested against her leg. He raised it, bending the elbow, and the torch light caught a solitaire diamond which flashed a dozen colors.

He began to take the ring off, then realized that if he took it he would have to find a buyer, which would result in

dangerous complications he did not want.

He waited until Isobel began to breathe more heavily. Her eyelids flickered, her head turned—and then her whole body stiffened, as with fear.

Amblin spoke in a low-pitched voice which had a slight Scottish accent.

"Don't move, don't do anything, or you'll get hurt."

**I**sobel lay quite still, while he wondered whether he should kill her now. It seemed such a waste.

Isobel lay there, with the unknown man sitting close to her. Her heart beat with a suffocating, pounding movement. She could breathe fairly easily, and she could

*think*, and feel the dread of what he might do.

Would he kill her?

She felt his hand touching her, and felt his breath on her cheek. She knew he was bending over her. She felt his hands—and suddenly, more pressure at her throat, more awful constriction. It was as if he had decided what to do, to kill . . .

She heaved her body and tried to scream, but could not.

Then, the pressure eased from her throat, and she felt different pressure at her lips.

He was kissing her, and his kiss prevented her from breathing.

Isobel felt the darkness coming again. There was no strength left in her. There was only the pressure of his strong hands, and the savage pressure of his lips on hers.

She felt her breast rising and falling as her lungs fought the losing battle; she felt tightness and pricking pains at her throat, her lungs. Gradually, these grew into one awful pain, agony at her breast, a swelling, drumming beat of her heart. Then she lost consciousness.

Amblin looked down at her again, his face set, his breathing hard through his pinched nostrils. The light shone upon her. She did not look beautiful now; her mouth was slightly open, and slack; so were her eyes.

He had only to pick up a pillow and press it on her face, and then collect from Ridler. A thousand pounds and safety.

He just couldn't make up his mind whether . . .

He heard a sound outside.

He went to the door and listened, holding his breath. He heard nothing, but undoubtedly there had been a sound. He went to the window, drew the curtain back, and looked out.

Light shone from the window below, in this house.

Amblin drew back and crossed to the door. He didn't look at the girl again, for he dared not kill her while there was a risk of being caught; he ought to have got it over earlier.

Well, he hadn't.

He opened the door and peered into blessed darkness. He went out, closing the door, which clicked more loudly than he wanted. Soon he reached the second landing, feeling his way down and not using his torch at all, because of landing windows.

No door opened.

He found his way to the banisters of the next staircase, then kicked against something which gave out a sharp, ringing sound, and next moment began to rattle. A milk bottle!

It fell down the stairs.

*Bump—bump—bump.*

He snatched the torch from his pocket and switched it on and, holding it in front of him, raced down the stairs.

A light went on in a room on the ground floor, bright against the blackness.

Amblin rushed past, pulled open the front door, and rushed into the street. He saw light shining out into the street from the window of the room on the ground floor.

A shadow was thrown onto the pavement.

He turned left, making very little sound. Just round the corner was the

bicycle he had ridden here, a stolen bicycle which he could leave or take with him.

Streets lights were on.

He saw a different light, just a glow which reached the corner: and almost on the instant he heard the beat of a car engine. The light moved, flashing past the crossroads, and he knew that it was coming from the headlights of a car. He wheeled the machine frenziedly into a doorway, and crouched in a corner as the light became dazzlingly bright.

He narrowed his eyes against the glare, but saw the word "Police" on the blue sign on the roof of the car. He was then quite sure what had happened: the neighbor whom he had roused had dialed 999.

If either of the men in the car saw the bicycle . . .

It flashed by.

Amblin was sweating when he pushed the bicycle out of the doorway. The police, knowing what time he had left Kilner Road, would soon fling a net round the whole area. There were no flies on them; they knew how to search a district. Empty houses, gardens, doorways, parked cars, alleys: if they came out in force, no one in the area would have a chance.

"Must get inside somewhere," he said, speaking aloud.

The tires of his stolen machine whirred on the smooth surface of the road. Something kept going *tick-tick-tick-tick* on the machine. He heard a car, a long way off, and his teeth clenched so tightly that his jaws hurt.

He was in a large square, with a garden in the middle, and large houses all round. He got off the machine and wheeled it onto the porch of a house, left it there, and went to a window which was protected by a wrought-iron railing. He climbed this, and in the poor light of a street lamp examined the window quickly—and had his luck. The catch wasn't properly in position.

He took a screw driver from his pocket and pushed it beneath the window, levered, and felt the window move. It squeaked once: that was the only sound.

He climbed through.

Inside, in the dark silence, he closed the window, then shone his torch and picked his way among the furniture towards the door, and stepped into the passage. He saw that the front door was bolted top and bottom, and a chain was in position.

Some careless fool had left that window unlatched.

Gently, fearful of making any sound, he pulled back the bolts: one squeaked very faintly. He slid the end of the chain along its groove, and then took it out. He opened the door, seized the bicycle, and pulled it into the passage. He rested

it against the wall and closed the door. The bicycle bell went *ting* as it touched the wall.

The car flashed past.

Amblin closed the door, sweating but relaxed and even smiling. The house was silent, and no one was likely to have heard the faint sounds that had been made down here. He moved towards the kitchen quarters, shining his torch downward at the floor; that way, there was little chance of the light's being seen through a window. Not that there were any windows here, in the passage.

Ahead was a closed door.

He opened it, slowly and cautiously, and the light shone on pale green floor covering and then on white tiles: this was the kitchen. He didn't really want the kitchen, and water; he wanted a man's drink. Whisky, gin, even beer.

The curtains were drawn at the window, and they seemed thick. He switched on the ceiling light and blinked in its brightness. Then, he saw that it was a narrow room, beautifully equipped, with white tiles and gleaming chromium, a refrigerator which hummed faintly, big glazed cupboards instead of a dresser.

In a cupboard he found a bottle of whisky, another of gin, and a syphon of soda.

Wonderful!

He sat down in an armchair and poured himself a whisky and soda: he relished every sip. He felt cooler, and he felt safe; the danger had stalked out in the dark streets, but would not penetrate this snug comfort. He ought to put the light out, soon, but there was no hurry. He had better be careful; he was getting too comfortable.

He sat facing the door.

It opened, and a woman stood staring at him.

She was young, or at least not very old—thirty-five or so. She wore a red silk dressing gown, red slippers, and a pink hairnet. Her eyes were big and rounded, and her mouth was opened in a wide O of astonishment. No one could possibly have a better look at him.

Very slowly, fighting the impulse to fling himself at her, Amblin stood up, and smiled.

He had a charming smile.

He said: "This is what they call a fair cop, but—I didn't come to steal anything, honestly. I—I was just hungry." He moved slowly towards her, watching for the slightest hint that she would relax and scream, or turn and run. "Honestly, I don't mean any harm, I—"

She moved.

"No! Keep away from me, keep away!" She turned round, a rounded silhouette against the light now burning in the hall.



He came toward her with a frank, engaging smile, both strong hands outstretched. As she felt his warm grasp, Isobel couldn't dream these hands had touched her once before.

He picked up the chair, raised it, and leaped after her.

She gave one scream.

Only Lionel Amblin heard her.

Detective-Inspector Galloway, of New Scotland Yard, went briskly into Isobel Waring's flatlet soon after the alarm had been raised. It seemed crowded, although only three men were here—one from the patrol car, Jenkinson of the Flying Squad, and a police surgeon. The doctor was standing up from the girl's side. Bedclothes were heaped up on her, in spite of the night's warmth. She was slightly flushed, and Galloway thought, "So she's alive," and

then realized that she was really something to look at. The way her head was turned showed her features at their best. She seemed to be in a natural sleep. The pouting of her lips might really be a swelling, Galloway reflected, and he saw puffy red marks at her neck. Her hair was a mass of loose curls.

"How's she, doc?"

"She'll be all right," said the police surgeon. "Five minutes more, and she'll come round."

"Any sign of interference with her?" asked Galloway.

"No."

"Well, that's something," Galloway

said. "Often wondered what it must be like to be a girl who's been—" he broke off when the girl moved her head.

The girl moved again, very slowly, as if she were beginning to wake up. She drew one arm out of the bed, as if too hot, then opened her eyes.

Galloway was in a better position than anyone in the room to see those eyes. He felt that he had never seen anything like their brilliance, their beauty—or the fear in them. That one moment gave him an insight into how she had felt; from now until her dying day, this girl would have a memory of the horror.

"I'm going to give you a cup of hot coffee," the doctor said to her. "It'll be

up in a minute. Just lie still, and don't worry. We're the police. He's gone."

"And he won't come back." Galloway said, and smiled at the girl.

Galloway had one disadvantage as a C.I.D. man: he looked the part. In fact, he had everything—the big frame, the thick waist and barrel-like chest, the big feet and hands, the square jaw and rather heavy features. To look at, he was a man without imagination, the all-brawn type who had graduated from the uniformed branch because of his pertinacity and strength rather than his mental capacity.

He had two redeeming features, a soft voice and homeliness when he smiled.

"We'll catch the beggar soon," he promised, quietly. "Do you know him?"

"No," said Isobel Waring, in a hoarse, whispering voice. She closed her eyes. "No," she whispered again, and tensed her body beneath the bedclothes. "It was terrible—*terrible*."

Galloway and the doctor glanced at each other. One became hardened because this kind of thing was commonplace; it might easily have been a case of murder. But there were moments when the hard surface yielded, and this was one of them.

"We'll get the swine all right," Galloway said grimly to himself.

Outside, the police searched.

Inside the house in Merrivale Square, Amblin waited, with the dead woman for company.

Soon he would have to venture out.

Galloway tried to be reassuring; so did the doctor.

Isobel Waring understood that, but the horror had struck deep, and was still with her. She could feel the pressure of the burglar's hands, the smooth, caressing touch, the hardness of his lips, the sharp pressure of his teeth—and she could feel herself falling into darkness.

The big man began to ask questions. What was her name? Had she seen the man who had attacked her? What had he done? What had he taken away? Soon, Isobel found herself telling them everything; somehow, that made it easier. Once she had talked about the pressure at her throat, and then her lips, recollection lost a little of its horror.

"Very bad luck," said the big detective, when she had finished. "Of all the places to be burgled, this had to be it. One good thing, though, lightning doesn't often strike twice in the same place."

Isobel found that soothing and reassuring, the most heartening thing that had been said.

Galloway stifled a yawn as he finished his report. He had a small, meticulous hand, and still took pride in forming each letter well. This report had been more difficult than most

were, because a picture of the girl herself had kept intruding, but it was done.

A lot that he knew about Isobel Waring was hardly relevant to the crime. That her fiancé was due home in twelve days' time, for instance. Where she worked, the names of some of the people in the office, facts about the tennis club, even about Colonel McKinley and his courteous, hopeful gallantry. Galloway put everything in, not sure what might become relevant.

No clue had been found at the flat. The man from Fingerprints had confessed a complete failure; only the girl's prints were anywhere.

The telephone bell rang as Galloway put down his pen.

"Galloway," he said into the mouth-piece, and wished someone else was here; he didn't want to be landed with another job.

It was the Duty Superintendent.

"Nasty job over at Number 34 Merrivale Square," he said calmly. "Woman murdered. Head battered. Go and have a look round, will you?"

Merrivale Square still looked deserted, except for the little patch of activity outside Number 34. Cars, an ambulance, two newspaper boys, a postman, and uniformed police were there—a familiar enough scene. Galloway went in. A white-faced maid, now in a front room, had come down to make the early morning tea, and found the body of her mistress in the kitchen. There had been blood on the tiles, on the green rubber flooring, even out in the passage. She had run, screaming.

There were no prints here, either.

Nothing had been stolen.

In the hall, behind the door, were scratches which couldn't be identified at first; but Galloway found something else, the marks of a bicycle tire—just a few inches of track on the polished wood of the hall. The scratches might coincide with the handlebars of a bicycle, too.

The bicycle was found two hours later, in a street off King's Road, Chelsea. It hadn't a single fingerprint.

Lionel Amblin looked out of the window of his room into the street. At the end of the street was Chelsea Embankment and the river, and there was a faint haze near the river—too thin to be called a mist. It was thicker, though, than it had been when he had come home.

He had had one other moment of panic when he had left the house in Merrivale Square, wheeling the bicycle; a man had come out of the house next door. He hadn't seemed surprised, hadn't taken any particular notice of him, but—he'd seen Amblin.

Amblin had arrived here just after seven o'clock. By that time many people

had been out on the streets, and he had been able to cycle and, later, to walk past policemen without feeling a moment's anxiety.

A newspaper boy came whistling along and stopped outside the house.

When he had gone, Amblin went downstairs, took the newspaper, and listened to his landlady in the kitchen. He didn't call out to her, but knew that she had seen him; she would come up in a few minutes, with a cup of tea—unless she sent her hopeful daughter!

Amblin grinned.

He began to go over everything that had happened.

Soon he felt more confident; the attack of jitters had passed. The man in Merrivale Square had only caught a glimpse of him, and wouldn't know him from Adam.

He began to go over all that he knew about the girl's fiancé, Ronald Muir. His memory, trained for the theater, was exceptional. He could recall nearly everything that Muir had said in his letters. If Isobel Waring wasn't dead, and he felt sure she wasn't, he might be able to get to know her as a "friend"—perhaps a friend of Ron's. That would be fine. He might find out why she would be so valuable dead. Perhaps it had been a good thing that he hadn't killed her.

He wondered what the unknown man who had given him this job would think. Forget him.

All day, that Wednesday, Isobel Waring stayed in a small nursing home, not far from the flatlet. She felt much better but a long way from well. It was one thing to remind herself that she was lucky to be alive; another to think of being "lucky" when she remembered.

There came anxious inquiries.

There were neighbors from Number 49 and nearby houses, and four offers to put her up for as long as she wished, one from a middle-aged woman who volunteered to sleep in her room on a camp bed. Flowers from old Mr. Lumsden at the office. Chocolates. Her favorite neighbor, little Mrs. Trabert from the ground floor.

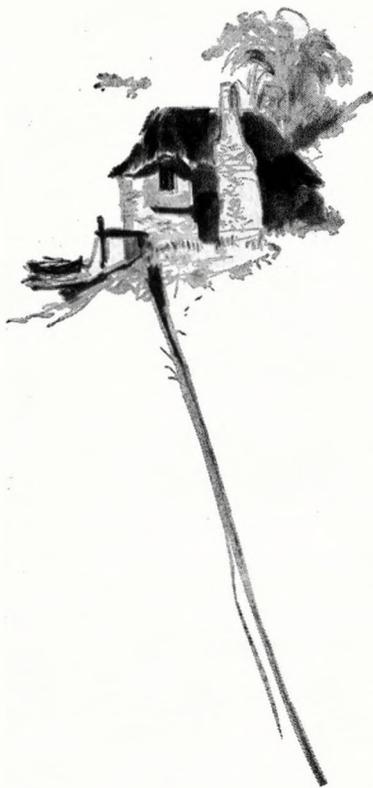
"We've a spare room, Miss Waring, and Bert won't hear of you sleeping up there alone; you're to sleep downstairs with us, and we won't take No for an answer."

"You're very kind, but—"

"And no argument," Mrs. Trabert looked rather like an indignant sparrow.

Towards five o'clock, Ron Muir's parents arrived.

Isobel hadn't sent a message, hadn't given them a thought, but here they were. Mrs. Muir's oft-voiced disapproval of young girls who lived on their own



**There was something eerie about this place he had brought her to, but she was too tired to protest.**

crowded into Isobel's mind. Exactly what Mrs. Muir had prophesied had come about; there was the fullest justification for disapproval.

Ron's father was all right, a tall, rather indecisive man, a Harris-tweed lover, a pipe-smoker.

The visit went as Isobel expected it to: Muir, a little ill-at-ease, trying to put in a friendly, soothing word. Tall, angular, gray-suited Mrs. Muir full of concern at the outset, almost fussy, then gradually becoming difficult, reproachful, long-suffering.

"Of course, you must come and stay with us until this is over," she said. "Don't let's have an argument about it, Isobel." She gave a bright, hard smile.

"You're very good," Isobel said weakly, "but I don't think I should stay away from the office." A week at the Muirs' home would be impossible. "Really, I shall be quite all right after another night's rest."

Her future mother-in-law said abruptly, "We certainly won't argue about it, but I know what my son would expect." Nothing could hide her repressed anger.

"What have you done to your lip?"

A silly, ludicrous question!

"He did that, he ki—"

Isobel stopped.

Quite suddenly she could see the picture which crept into Mrs. Muir's mind. A girl, alone in a small room, in bed—wakened by a burglar, by a man who nearly choked her, who *kissed* her, who—

"Is that *everything* that happened?" asked Mrs. Muir, in a voice meant to hurt, to wound.

Isobel started to speak, but couldn't find words. Anger following a shock, and distress because this was Ron's mother, both combined to affect her. She hated this woman who had always disliked, resented, perhaps hated her. Here it was, out in the open, with that unspeakable question, that wicked innuendo.

"M'dear," Mr. Muir said, awkwardly, "distraught, you know, most unhappy experience. Wicked. Don't you think—"

The door opened.

"I'm sorry," said the nurse, in an uncompromising voice, "but I shall have to ask you to leave."

Isobel hardly heard their good-bys.

The nurse came back.

"What did that old so-and-so say to upset you?" she asked. "I could see what she was like the minute I set eyes on her. Come on, cheer up! You've got plenty of friends—the last one who called left some roses. I'll fetch them."

Isobel, staring blindly at the spot where Ron's mother had been, seeing the woman's face and hearing the venomous question, didn't give the nurse any thought, and gave less to the twelve roses until the nurse picked out the card and read:

"With very real concern for you.

Can I help in any way?

—H. G. McKinley"

Galloway looked at Isobel and put his head on one side. When he smiled, he still had that puppyish look. There was another kind of look in his brown eyes, too; she knew it only too well. Her beauty affected men like that. "Sure you're going to be all right?" he asked.

"Of course I am. Didn't you say that lightning never strikes twice in the same place?"

"I'm not thinking about lightning, or burglars, or bad men," Galloway said. "I'm thinking about the effect on you. Haven't you any friends to stay with?"

"Mrs. Trabert, downstairs—"

He grinned. "Mrs. Bunny? Well, I suppose you'll have to go. Mind if I drive you back home?"

"You're very kind."

"It's easy to be kind to you."

She didn't answer, didn't say what she felt—that he had a way of saying kind

things and of warming her with obvious sincerity. Some men did; and he had seen her much more than most new acquaintances.

Abruptly and unexpectedly he said, "We have a lot of unpleasant jobs to do, you know."

She didn't comment.

"Reading private letters, for instance. Checking very closely into things which are strictly personal. Had to find out what I could about you. Office—club—your home. I read the letter from—er—Ron."

An exclamation burst out. "Oh!"

"Forgive me, but if I were you I'd write to him, at once, by air mail. I imagine that his mother has, already."

Isobel was staring straight ahead of her.

Of course Mrs. Muir would write to Ron. She would pass on her "suspicions," would start to drip the poison.

Ron would reject it as absurd, he—

How *could* he help wondering?

Now she felt very cold, even scared.

Galloway started to talk very quickly.

"Lots of people seem to think that we're only interested in catching crooks and jailing them, but that's not wholly true. You'd be surprised how often we can help a bit. We've checked your movements, history, and background, too, just in case that brute had some personal motive. We know you've no close relatives, that—er—Ron Muir is everything. None of my business, and I shouldn't be saying it, but if you do find that it would help to talk, try—er—us."

She managed to murmur: "Thank you," and wondered just what he knew. That her father had died before she was born, her mother during the war? That neighbors had looked after her until she'd gone to live with a family recommended by her mother's solicitors, Cort. Lumsden, and Cort. Later, she'd gone to work in the solicitor's office, and lived on her own . . .

It was ten minutes more before they reached Kilner Road, and it wasn't until they turned the corner that Isobel began to feel a quickening of her pulse, almost a new sense of fear.

Two men were lounging by a car, near Number 49. As Galloway drew nearer in the car, and came forward, they recognized him and then recognized her. One of them waited until she was on the pavement.

"I'm from the *Flash Agency*, Miss Waring. Would you care . . ."

"She wouldn't, Jim," said Galloway, and gave his most boyish grin. "Would you, Miss Waring?"

"No!"

All of them laughed.

Neither of the newspapermen argued,

but one backed away suddenly, brought a small camera from his pocket and, without appearing to focus it, put it to his eyes.

There was Mrs. Trabert; another neighbor; a quick exchange of greetings; unexpected kisses, before Galloway took Isobel upstairs and into her own room. There were roses in one vase, yellow and black orchids in another—*orchids*. A huge bowl of sweetpeas gave off a glorious scent.

The sun shone.

"Not at all horrifying?" asked Galloway, and made her face the word. "I didn't expect it would be. Let me know if I can help at all, won't you?"

"Yes, and—thank you—thank you very much."

"If you really want to thank me, find some excuse for having me come round!" Galloway said, and went out.

Isobel moved to the window seat, carrying the orchids and seeing a letter with them.

She opened it, uncertainly. Inside, a folded sheet of paper was headed: "Bowen's Hotel, W.1." There was a type-written message:

"Dear Miss Waring,

You won't recognize my name, but I can claim to know you very well, by repute. I've spent a lot of time with Ron (Muir!) in the United States, and left just a couple of weeks before he's due to leave.

I shall be leaving London before he comes home, more's the pity, but I would like to say hallo. May I call you?

Cordially,

Lester Abbott"

A friend of Ron's! Someone who would understand—

And his orchids were beautiful.

Sweet peas from Mrs. Trabert, of course. Roses—from Colonel McKinley, with a note: "I hope you will forgive me if I call on you, on your return, to offer my warm good wishes in person."

She had so many friends.

She wondered when Lester Abbott would call.

Late that night, Amblin was about to ring the bell marked "Isobel Waring" when the door was opened by a thin man with a harelip. Amblin was near panic; he hadn't dreamed that anyone but Isobel would open the door.

He fought the panic down.

"Is Miss Isobel Waring in?" he asked, and he wondered if this was the man who had sent for the police a few nights ago.

"There's a Mr. Abbott downstairs, talking to George, and I came up to see if you were all right, and whether you'd see him or not," said Mrs. Trabert to

Isobel. "After all, it's late. Apparently he has to go away first thing in the morning, and he didn't know that until an hour ago. That's what he says," added Mrs. Trabert. "I must say he looks a nice enough young man."

"I must see him." Isobel said eagerly. "Will you ask him to come up?"

"You could see him in our flat, the front room's empty, and—" Mrs. Trabert began, and then seeing the expression on Isobel's face, she broke off with a little laugh. "Oh, all right."

While she waited for this friend of Ron, Isobel felt excitement rising, Abbott came hurrying up the last flight of stairs alone. The first glimpse Isobel had was of his agile body, his quick smile, his arresting good looks. He brought news of Ron.

He saw her, paused, and then exclaimed: "Well, now I guess I can understand why Ron's so crazy about you!"

He came forward, with both hands outstretched.

Isobel took them spontaneously; his grip was very quick and tight. It could not possibly occur to her that these were the hands which had so nearly choked the life out of her.

"This is just fine," he said, in an accent which was faintly American, or possibly Canadian, she thought. "I'm sorry I had to come so late. Isobel, but I had a cable from my company just an hour ago; I have to go away from London for the next few days—up in the Midlands. Isn't that how you call the district around Birmingham?"

"Yes," Isobel said.

He stood looking round, as if he hadn't seen anything like this flat before. He was thinking that the room looked very different in this good light.

"Why, this is charming," he said, and smiled broadly. "You don't mind if I say whatever comes into my head, I hope—Ron tells me that isn't the custom over here."

"Of course I don't mind. How—how is Ron?"

They stood together in the middle of the room.

"Ron's just about as good as a man can be," he said emphatically. "He's looking wonderful, he's had plenty of time to sunbathe, and he's having a wow of a time. At weekends, you understand; we have them on the other side also! Well, tell me to go home!" He moved back a step and looked Isobel up and down, so intently that it was almost embarrassing. She remembered, then, that the bruises at her neck showed; she should have pulled her chiffon scarf higher. "Imagine Ron leaving you over here. If those girls in Chicago knew the

kind of competition they were up against, I guess they wouldn't think twice about Ron."

She found herself laughing, and then asked, "Did—did Ron send any message?"

"He certainly did! He sent his love, and said that he couldn't wait to get back home and see you again. You've heard that he'll soon be back, I imagine."

"Yes, It's wonderful!"

"I guess that's what he thinks, too," said Abbott. His voice changed a little, and he was staring at her more intently—especially at the scarf.

She couldn't keep silent.

"What—what's the matter?"

"Now, take it easy," the visitor said, and moved quickly, taking her hand: before she quite realized it, his arm was round her waist, in a reassuring way, a kind of impersonal way. "I didn't mean to worry you, Isobel; I was rude, I guess. I'm sorry. But I've only just realized what that man downstairs was talking about. I don't read English newspapers much, but I read about the attack on a Miss Waring. I didn't realize you—Why, if Ron knew about this, I don't know what he'd say. Does—does your neck hurt?"

"It—it's a bit stiff, that's all."

"How anyone could do a thing like that!" he exclaimed. "And you're staying alone? That's wonderful: that's what I call real courage. But I don't think your friends ought to allow it. I'm dead sure Ron wouldn't like it. Why don't you stay with his family?"

"It wouldn't work out," said Isobel, and forced a smile. "I'm quite all right, really. The neighbors fuss too much. Nothing—nothing irreparable happened. After all, I *am* alive." She found that her laughter had an edge to it.

The visitor's eyes were glowing.

"That's a wonderful way to talk," he applauded. "And you're dead right to see it that way. But I'd like to think you were able to get away from here for a few days, anyway. Can't you do that?"

"Really, there's no need—" and then she broke off. His eyes shone, as if with delight, and his voice boomed out.

"Say, I've just had a wonderful idea! Why don't you come and help to show me round the Midlands—isn't that near the Shakespeare country? I'll be staying with business friends, and they'll be happy to have you visit them. I have to see them in Birmingham tomorrow morning, and they reckoned I'd be sight-seeing on Sunday. Why don't you join us? I could bring you right up to date about Ron." He put out his hands, appealing, almost pleading. "That would be just wonderful."

Even apart from Abbott's eagerness,

## SO SOON TO DIE (continued)



**He looked magnificent in the water, beckoning.  
Then she knew that somehow she must get away.**

Isobel thought that it would be a wonderful thing to do; it would take her away from the flat, from Mrs. Trabert and the neighbors, from the danger of sitting and brooding. It would lift her out of herself, help her to forget Mrs. Muir and all that had happened. It would bring Ron closer, too.

What she felt showed in her eyes; so did her doubts. She couldn't impose on Lester Abbott's business friends. Perhaps they were more casual in America, but it just wasn't "done."

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Abbott, briskly. "I must catch an early train in the morning, there's no way to avoid that. I'll find out in Birmingham if it's okay for the two of us, and call you about noon. You can sleep on it—and wake up with the idea of joining me!

I should say you could catch a train to Birmingham to reach there in the middle of the afternoon. I can meet you at the station. How does that sound?"

It sounded wonderful; but she wasn't sure she could bring herself to go. There were so many things for and against . . .

When Lester Abbott left, it was nearly half past eleven. She did not go down to the door with him. There was still a light on in the hall, which meant that the Traberts were up; they made themselves responsible for that light. Isobel stood at the open door of the flatlet and heard Abbott hurrying down, light and sure-footed. Everything about him was so full of vitality he'd done her a world of good. After the first moment of awkwardness, it had been as

bright an hour as she had known for a long time. The gaiety about him touched the spark of gaiety in her.

As Ron did.

The front door opened and closed.

"I think I *will* go," she said to herself, *sotto voce*.

She woke up with a clear head, and with her neck much less stiff. She couldn't turn her head easily, but it didn't hurt so much. She boiled an egg, made toast, and found herself humming with a new kind of contentment. It was a glorious morning. The weather forecast promised a fine weekend. The Cotswolds and the Shakespeare country would be looking their best.

At half past ten, her bell rang; someone was at the street door, pressing the bell. She glanced at herself in the mirror, patted her hair, adjusted the chiffon scarf, and then hurried downstairs. There was a kind of eagerness in her manner; she was hurrying in much the way she used to hurry for Ron.

She opened the front door, and started back at the sight of Colonel McKinley. Behind him in the road was a black car, of a magnificence seldom found in Kilner Road; at the wheel was a chauffeur.

McKinley wore a beautifully cut suit of pale gray, a pale pink rose in his button hole, a gray curly brimmed bowler; to complete the picture, he carried a black walking stick.

Isobel was so taken aback that she could only gape.

"Good morning, Miss Waring," the Colonel said, and took off his hat with a flourish. "I trust I find you well." His eyes were smiling and also questioning a little anxiously. "You *look*—delightful."

She found herself smiling, liking him, as she stood aside for him to enter.

Last night, Lester Abbott.

This morning, Colonel McKinley.

"I must thank you very much for the flowers, Colonel McKinley, and your messages. They—they helped so much."

"It's kind of you to pretend that they did," said the Colonel dryly. "You are kind, aren't you?" His eyes gleamed with a humor which reminded her a little of Lester Abbott. "I hope there is something I can do to help you to forget that most unpleasant affair." He laid his stick down, the gloves with it. "I think I've been spoiled. I so often get what I want and I would very much like to get to know you better, Miss Waring."

What could she say?

He seemed amused by her silence, and his manner was almost fatherly.

"And I have excellent references," he said dryly. "Mr. Lumsden will vouch for me, I'm sure. In fact, I'm here partly in the role of his emissary."

That enabled her to break the spell. "Mr. Lumsden's?"

"Yes," said Colonel McKinley. "He has an important weekend engagement, and couldn't come in person, so he asked me if I would come in his place. I had already told him that I hoped you would be my guest for the weekend."

It was hard to take this seriously; yet obviously it mattered to this rather pathetic man.

"You're very kind," Isobel said.

She thought of the prospect he was offering: a peaceful weekend with elderly people at the Colonel's riverside home; she had often written letters to him. It would be pleasant, restful, and safe. Compared with it, the prospect of a weekend with Ron's friend, exploring Shakespeare country, was tumultuously exciting.

She had to make up her mind.

"And I do appreciate your kindness," she went on very quickly, "but I've already made plans for the weekend. I'm going to stay with friends of Ron's—of my fiancé's—near Birmingham. In fact, I'm expecting a call from them now."

She felt a flush of gratitude to the Colonel, for making her decide.

It was a little after twelve o'clock that Saturday when Galloway left the Yard, at the wheel of his own car, and with Sergeant Kell beside him. He wanted to see Isobel Waring again, and it wasn't all because of his job. He ran into some of the thickest rush-hour traffic, and it took him twenty-five minutes to reach Kilner Road.

He saw a taxi outside Number 49, with the driver standing by the open door; someone was coming out.

The girl, Isobel Waring.

She carried a small, light brown case and a handbag, wore a linen suit of apple green, trimmed with white, and if he had ever doubted how good she was to look at, his doubts vanished now. Those movements, too! The coat of the suit was open at the top buttons, and it hinted at her figure. She wore a wide-brimmed hat, the same color as the suit, and round her neck was a white chiffon scarf.

The taxi-man reached out for the suitcase.

"Lemme take it, Miss."

She smiled, and Galloway caught the brightness of that, sensed that something had cheered her up. By then, he had stopped and was getting out of the car; and the slamming of his door made the girl look round.

She recognized Galloway and stopped. She didn't look so much surprised as a little exasperated, and he wished she hadn't. He raised his hat and was very conscious of his heavy, cumbersome-looking body.

"Good morning, Miss Waring. Sorry to worry you again, but I wonder if you can spare me a few minutes."

She exclaimed: "*Now?*"

"Yes, please. I needn't keep you long."

"I'm sorry," Isobel said hurriedly, "but I really must catch the half past one train from Euston. I'm spending the weekend with some friends."

"Oh," said Galloway. "That's good, it'll be a change." He gave that homely smile. "Let me drive you to the station, and we can talk on the way."

"Don't mind me," put in the cabby, tartly.

"Nobody's going to," Galloway grinned, taking Isobel's suitcase from him. "Buy yourself a drink, Sergeant!" Kell was approaching. "You drive, will you, and take this." Briskly, he tipped the cabby, gave the suitcase to Kell, and then opened his own car door for Isobel Waring.

She got in.

He sat beside her, aware of the slight perfume, of her nearness and her freshness. He reminded himself that he was a policeman. He began to ask questions, and they seemed empty and pointless, but the girl didn't lose patience. He had an impression of excitement about her, and the only thing that really puzzled him was her answer when he asked her who the friends were.

"Oh, just—just friends of my fiancé's."

"What address will find you?" Galloway asked.

She hesitated; and a lifetime of distinguishing the truth from a lie told him that she wasn't going to tell the truth.

"I don't know. I'm being met at the station," she said. "Surely you won't want me again? Not for the weekend, anyhow, and I'll be back by Monday."

There wasn't any logical or official reason in the world why he should want her address, and he couldn't insist. He watched her hurrying toward the booking office, wishing she hadn't lied, and wondering where she was going and what kind of weekend it would be.

The man Isobel knew as Lester Abbott strode toward her at New Street Station, and, as when he had entered the flatlet, his hands were outstretched. They met, and gripped.

"My sweet Isobel, you knock 'em all cold," he greeted. She didn't know why, but that phrase had a nuance that she didn't expect from him. It puzzled without worrying her, and she forgot it when he tucked a hand beneath her arm and, with the suitcase in the other hand, walked toward a flight of wooden steps and a covered-in bridge which crossed the lines. The station seemed huge, the smell of smoke was unpleasant, the hiss of steam was constant.

They went up the stairs together.

"One piece of bad luck," he said, "although that's rather according to how you look at it, I guess." She was aware of that slight difference in the way he spoke, but didn't take any notice of it.

"Why, what's happened?"

"You'll have to put up with me alone."

"I don't quite understand."

"Try not to look depressed about it," Lionel Amblin said, and gave a comical, half-reproachful smile. "I'll be a Sir Galahad, and I'll try to do everything you'd like me to. We won't be able to go to my friends for the weekend. Everything was arranged by telephone, so I called you. Then after your train had left, I had another call. A child in the house is sick, with something infectious. They were very apologetic about it."

"Oh," Isobel could hardly get the word out.

"They couldn't have been more helpful either," Amblin went on. "They helped me with an auto, and we finished the essential business this morning. I'm quite free until Tuesday. Isn't that grand?"

"It's . . . wonderful." Her heart was very heavy with doubt.

"And I've been busy," went on Amblin, as they passed out of the station into the street. "I've learned to drive this car. It's a big change, you know; I'm not used to these small cars you have in this country! Also I've taken the advice of my friends, by booking at a little hotel in a village on the river near Stratford."

"Oh," Isobel said again.

She was really uneasy, but would hate to admit it. Spending the weekend with a party was one thing; with Lester Abbott, or with any man on his own, quite another. She snatched a glance at him—and found that he was doing the same at her. His eyes were bright, and the clean-cut look about him was reassuring; so was the way he chuckled, the way his teeth flashed. He shifted the case from one hand to the other, and then gripped her arm.

"The car's not far away," he said. "There are some parking places free on a Saturday, I'm told. I guess you're worried about the lack of a chaperon?"

Someone, in a hurry, pushed past them; they were thrust close together for a moment, and his grip was very tight, possessive. Then, he let her go; she could feel where the pressure of his fingers had been—but he'd had to grip her tightly, or they might have fallen over.

"Are you?" He was obviously amused.

"I suppose I am."

"I guess you would be," he said, sobering at once. "I did wonder whether we should drive straight back to London,

## SO SOON TO DIE (continued)

but it seemed such a shame. If you were anyone but Ron's girl, I'd say, 'We're in it together, let's have fun.' but I've too much respect for Ron to want to do anything you wouldn't like."

He sounded so sincere.

"It's so hot here." Isobel found herself saying, "Suppose we drive out a little way? We can get cool, and have time to think."

"You look so cool it's a dream," said Amblin. "Let's go."

He looked at her, as she sat by his side, staring straight ahead of her; she had a lovely profile, and there was no exaggeration in what he said: she looked so cool that she was like a dream. It all was. She was quite beautiful. Her complexion was lovely, her skin so smooth. But she wasn't the only pretty girl; black-eyed, willing wenches grew on trees in South America! He felt annoyed with himself for a few moments of near regret; they were gone. It would be fun finding out if she was as prudish as she seemed to be; and in a day or two he could find out if she knew why she would be so valuable dead. In two days, if he played his cards right, he could be absolutely sure of the best thing to do.

At heart, he knew.

Kill her.

It was getting dusk.

The sun behind them was still shining, casting long shadows. Shadows of willows which grew near the bank of the Avon fell now across the glasslike surface of the river.

Isobel sat against a tree.

Lionel Amblin sat near her, a little way ahead, so that when he leaned back, his head touched her side, and he looked up at her face.

Round a near-by bend was a village, and at the village a boathouse, light, life, crowds; the sound of music came faintly to their ears, like something from a different world.

"We'd better get on," Amblin said, and didn't move.

"Yes, we must."

"Pity we haven't swim suits."

"Yes."

"Might be able to borrow some tomorrow."

"I suppose so."

Isobel was contented, sitting here and watching the scene; yet deep down there was something worrying her, and she could not really diagnose it—a kind of fear of unfaithfulness, as if she felt that it was wrong to have enjoyed an afternoon and an evening as much as she had with Lester Abbott. Ron should have been with her. Yet, she *had* enjoyed it. She did not realize how much of the relish was due to the loneliness she had

known for so long, to a kind of relief from waiting.

"What time is it?" Amblin asked.

She glanced at her wrist watch. "Nearly ten."

"We *must* go, but I don't feel like it."

"How far is it to the—the hotel?"

"I'm not quite sure, from here. About twenty miles. I should think."

"Over half an hour."

"More or less."

"And it's almost dark." Isobel moved, getting ready to stand up, but as he started to, he seemed to slip and his head fell back against her breast. He looked up into her eyes, and the beauty of the last sunlight glowed in them, as it showed in her face. Her lips were parted a little, as if she were catching her breath.

"There's something about the twilight," he said. "Enjoyed the evening?"

"Of—of course I have."

He touched her hand.

At the station and during the early part of the afternoon and evening, he had been just a friend of Ron's, glad to be with her. They'd been to Stratford, had a meal at a large restaurant, looked over Shakespeare's birthplace and Anne Hathaway's cottage, seen the Memorial Theatre, done all the usual things; and it had been delightful, lighthearted, carefree. They'd had an hour on the river in a dinghy, and—that was when his mood had changed. She had sensed it at the time. Perhaps it had been due to the fact that they were so much alone on the river, out of earshot, confined in their own world. The way he had looked at her had told her the truth; she knew a lover's look.

How could she stop it from getting—worse?

"Shouldn't be long," he said, and started off.

But it was dark when they reached the village. A light was on at a corner house and beyond it were half a dozen houses, more lights, the big window of a shop which reflected the headlamps, a church—and then a building at the far end of the street. A dim yellow light shone outside this building, and as they drew nearer, Isobel saw that it illuminated an inn sign: *The King's Wench*. Lester Abbott swung the wheel, and the tires crunched on the loose gravel outside the inn, which stood well back from the road. The front door was open, and a faint light shone through.

"Is—is *this* the place?"

"It's the right name—bit eerie, isn't it?" Abbott didn't get out. "They warned me it was small, but said that it was first class."

She did not like the look of *The King's Wench* at all, but she was desperately

tired; it did not then occur to her that he had deliberately made them late.

"I'll tell you what," offered Lester Abbott, in a sharp voice. "I'll go and telephone a couple of Stratford hotels, and see if we have any luck."

"No, we'll stay here," Isobel said; "It will probably be beautiful in the morning."

A moment later she was getting out walking with him to the door, hearing him talking to an old woman who seemed in sole charge but kept referring questions to someone in the background, a man with a gruff voice. They signed the register, and then the little old lady led them upstairs.

Their rooms were next to each other. Hers had a sloping ceiling above the head of the bed and a long window which overlooked the river: she could see the stars reflected on its black surface: she could hear it murmuring, too. She drew the curtains, and yawned, so tired that she was sure she would drop off to sleep as soon as she lay down.

She heard Lester moving about in the next room. He was *very* sweet, really. Was "sweet" the word? A lazy one. She was grateful because he had not let himself go, hadn't started to get "fresh." She wondered if he would come in, or call "good night" from his room.

He tapped at the door.

"Good night, Isobel. Got everything you want?"

"Yes, thanks."

"Sure?"

"Yes."

"Good night. Sleep well."

"I'm sure I shall," she said.

He went off. She heard his door open and close, as she locked her own. She got into bed and lay looking at the window, and the stars, and the darkness about the stars. It was very quiet, after he had settled down, in the room and outside. There was just the murmuring of the river.

She went to sleep.

She woke up.

It was dark.

There was someone in her room.

She lay rigid with terror, did not feel even the desire to scream. She could not move, think, or feel. Terror swirled about her like writhing mists, mists which touched and pulled at her, which clawed at her neck, filled her head with hideous noises.

She was icily cold. She lay as if she were a corpse, aware of the sounds, the movements, the approaching horror.

The room was pitch black.

Then, not knowing it, she had some release from the tension; she began to moan. Crowding upon her were memories which seemed like horror being repeated

now—of those hands at her throat. She sensed that *he* was coming towards her; the same stealthy approach, hands outstretched, *both hands*, towards her neck. The fingers crooked, to clutch, to—

She screamed.

He touched the bed. She felt springs creak. She drew even farther back, shoulders and head hard against the bare wall, hands clenching.

"No, no, no!"

"Be quiet, you—" the man said, and there was venom in his voice. "Keep your—"

His hands touched her.

"No, no, no!" she cried, and struck wildly, felt her nails catch the skin, then catch in cloth. She tried to pull herself free, but his fingers were tight as a steel band at her throat.

"No, no, no," she sobbed, but strength drained out of her, taking hope with it.

Then, there was a rattling at the door.

The hands released her; the dark shape moved, passed her, and reached the window. She was hardly aware of this; she just crouched, one hand at her throat and one stretched out to fend off terror.

The door crashed open.

She knew that Abbott staggered into the room. He moved, darting towards the window. Her assailant dropped out of sight; a thud came as he reached the ground; then footsteps scraped on the loose gravel. Lester Abbott reached the open window; Isobel saw him grip the window frame, eager to climb out.

She screamed, "Don't leave me, don't leave me!"

He jerked his head round. The light from the landing had a softness which was kind to the terror of her features. She crouched, both hands outstretched, pleading, beseeching.

"Don't leave me," she sobbed.

He said slowly, as if reluctantly: "All right, I won't but—ought to catch the swine."

Knowing that he was going to stay here, Isobel collapsed. Crouching as she was, her body slipped sideways. She began to cry, piteously, helplessly. She was beyond thought, beyond feeling, except that the terror, past its peak, now had its way with her.

She heard and was aware of movement, felt Lester's hands at her shoulders, felt a hand sliding round her waist, felt her body raised, then lowered, so that she was lying full length. She was conscious of Lester Abbott's hand, caressing, soothing, comforting, and of his voice. She was hardly aware of the fact that first he was leaning over her, one arm round her shoulders, one resting lightly at her breast.

As Ron's might rest upon her.

Ron, Ron, Ron.

She felt a different kind of fear—of what might happen. She dared not stay here alone, yet if he stayed—

He did not move.

If she sent him away—

Soon, she felt his arms about her. His warmth became her strength. "I'll look after you," he said, and it was as if a champion had come out of the dark night, to protect her now and for always. "Don't worry, Isobel, just go to sleep. I'll stay with you. Don't worry. Go to sleep."

Soon, he heard her even breathing.

If she knew anything, she would surely talk, next day.

Lionel Amblin woke, aware of the strangeness of an unfamiliar place, when the sun was already bright, striking a corner of the window and a tassel of the lamp shade, which was made of something shiny, and kept glittering and moving slightly in the breeze which came through. Amblin felt this breeze on his head. It was cooler, too. He heard sounds outside, of two men, walking with the slow, deliberate gait of the countryman—probably farmhands.

No one was talking.

He lay facing Isobel.

She had moved in her sleep, and her head was thrown back so that her

bruised neck showed. She had long, dark, curling lashes, and he watched them. Then he looked at her nose, and the graceful lines of her chin. . . .

She had—everything.

He moistened his lips.

Suddenly, unable to stop himself, he bent over her, and kissed her.

He saw her eyes flicker, feared that he had made a mistake, that it would strike some chord in her memory, but she didn't wake.

He got up without waking her, put on a coat, and went out of the room. He carried a vivid picture of the girl with him, as he went down the stairs. He felt like whistling. She would be easy, now—hadn't he "saved" her life? To have another human being utterly in one's hands, to be able to strike terror and to soothe, to shock and to delight.

A door at the end of a short passage was open. There was a smell of stale beer and tobacco smoke. Two barrels stood in a small room, and beyond was a door leading to the bar. Behind the bar was a man in his shirtsleeves, small, wiry, dark-haired and dark-skinned.

He whispered: "How's she?"

"She's okay."

"Sure?"

"Of course I'm sure," Amblin said.



## SO SOON TO DIE (continued)

"Do you think she saw me in there?"  
"What the hell's got into you—it was dark, wasn't it?"

"When you opened the door—"  
"You had that scarf on," Amblin said. "Even I didn't recognize you. You're a fiver better off, so what are you grouching about?"

"She going to tell the police?"  
"She'll never do that. She's afraid her boy friend's mother will get to hear of it. I put the police idea to her, but she won't have any." Amblin grinned. "Trust me, stop worrying, and lay on some tea. Tea for two, all nice and cosy."  
"Okay," the wiry man said.

Amblin watched him go out, and went behind the bar, helped himself to a packet of cigarettes and a box of matches. He lit a cigarette and let smoke trickle through his nostrils, then went upstairs to wake the girl. He had one hurdle to clear now—making sure she didn't want to tell the police.

As it proved, that was easy. The police might mean publicity, and publicity would reach Ron's mother. . . .

Isobel sat in the stern of the boat, with the thin rope of the rudder lying in her lap. Lester Abbott was pulling easily at the oars, showing no sign of strain, although his forehead and face were damp with perspiration. It was cooler than it had been yesterday—there must have been a storm in the night; but the sky was beautifully clear, and there was no sign of rain.

This was a narrow tributary of the Avon.

The village, or rather hamlet, lay behind her, not more than a mile away. She had no idea what lay ahead. Here there was the healing warmth of the sun, the gentle ripple of the water against the side of the boat. The water was so clear that in places she could see the bottom, and could see fish, many quite still except for a faint movement of their tails and others darting.

"Right hand a trifle," Abbott said.

She pulled the rope.

"Fine. Steady, as we bump." In fact, they struck the bank so gently that the boat hardly quivered. Abbott shipped the oars, flung a rope onto the bank, stood up, and jumped lightly ashore. He made them fast to the trunk of a willow, and then came back and put his hands out—both of them, ready for her.

She stood up.

Something—it was like a shadow—crossed her mind. Something reminded her of last night. She didn't know what. She didn't know that it was Lester Abbott, with both hands outstretched. She let him take hers and pull her ashore. She stumbled, and his arm went round her tightly.

"Will you be all right here, Isobel?"

"Yes, thanks."

"I'll get the cushions." He let her go, and stepped back into the boat, getting them. "Perfect spot," he said. "away from the madding crowd. Or would you rather mix with the crowds? Like to try Stratford again, or—" he sounded anxious.

"No, it's fine here, but I think—" she paused.

"Don't save it!"

"I'd rather go home today," Isobel said. "I hope it isn't spoiling your weekend, but—but I don't think I ought to stay in—in a strange place. If—if anything should happen—"

"Oh, nothing will," said Lester Abbott, offhandedly. "You needn't worry. Let's see how you feel later on."

The last thing she wanted was to argue.

He was squatting on his haunches a few yards in front of her, smoking a cigarette, his head still a little on one side. The sun struck the right side of his face, and gave him a kind of film star look—a technicolor complexion.

"What you want is rest," he said. "Mind if I disappear for a minute?"

"No, but—oh. Yes, of course."

He got up, and disappeared behind the willows and some bushes, and silence fell. She wasn't frightened, here in broad daylight, and she found it easier to think, now that he wasn't watching her. She *must* go back to Kilner Road; she daren't stay here alone with him.

The shadow was still there.

It was made up of so many things. The fear she had felt on that first night, the horror that had followed, and the terror of last night. She wouldn't let herself believe it had been the same attacker. It must have been a casual thief—

At heart, she doubted that. She ought to go back and—see Galloway.

She could almost feel that pressure at her lips, a savage force which had the nightmare quality of the kiss which the burglar at Kilner Road had given her, the kiss which had caused the trouble with Mrs. Muir. She must have been dreaming of it, and if that was going to haunt her dreams . . .

She heard a splash.

Startled, she looked round.

Something was moving in the water, sending great ripples.

Next moment, she saw Lester Abbott swimming in midstream. His arms seemed to snake through the air and into the water. He was facing her, but didn't appear to be looking her way. He was wearing just a pair of swimming trunks, the red catching the sun, bright as blood.

Soon he came back. This time he drew level with her, and then stood up; the water was chest high, out in midstream. He had a fine, deep chest.

"Hi, there!"

"Hallo!"

"It's glorious in here!"

"I bet it is!"

"Come on in, the water's fine!"

She just smiled—and wished he hadn't suggested it. She had no swim suit, he knew that; he—but it might have been just a spontaneous phrase. Obviously, he enjoyed bathing so much.

"Come on," he called. "Do you good."

"No, I'd rather stay here."

"Shall I tell you something?"

"What's that?"

"Under the seat you were sitting on, there's a bikini-plus."

"What?"

"Look and see."

She didn't move.

There wasn't a sound. They were some distance from the road, and the road was little used, anyhow. It was almost like another Garden of Eden. The thought startled her.

Now, she knew she mustn't stay. Whatever excuse she gave, she must get away, soon. It wouldn't be long before his self-control would weaken—or hers.

He looked magnificent in the water; she could see the muscles of his arms, his legs, and his chest; he was beautifully formed, with a flat stomach and narrow hips.

"No," she called, and hoped, almost prayed, that he wouldn't try to insist. If he set out to persuade her—

He raised his arms, and then let himself fall backwards into the water. Splashes came as far as her stockings, making dark patches on the nylon. He began to swim furiously on his back, turned over, and raced down river.

He swam with those long, powerful strokes, towards the bend in the river, and out of her sight. He felt vicious. He had taken it for granted that she would come in, for he had gone to such trouble to borrow the swim suit at The King's Wench, had planned the swim, together, then that they should lie side by side, in the sun. He had been utterly sure of conquest, had preened himself to impress her, and she'd shouted, "No!"

He'd teach her. Leave her alone for a bit. Creep up from behind and scare her. Or throw stones at her, so she didn't know their source.

Who did she think she was?

At twenty minutes past two that Sunday Galloway drew into Merrivale Square. Sergeant Kell was already outside Number 32 standing next to a police car driver, for word had come

of new evidence from a neighbor of the murdered woman.

A dozen or so sightseers were gathered about the doorway of Number 34, and a middle-aged man and woman, with four children clustered about them, were hurrying from the Knightsbridge end, but Galloway's only thought was of the man he had come to see, and, irrepressibly, of Isobel Waring. He simply couldn't get her out of his mind.

A maid, gray-haired, neat, wearing a black dress and a lace cap and starched apron, opened the door of Number 32. Galloway had seen her several times during the investigation. She was expecting them, and invited them in.

"Mr. Cumberlege won't keep you a moment. If you will please wait in here." She opened a door.

It was a morning room, fresh and bright. Books, photographs, water colors, low, modern armchairs which looked about right for a Swiss chalet, a pearl gray carpet—Galloway knew it well, and felt almost envious.

A man came, hurrying, and the door opened almost as soon as the maid had closed it.

"Good afternoon," said Cumberlege, and Galloway introduced himself and Kell.

Cumberlege was tall and dark, with a lean, rangy figure; his blue eyes had a sharpness which made Galloway hope that he had really seen something worth while. "What about a drink, if it's neither too late nor too early. Liqueur? Anything?"

"I wouldn't say No to a beer," Galloway said.

"Good, there's some in ice, I know." Cumberlege pressed a bell-push. "And also for you, sergeant? Good!" The maid came in. "Bring some beer for us all, Maude, will you—off the ice, not out of the cupboard." He nodded, and she went primly off. He motioned to chairs, and then went on briskly: "Sorry I'm late with this news, and I really hope it will help. I've been to Paris. Caught an early plane on Wednesday morning, came back this morning—and believe it or not I hadn't so much as looked at an English paper until this morning. Nasty shock when I saw what had happened next door."

Galloway said: "Yes. I can imagine."

"Well, to get down to cases," Cumberlege went on. "I was leaving at half past six on Wednesday morning. Had just an overnight case, and wanted to start the day well, so I walked to the bus stop. Only a short way from there to Victoria. Just going out, when I saw a chap come from Number 34, pushing a bicycle. Green bicycle, with drop handle bars and dynamo lighting."

He was that one witness in a million! "Sounds like the bicycle we found," said Galloway, his excitement rising fast. "Did you get a good look at him?"

"Fair. He saw me, and seemed a bit startled. I'd gone twenty yards before I began to wonder what he was doing there at that hour of the morning! Pity I didn't wonder a bit more, but"—he shrugged—"that's the worst of believing the lowest in human nature!"

The maid came in, carrying a tray, three black bottles that sparkled, and three pewter tankards.

"Thank you, Maude. Put it down there."

"Yes, sir."

Cumberlege waited until she had put the tray down on a small table by his side, and watched her as she went out. The door closed.

"Between you and me, I know that Daisy, the maid at Number 34, isn't quite as sweet and young as she ought to be. Whenever Mrs. Fyson was away, I knew that Daisy consoled herself well into the evening. Quite honestly, Inspector, I thought that Daisy had gone a bit too far this time, and let a boy friend stay for the night."

"You say you got a good look at the man, sir," Galloway said hopefully. "Can you describe him?"

Cumberlege leaned forward, to pick up a tankard.

"Yes, fairly well, I think," he said. "I don't know that I'm up to you chaps' standard, but his face registered with me all right. Like to pour out for yourself? Now, here goes—"

Galloway sat on the edge of his chair. Kell had his notebook out, now, although he wasn't scribbling shorthand; he was looking hard at Cumberlege. The room was very quiet. Galloway was seeing a picture, in his mind's eye, and it was one he wasn't likely to forget very easily; Cumberlege could use words and had an artist's eye for detail.

"Would you mind repeating that, sir? And will you check your notes, sergeant?"

"Gladly."

"Yes, sir."

"He was a young fellow, in the late twenties I should say," Cumberlege repeated quietly. "About five feet nine, good shoulders, narrow hips, easy moving. He had fair hair. I'm exaggerating, now, but it was rather like a wire brush, a kind of wire suede cleaner brush enlarged several times—very wiry and very wavy." Cumberlege paused, with a glance at Kell, who was taking notes now. "Blue eyes, rather light in shade. Fair complexion. Good forehead, very fair eyebrows, rather short nose with pinched nostrils—in fact, the actual

shape of the nostril is rather thin, has a kind of unfinished look, if you know what I mean."

"Couldn't be clearer," Galloway said, with deep satisfaction.

"Fine. A short upper lip, rather full lower lip but nothing ugly about it. Good, square chin. In fact he was a handsome piece of goods, and it didn't surprise me that he'd won Daisy over. He looked the type who would make a complete fool of a woman, if she didn't know what she was doing. Can't say with any honesty that I saw him as a killer, mind you—just as a chap who'd seized his main chance."

"I know what you mean," said Galloway. "I take it that you're quite sure you would recognize this man if you saw him again?"

"Positive," Cumberlege said. "And believe me I'd be glad to!"

Galloway's heart was beating with that peculiar throbbing note which often came when he sensed crisis. He was too anxious; catching a killer mattered almost too much.

Kell was driving.

Galloway held the radio hand instrument, but hadn't yet switched on and called the Yard. Pity it was Sunday, he reflected; on any other day, he would have been in time for the evening newspapers.

As it was, he felt as if he were nearer a killer than he had been from the beginning of the case.

He called the Yard, and the superintendent on duty didn't waste time, but gave him permission to pass the story on to the press.

Then, gradually, he began to lose the tension and excitement.

How often were men picked up from a facial description, unless they were known? That was the luck he needed: a photograph in the Rogue's Gallery which fitted in with Cumberlege's description. A hell of a job. A fingerprint, even a tiny section of a single finger, would have been easier to check than that; but this had to be checked, anyhow. It was a priority job, and it would happen on a Sunday. He'd use every man he could get, but they might go through the photographs for hours without picking out the right one. The classification system would help. *Men, young, approximate ages 21-31. Fair hair. Blue eyes.* It wouldn't be so difficult.

At half past four, the search was on in earnest.

At a quarter past seven, Galloway was quite sure that there was no official picture of the man whom Cumberlege had described.

He went down to the office. No one

## SO SOON TO DIE (continued)

else was in. He felt hot and hungry and dejected, and knew that it was partly because of Isobel Waring. He wondered where she was, and wondered whether the man who had attacked her was also the killer. The timing and the vicinity of the two crimes were the only possible reasons for thinking so, and that made it a wild guess.

He went downstairs to the canteen, had sausages and eggs, washed them down with beer, lit a cigarette, and stared blankly ahead of him, wishing he could flog his tired mind to some kind of inspiration.

Suddenly, he said aloud: "I know what I'll do. I'll go along and have another talk with the Traberts. Old Rabbit Face raised the first alarm." He finished the warm beer, grimaced, put out his cigarette, and went upstairs.

The Traberts' front window was wide open when Galloway reached Kilner Road, and Trabert's long face, with its rounded chin and the harelip, which gave him the uncanny rabbit appearance, showed between two flaming red geraniums.

"Had any luck?" he asked. "Come in, no point in standing there on the doorstep." He held the door of the flat open, and followed Galloway in. "Or can't you keep away from the place?"

"That's about it," said Galloway. "Good evening, Mrs. Trabert. Sorry to worry you again, but something's cropped up that might help, and we don't want to lose any time." If they had dreamed how sure he was that it was a wasted journey, they would have been astounded. "I can't help feeling that Miss Waring might have known the man—can't see why he should go up to her flat and leave all the others, if he hadn't some special reason. I suppose you haven't seen a man like this visiting her," he went on, almost apologetically. "Youngish chap. Fair, wiry hair, pale blue eyes, good-looking, with pinched nostrils and a short upper lip. Probably about twenty-eight to thirty."

Neither of them answered, but each looked startled.

Galloway felt a flood of new excitement.

"That would be her fiancé's friend, the one who called Friday night," Mrs. Trabert said. "If you ask me, *that's* who she's gone away with for the weekend. A man named—"

"Abbott," her husband burst out. "Abbott's the name."

It was nearly midnight.

Galloway, in his shirtsleeves and at his desk, was dripping sweat. Everything the night had threatened had come about. His tie was loose. His lips looked sticky, although he had a large

tankard of beer at his side. Every paper he touched left greasy-looking fingerprints.

Euston Station had been combed for witnesses; a porter who had waited for the girl to get out of Galloway's car and followed her with another man's luggage had been interviewed; no one had met her at the train. But he remembered which carriage she had entered, and something about the passengers in that row of compartments. He wasn't sure, but thought that he had seen a parson, quite a young chap, in the same compartment.

Galloway studied written reports. *Inspector in Charge of Press Relations*. Photographs of Isobel Waring and a description of Abbott had been distributed to all national newspapers with a request for publication in all editions tomorrow. If required the BBC would broadcast the picture in tomorrow's services; it was too late tonight.

*Birmingham City Police, C.I.D.* Copies of Isobel Waring's photograph had been teletyped to Birmingham, copies rushed out. Officers were now engaged in interviewing all clergymen in the city and suburban area, to find out whether one could be traced who had traveled with Isobel Waring on the train from Euston. All local police were being asked to cooperate. Officers were interviewing members of the train and station staff who might have seen Isobel Waring get off the train, and might have seen whether she was met.

*CJ Division, Metropolitan Police.* No further reports available of the cyclist seen to leave 34 Merrivale Square.

*Fingerprints.* All prints found at 34 Merrivale Square now identified. Quite certain that the murderer had left no prints, not even on the chair which he had used as a weapon; assumption: he had worn gloves.

*Photography Department.* Hundreds of prints of the photograph of Isobel Waring were being rushed to London and Home Counties police stations and all Midland police stations.

The telephone gave a sharp *ting*. Galloway raised his head hopefully. He had put a call through to Ronald Muir, in Chicago; it seemed to be an age coming through.

The telephone went *ting* again, making Galloway jerk his head up. This time it rang in earnest. He took the receiver off.

"Galloway here."

The operator said: "Your call to Mr. Ronald Muir, Chicago, U.S.A." That came out with a flourish—pretended nonchalance. "It was easy, he was at the hotel number—just a mo'—you're through!"

There were some atmospherics, not a great deal.

"Mr. Ronald Muir?"

"Yes, speaking. Did someone say Scotland Yard?"

"Yes, Mr. Muir, this is Scotland Yard of London speaking. Sorry to worry you, but have you a friend named Abbott, Mr. Lester Abbott, now in England?"

"What name?"

"Abbott, A B B—"

"I get it, Abbott. No, I don't know anyone named Abbott—not a friend, anyway. Why?"

Galloway, really frightened for the girl now, told him all that he could.

It was easy to realize how Muir felt, but there was no way to help him. Galloway rang off, weighed down with a sense of foreboding. If they didn't find Abbott soon—

The telephone bell rang again.

"Galloway here," he said.

"Plumley, Birmingham," said a man laconically. "We've found the person who traveled down with that Isobel Waring girl. He's on his way in to see me now. You know more about it, thought you might like to have a talk with him on the telephone."

"I would," said Galloway, fervently. "Nothing I'd like better. Don't be too long."

Early in the afternoon Isobel felt the headache coming on. It wasn't an ordinary headache, but something new, a pain which started at the nape of her neck and seemed to creep slowly towards her forehead and down her neck, until it was difficult to turn her head. It struck at her eyes, too, and made her limbs feel heavy. At the beginning, she put it down to the heat and moved into the shade; but it made no difference, and gradually it grew worse. Abbott had given her some aspirins, and he seemed all right.

At last, Isobel dozed off.

Lionel Amblin looked down on Isobel as she slept. He went down on one knee and studied her. In her relief from pain she looked better, but not beautiful, as she had been.

He could kill her, now.

He could drown her, by holding her face downwards in the river. She would take water into her lungs, and the only bruises would be the old ones.

In a way, he wished it could be done, now—safely. But he knew quite well that the time hadn't come, and that this was not the place. He must hide her body so that she wasn't found for a long time—days certainly, weeks preferably. He could read about it in Rio or Buenos Aires!

Her coat was off, and her arms were bare, long, slim, tanned. Her hands lay

limp. She was quite helpless. He was thinking very fast, and told himself that he must take her back to the inn, where she could stay in her room until night. During the night he could take her away. During the night he could kill her. He felt a choking kind of excitement; the same kind of thing that Galloway had felt when he believed that he was getting somewhere at last. He felt again that power of life and death, that gloating satisfaction.

Must he wait? Need they go back to the inn?

He couldn't make up his mind; and his own nerves quivered.

Sam Grigson at the inn wouldn't squeal, even if the police began asking him questions. The little old woman who had seen them last night was half blind, so she wouldn't offer any danger. No one else had seen Isobel, except to catch a glimpse as they had left the inn and walked to the little jetty; and that would have been a back view.

That choky feeling came.

He knew it well; it was always the same. His heart raced with a kind of excitement that couldn't be stifled. A moment was near. He had only to move a few yards, and to bend down, and to kill—

This was the time to arrange a vanishing trick, so that the police couldn't find the body. He had a few morphia tablets in his pocket. He could dope her, lift her into the boat and row back to the landing stage, bring the car close, and carry her into it. She could sit at the back, as if asleep, while he drove to whatever spot he decided to 'lose' her. He could take a spade from the inn—

He stood up, putting a hand to his pocket.

He checked his movements, and new tension came as he stared at Isobel.

He'd forgotten one vital thing.

There must be proof that she was dead.

The idea of hiding the body was out, and with it, much that he had planned. Much—almost everything! In that one second, Amblin became sickeningly and furiously angry—with Isobel, with everything and everyone but himself. His upper lip was a taut, thin line, and his eyes were narrowed so that their blueness hardly showed.

He would have to give Ridler proof before he could collect his reward. Only when "they" saw her dead, or read of her death in the newspapers, would they be satisfied.

He began to sweat, and it wasn't because of the heat.

He might have made a noose for his own neck.

Wait a minute—

All he had to do was finish her off, let the news break, and then wait at his rooms until he heard from Ridler.

Isobel's body quivered with some nervous reaction; then she lay still. By killing her, he could win his safety; by killing her the wrong way, he could get himself hanged. She was a nervous wreck already, he could see that.

Why kill her by any of the usual ways? Why make it evident that it was murder?

Could he frighten her to death?

He had to get her back to the pub, and another fright like last night—

When Isobel came round, she still had the headache. When they were at the

landing stage, Amblin gave her another "aspirin." In fact, it was a morphia tablet, and she'd sleep heavily. When she came round, she'd be scared all right.

Could he frighten her so that she died?

There was one thing that Amblin felt was secure—his room at Mrs. Evans'. He had twice discovered his landlady snooping, and two icy interviews had put an end to all that.

Or so he believed.

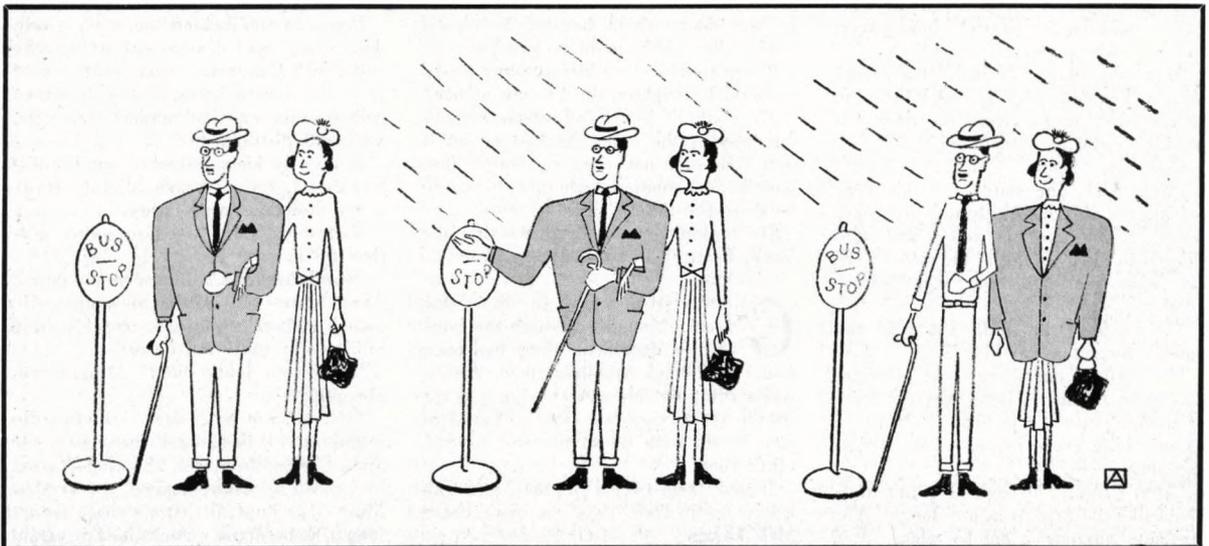
That Sunday there was an emergency at the Evans house, and Mrs. Evans found herself with one more body than she had available beds—but she was sure Amblin would not be back until the next day.

Why shouldn't she borrow the room?

The temptation was strong, because it was for the son of family friends; and he was a prospective husband for her Susan.

His name was Arthur, and inevitably he was allotted the bedroom for the night. Susan escorted him.

A little later, flushing hotly, she pulled herself free from Arthur and went into her own room. She closed the door, making very little sound. Arthur licked his lips, and looked round Amblin's room, but he wasn't interested in anything but Susan. Soon he began to wonder whether she was asleep. He wanted to go and find out, but hadn't the nerve. His desire made him desperately thirsty, too. He crept onto the landing, but saw no light under Susan's door. He went back into Amblin's room and began to look about for a drink. There was a handbasin, but no glass—must be a glass somewhere. He searched in a cupboard and found some tumblers and cups and saucers, a tin of biscuits, and some sugar. He helped himself to a couple of biscuits.



## SO SOON TO DIE (continued)

Finished, he started to put the things back—and couldn't remember for certain what shelf they had been on. He mustn't put them back in the wrong place, or that would give the game away. He opened the cupboard door wider to find out whether he could see any marks. He did see a few crumbs on the shelf he thought was right. He put everything back and then went back to the chair. As he sat down, he saw an envelope which hadn't been on the floor before; he must have dislodged it.

Several papers were poking out at one end.

Where had *that* come from?

Arthur scowled as he got up. He was feeling tired, now, and the problem of replacing the glass and the biscuits had brought him back to normal. Quite suddenly, he was edgy and ill-tempered, and when he picked up the envelope and the papers fell out, he swore.

He picked them up and saw a photograph of a girl. He glanced at it, quickly—and his ill temper faded. He stood looking down and whistling softly.

Next morning he stared unbelievably at a picture of a girl on the front page of the newspaper. It wasn't just her beauty which made him gape, either.

This was the girl whose photograph was in the cupboard.

He began to read . . .

She was just waking from the drugged sleep.

She did not know where she was. She felt too ill to move, and could only stare at Lester Abbott as he stood and looked down at her. The smile which twisted his thin upper lip made him look ugly.

"Hallo, Isobel," he said, very softly. "So you're awake at last. That's fine; that's just what I wanted. Awake at last."

She said with painful hoarseness: "Where—where—where am I?"

"The same place," he said. "The King's Wench. Remember it? The nice little inn on the bank of the river—the river you wouldn't swim in. Remember?"

She said: "Yes."

Dazed, sick, she stared into his eyes, sensing the difference in him, a difference which echoed in his voice and also showed in his eyes and at his mouth; she saw what she had never seen before: cruelty.

"That's fine," he said. "I'm glad you haven't forgotten anything."

She realized one thing: that his voice was quite English. There wasn't a trace of an American accent in it.

Something made her say, "It—it isn't the same room."

"That's right," he said. "I didn't think you'd like the first room any longer. You see how anxious I am to please you,

sweetheart. It's a room over the boat-house. It's nice and quiet round here, no one within a hundred yards."

He bent down, slowly, and as he came nearer, his face seemed to get larger, and the expression was more frightening, so frightening that Isobel began to quiver.

He put his hands on her shoulders, pressing her against the bed, and then he bent his head and kissed her.

Then she knew.

She caught her breath, and the pain stabbed through her head.

He drew back.

His hands were near her, outstretched, with the fingers crooked, as they would be if he were going to throttle her.

She felt a wave of blackness, then blinding light, before something seemed to snap inside her head.

He picked up a length of rope and tied her wrists together, as she lay on her side. Then he tied her to the bed, by the waist. He took her own white chiffon scarf and wound it round her face; she could breathe but couldn't speak.

He went to a corner opposite the camp bed where she lay. There was a hole and a ladder leading down to the water inlet and the ground floor. He climbed down and stood for a moment in the gloom.

The water came in from a wide opening which faced the thick undergrowth on the far side of the river. There was hardly a ripple. As he grew accustomed to the darkness he could see the oars resting on cross beams, an old life belt rotting on an angle bracket, a few pieces of sailcloth, a tin of petrol, and some old boxes. It was possible to walk right around, on a brick surround, but only where the door opened from the grounds was there plenty of standing room. The ladder from the loft stood there, hidden by the door, which had to be closed before the ladder could be reached.

There couldn't be a better hiding place.

Could he frighten the life out of her?

He couldn't put it off much longer; one way or the other, he had to get it done. He did not even remember that once he had wondered whether she would be more use to him alive.

He couldn't let her live, now that she knew. Perhaps an accident . . . a fire . . .

Galloway sat at a table in the waiting room, skimming through the typewritten document which had been found in Lionel Amblin's room. Arthur was waiting outside after having told the simple truth. Galloway and a squad of men would soon be on the way to Amblin's room.

It took them twenty minutes, and Galloway spent little time on an agitated Mrs. Evans.

There were bound to be fingerprints by the dozen, and there might be other clues, but what he wanted first was a photograph of Amblin.

He found several prints of the same one in an album; one had been taken by a studio for a stage show Lionel Amblin had been in. Mrs. Evans and her daughter vouched for its excellence. He put it in a large envelope, checked to make sure that the fingerprint expert, photographers, and all the others were there and going about their work with a quick, quiet efficiency. Then he went out. He was at Kilner Road in fifteen minutes; five minutes later he had Mrs. Trabert's vehement identification: Amblin was Abbott.

It was barely half past ten when Galloway entered Cumberlege's office in a building in the Strand.

"I've a dozen different photographs here, sir," Galloway said, "and I'd be very glad if you would look through them and tell me whether you've seen any of the men in person."

"Gladly, Inspector," Cumberlege took them, glanced at the first, the second, the third; Amblin's picture was at the bottom of the pile. None of the others had the slightest effect on him; at Amblin's he stopped abruptly, picked the photograph up, looked at Galloway, and said: "I see I have to congratulate you—that's the chap. Have you got him?"

"Not yet," said Galloway, "but I'm on the way."

At half past eleven Galloway entered the offices of the firm of solicitors where Isobel Waring worked. It was a tall, narrow, Victorian building in one of the streets which led from the Strand to the river. Outside, there was all the bustle of London, the noise, the petrol fumes, the gathering warmth of the day.

Lumsden was behind the desk, a tall, spare, bald-headed man with a butterfly collar and a gray tie caught with a gold ring. He wore a black coat and striped trousers and was pink rather than pale, frail and distinguished.

A man by his side looked equally distinguished, but not even slightly frail; it was Ronald Muir's father.

Galloway said: "Good morning, gentlemen."

"Good morning," Lumsden answered. "You know Mr. Muir, of course. He called a short while ago, and I invited him to stay until you came."

"Have you found her?" Muir asked, abruptly.

"No, sir, not yet," said Galloway. He found himself thinking of this man's wife and of her spitefulness. If Isobel Waring had cause to dislike anyone, it was Mrs. Muir. "I'm hopeful that we shall, before long," he went on. "As it is, I'm afraid

that the news I have so far isn't good." Lumsden said slowly, "Oh dear, oh dear."

"What do you mean?" demanded Muir.

Galloway said, "We've identified the man she went to Birmingham with. Mr. Muir—the man who represented himself as your son's friend. The man is wanted for questioning in connection with another charge—one of murder."

Muir said in a strangled voice, "No!"

"I'm sorry, sir."

"Mr. Galloway," said Lumsden, refusing to be hurried even in this new crisis. "I understood on the telephone that you wanted all the information that I could give you about Miss Waring. I needn't say that at this stage it must be regarded as absolutely confidential."

"Of course."

"I have explained to Mr. Muir—" Lumsden began, and then broke off at a tap at the door. He showed mild signs of being annoyed. "I asked not to be disturbed. I do beg your pardon. I—"

He broke off.

"Colonel McKinley, sir," announced a middle-aged woman.

"Oh, yes, I forgot," Lumsden said. "Yes."

McKinley walked in briskly. He was dressed in gray, with a black hat and an umbrella—quite the *beau*. His keen eyes seemed to take in all three of them at once. His gaze settled on Galloway, but he spoke to Lumsden:

"Sorry I'm late, Matthew. I came as soon as I got your message. *Wicked* business." His eyes were hard and bright. "Have you found her?"

Muir said roughly, "She is missing, and was last seen with a murderer."

"With a man wanted for questioning in regard to a most unpleasant murder." Galloway said formally, and was glad to see the effect of the word "unpleasant" on Muir—and on Lumsden as well.

McKinley braced himself and clenched his teeth.

"What fresh information can you give me about Miss Waring, sir?" Galloway asked Lumsden, and produced the dossier. "Do you recognize that?"

Lumsden opened it, put on pince-nez, and took them off.

"Yes," he said. "It is a copy of a confidential report made by an inquiry agent at my request in the—ah—course of establishing Miss Waring's conduct, habits, and associates."

He paused.

The exasperating thing was the slow deliberation of Lumsden's movements, the almost casual way in which his pale, blue-veined hands moved as he put the dossier down and opened a long, foolscap-sized folder.

"Miss Isobel Waring has been a ward

of this office and of this firm for many years," he said, "practically since her infancy. The firm has endeavored, in a variety of ways, to carry out its obligations. I may say that in the early years and, in fact, until a few years ago, four to be precise, when she earned a fair salary, the firm found it necessary to make a contribution to the costs of the young lady's upkeep, for the amount of money left to her by her mother was quite insufficient. Her mother died in—ah—expectation of an inheritance which did not materialize. It was, however, an exceptional case, and Colonel McKinley, who knew the child's mother, also wished to make a wholly voluntary contribution. On Miss Waring's behalf, this generous offer was accepted, and of course neither of us expected that Miss Waring would ever be in a position to—ah—repay."

McKinley said abruptly: "Didn't occur to me."

Muir was drawing at his pipe. He stood by the window, now looking out, now staring at Lumsden. Galloway sat upright in his chair; he felt a feverish desire to make the old solicitor hurry, but knew that nothing would do that.

"As a result of working here, and by one of those mischances which can happen in any—ah—office," he went on, "she discovered the truth about her financial position. She realized that she was indebted to me—I should say to the firm—for part of her income. It greatly distressed her. As a young woman of natural pride, as distinct from conceit, she was anxious to be able to support herself. I did nothing to discourage her, and—"

Muir burst out: "Is there any reason for anyone wanting her dead? That's what we want to know."

Lumsden said very slowly, "Yes, I am afraid there is."

Almost for the first time since he had entered the office, Galloway's mind was wrenched from thought of what was happening outside.

Muir exclaimed, "What?"

"Are you quite sure?" the Colonel asked briskly.

"I am quite sure," said Lumsden, with a dignified nod. "It has transpired, and I should say that I was not aware of it until a very few days ago—that Mrs. Waring's expectations were, after all, justified. She did not come into the large inheritance which she expected, but it has passed to her daughter. At the age of twenty-five Miss Isobel Waring will inherit a very large sum, running into hundreds of thousands of pounds. I have made the closest possible examination of the will involved. Miss Waring will reach her twenty-fifth birthday next Sunday, and on that day she comes into the inheritance, of which at the moment she

knows nothing. The money will be hers in its entirety, without condition. Should she die before she is twenty-five, however, the money will go, also without condition, to another branch of the family."

Galloway said abruptly, almost fiercely: "Does that other branch know about the will?"

"Yes."

"Who will inherit?"

Lumsden didn't answer. He looked not only sad but tired, and very old. He lowered his hands and placed them on the desk, the long, knuckly fingers intertwin- ing. It was utterly silent in the office except for Muir's labored breathing; he seemed to be more affected than Galloway. The Colonel was a motionless figure, almost jaunty, with the umbrella in his right hand.

"I cannot see—" began Lumsden, speaking as if it hurt him, "that I would be justified in withholding the name from you. However—"

There was a sharp tap at the door, and it opened.

"I'm very sorry, sir," said the middle-aged woman, "but there is an urgent call from Scotland Yard for Detective-Inspector Galloway."

Lionel Amblin left the boathouse and walked slowly down to the river. He was tense and edgy. As it was silent in the boathouse, so, but for the sounds of the countryside, it was silent here. His own movements were clearly audible, even the slight jingle of coins in his pocket.

The sun was high; it was nearly eleven o'clock.

He turned and looked at the boathouse and the jetty, where the two little boats were tied up. The thatched roof was breaking in places and looked tinder-dry; it would burn easily; a spark would set it afire.

He moistened his lips.

His thoughts went swiftly from one thing to another; he had no peace, now, no satisfaction, except in the moments when he could impose his will upon Isobel.

He heard a car draw up, and it seemed a long way off, although it was only a hundred yards or so behind him. A cophage led the inn from this spot, and a path led from it to the boathouse. He walked along the bank until he reached a spot from which he could see the inn through the trees. That thatched roof also looked tinder-dry—easy to fire. Why, the sun on a piece of glass in that thatch would start it.

The inn, with its brown color and the crooked beams in the walls which looked as if they might fall down, was beautiful against the clear blue of the sky.

## SO SOON TO DIE (continued)

He saw a movement among the trees. Something bright blue was moving toward him. He went rigid, hands thrust deep into his pocket. He didn't want to talk to anyone then; he had his one problem, and it obsessed him. He stared at the bright blue, knowing who it was: Sam Grigson's daughter.

Why was she coming here? Was she going to meet anyone? *Was she heading for the boathouse?*

Sweat was greasy on Amblin's forehead as he broke from cover. He was only twenty yards away from the girl, a pretty, golden-haired little thing, who would have quite a figure in a year or two.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, and her expression changed. She stood absolutely still, arms raised, as if to fend him off.

"What—what do you want?"

She started to speak, failed, and then tried again:

"Pa—Mr. Grigson—sent me, he—" she paused, staring at him, and he knew that his expression frightened her. The little fool. He could put his hands round her neck and twist and kill her, and . . .

"What for?" he demanded.

"He said—he said, would you go and see him, if you can spare a minute."

"No! Tell him—" Amblin gulped, fought for self-control and won it. "Tell him I'm sorry. I've a bad headache and want to rest."

"Well, all right. I'll tell Pa," she said. "He wants to know if there's any message for the police?"

Amblin just stared at her, his mind emptied by the shock of that last word; then he made himself move, and say: "Is there what?"

"I'm only passing on what Pa said. Could you come and see him, and if you don't want to, have you any message for the police?"

"Why—" Amblin began, and then licked his lips. "Why should I have?" He took his cigarette from his mouth and dropped it, then trod it out, grinding it into the earth. "Are they—here?"

"They're talking to him now."

"Did he—did he say I was here?"

The girl said: "I don't know." She backed away a pace, as if scared again. "He saw the car drive up, and shouted for me. That's the message he sent. Have—have you any message for 'em?"

Amblin said huskily: "No. No, I haven't. Listen!" He shot out his arm, and grabbed the girl's shoulder.

"Go back, and if the police ask you anything, say I wasn't here, understand? Say you didn't see anyone. Come and let me know when they've gone. Listen, I'll—I'll see you right if you do that. Here's a quid to go on with." He took out his wallet, and his fingers were not

steady as he snatched at a pound note. The girl was at arm's length, backing away, and for a moment it looked as if she wouldn't wait for the money. "Take it!" he said harshly. "Take it!"

She took the note, turned, and began to run back toward the copse and the inn. Her footsteps sounded loud and urgent. He followed, slowly, and kept looking back at the boathouse. At a spot halfway between the river and the road he could see the yard in front of The King's Wench; the police car was drawn up at one side. Its radio antennae gleamed in the sun, as did the sign which said "Police."

The footsteps faded.

The sound of voices traveled to Amblin, but he could not tell who was speaking.

Sam—Sam and the police?

Why had they come?

A door slammed; a second closed, more quietly. The car engine started up with a harsh squeal of the self-starter, and the engine roared. As it settled down, there was the sound of another man's voice; then the car moved off.

Amblin was sweating all over and felt weak with relief. It had been a false alarm. If it hadn't been for that fool message, he needn't have been scared. He'd tell Sam a thing or two, but now he had to get back to the boathouse. He had to finish the job quickly; he couldn't wait for refinements. That was a pity.

The car was near the boathouse; he'd get Isobel away now, and . . .

What about that dry roof? What about that fire?

The place would blaze up in no time; the smoke would suffocate her, even if she wasn't burned. There was that tin of petrol in the back of the car—no! That would make it appear like arson. Just a match would be enough, some dried sticks of wood, leaves even, and a match—all in the right place.

He turned to hurry towards the boathouse.

He was only ten yards away when he heard a whistle, and that was one he would never mistake: Sam Grigson's. Sam could put his fingers to his lips and whistle loudly enough to sound across the English Channel. Amblin stopped in his tracks and looked round. Sam was hurrying towards him, carrying something which at a distance looked like a stick. He beckoned, Amblin moved slowly towards him. Sam's short, lean figure was very nimble, and he came fast.

The stick was a gun, a small rifle.

Amblin stood still.

Sam drew within a few yards of him and stopped. He was an ugly little man with a nasty expression; he had been inside for three years for robbery. If the

police found out what Amblin knew about him, he would go back there for a long time, most of the rest of his life.

"What's the matter with you?" Amblin demanded.

Sam held the rifle, a small bore used for shooting rabbits and game, in both sinewy hands and kept his distance.

"You're going to clear out of this place," he said. "Take your bit of stuff and scram. Get me?"

"I'll break your ruddy neck! Who do you think—"

Sam's hold was very tight on the gun.

"I'm talking to you, Mr. Murdering Abel, Amblin, Abbott, whatever your real name is. The police are after you for bashing a woman in London, and I'm not giving shelter to any murderer. You lousy swab, if I'd known—"

Amblin stretched out a hand pleadingly. "Be a sport, Sam. I—I've always treated you all right. Give me a bit more information, will you? Did they—did they have a picture of me?"

"No, just the girl," Sam didn't relax. "They knew what you looked like, though, and said that a picture would be coming s'afternoon. Listen, Abel, Amblin, Abbott, they're after you. The dragnet's out. If you want to dodge it, you'd better act fast."

Amblin moistened his dry lips.

"All right," he muttered. "Give me time to tell my girl."

He went toward the boathouse quickly. The significant thing was that the police would soon have his photograph, and they already connected him with the Merivale Square job. He had to get out of the country in a hurry, and there was just one hope of that.

With Isobel Waring dead he could collect.

If he fired the boathouse now, though, Sam might come in time to get the girl out. He couldn't do it that way. He raised his hands, the fingers crooked. He felt the suffocating beat of his heart which always came when such moments as this were imminent. He knew exactly what he had to do: strangle her, carry her to the car, sit her in the back, dodge the police until night, then get her to a place where he could dump her.

Amblin opened the door of the boathouse and went in.

A little earlier, Isobel was struggling to sit up, but couldn't. Her head ached dully, but without the frightening intensity of the previous day. She was calmer face to face with death, no longer with the unknown horror.

She was sure that Abbott had been at Kilner Road, when this nightmare had begun.

She must—*must* get away. If she could only shout . . .

She must think, plan, scheme, quickly. She bit at the scarf, but it was no use. The only sound she could make would not travel beyond the four walls. She heaved her body up on the bed, and it moved a little, but the rope twisted, and she only hurt her wrists.

She heard a sound which was different from any she had heard before—a splashing, beneath her. Then, something bumped, and the floor shook a little. Then all went quiet, and she heard a man's rough voice from afar off. Next, came creaking.

Her heart began to thump.

Was he coming? Was this the end?

There was more creaking, and the noises seemed to draw nearer, not loud, but stealthy. They came from the corner which she could see. If this were he, would he come up there, would he come so stealthily?

A girl's head appeared.

Isobel raised her head and stared toward the corner, at the fair hair of the girl and a pair of startled eyes. Isobel gave a little groan and let her head fall back.

She heard more creaking noises; the uneven floor shook a little, and a voice came clearly but pitched on a very low key:

"Are you—are you all right?"

She couldn't answer, just tried to raise her head again.

"Are you—" the girl began, and then stopped. "Caw!" she breathed. "You've got something round your mouth! You—" she broke off, choking on her words.

She turned round abruptly. Obviously she knew the room well, for she went straight to an old sideboard. She came hurrying back with a pair of scissors, the points looking evilly sharp. She cut desperately at the ropes round Isobel's wrists.

"I'll—I'll try to undo that; might cut your face if I—if I use the scissors." She put them down, and plucked at strands in the scarf. Isobel felt her arms fall limply by her side. They didn't hurt, but had slight pins and needles, running up and down. Hope and fear fought in her, and despair, as the girl plucked uselessly at the knot.

"I can't—"

She broke off, raised her head, and then breathed: "Listen!"

In the utter silence of the boathouse they heard the sound of footsteps—one man, approaching. They came slowly at first, and then they seemed to come more quickly, briskly.

"He's—coming," the girl in blue almost screamed. "Get up, get off that bed, get downstairs!" She started to pluck at Isobel's shoulders, trying to drag her off the bed. The footsteps drew nearer.

Isobel swung her legs, touched the floor, and then stood up. The girl supported her as far as the hole in the floor and the ladder which led to the ground level and the water. She could hear it lapping. She could hear his footsteps, too.

"Please, stay here," she breathed to the girl. "Stay here." She put her right leg through the hole to touch the first tread. Clutching the handrail, she went down a step at a time, and with each step, Amblin drew nearer. Isobel's movements seemed to be an echo of the sounds he made. He was only just outside. She reached the floor as the door began to open, and brighter daylight flooded in.

Amblin's shadow was flung across the floor to the water and a boat which hadn't been there before.

He saw it, and missed a step, before he looked toward the top of the ladder.

Isobel saw the shadow as his hands were raised, as if in surprise—the shadow of the hands which had nearly strangled her. He stepped forward, staring at the boat. If he so much as glanced round now he would see her, and once he saw her—

He glanced round.

She saw his eyes widen, saw the glint in them, saw him swing his body toward her. She knew the awful certainty of death, and yet leapt forward, moving before he did. She picked up the old petrol can and flung it at him, and he dodged and lost his balance. She ran at him and struck with the strength of despair. She kicked and felt her shoe crack against his shin. She swayed; he staggered, off his balance, near the edge

of the water. She gave him another push, and saw him falling, arms and legs waving. She snatched at the handle of the door and opened it wide. He fell between two boats and splashed into the water. A sheet of water rose up and drenched her from the waist down—and its splash pushed the door to.

It was suddenly dark.

Gasping, Isobel snatched at the handle, missed, clutched it, and then pulled the door open. She heard Abbott splashing. She reached the broad daylight of the river bank, and the brightness struck at her like a sword. She steadied herself, saw the path leading towards the trees and, beyond it, the inn. She started to run. She didn't look behind her, but kept staggering; once she nearly fell. She did not know whether he was coming or not, she only knew that she had to get to the inn, to the other people. She had to have help.

She kicked against the root of a tree, and went sprawling.

"Oh, no, no," she gasped. "No!"

She tried to get up, but slipped again. She looked behind her—and there he was, coming out of the boathouse, running. Water streamed from him, like melting armor. The sun shone on his fair hair and made it look like gold. He was moving very fast. His mouth was slack, and she could see his teeth. She could almost feel the pressure of his hands.

She picked herself up.

Just ahead, the path beckoned. The trees offered some kind of sanctuary, but to her they were a long way off, and out of reach. Yet she ran, able only to call out in a helpless, pathetic voice,



"Mr. Mahon, do you recall seeing my scout knife in the operating room? I seem to have mislaid it somewhere."

## SO SOON TO DIE (continued)

sounds more like prayer than like a cry.

Abbott's footsteps were closer behind her.

She saw his shadow, alongside hers.

"No, no, please, no," she sobbed.

Then she heard a sound which was quite new, quite different; it seemed to be part of another world. It was a sharp crack, clear and explosive. She didn't see where it came from, and it did nothing to ease her fears. There was just that shadow, by her side, and the sound of Abbott's breathing close behind her, and the fear of the touch of his hands.

She heard Abbott give a funny kind of gasp, and suddenly the shadow wasn't there. He wasn't close behind her any more. She went running on, no longer sobbing, hardly aware of what she was doing. Then she felt her head reeling, felt herself slow down, and slowly crumple up.

She lost consciousness.

Ten yards away, Sam Grigson stood with the gun at his shoulder, looking at the man he had shot. Lester Abbott was on his knees and couldn't get up; two bullets had caught him in the leg, and blood showed at his instep from one of the wounds. He knelt with both arms stretched out in a kind of supplication.

"Sam--Sam, don't," he croaked. "Don't, Sam."

Alice came rushing out of the boat-house, her blue dress gay in the sun. She ran as fast as she could, but gave Amblin a wide berth. He was still kneeling there, pleading silently, with the muzzle of the gun steady as it could be, and pointing between the eyes.

Alice drew close to her father.

"Go phone the police," said Sam. "Get a move on. Never mind her, just get the police."

Alice ran on.

"Sam," begged Amblin. "Don't shoot, Sam."

Galloway leaned across the desk in Lumsden's office and spoke into the telephone. He was acutely conscious of the gaze of the three men, especially the faint disapproval in the solicitor's.

"Galloway speaking," he said.

"Sergeant Kell would like a word with you, sir."

"Yes, put him on," Kell wouldn't waste time. Galloway had to wait for several seconds, and he saw Muir fidgeting. McKinley shifting the position of his umbrella, and Lumsden sitting there, quite still.

"You there, Jeff?" Kell sounded excited.

"Yes."

"We've got 'em both, girl's okay, and Amblin will live to hang!"

The words came out with a rush, and

were almost more than Galloway could take in; his expression didn't change, for he had schooled himself so, but his voice had a shocked sound.

"Give me that again, will you?"

"We've got 'em both; how do you like that?" Kell repeated, more calmly. "The girl's okay—shock and all that, but not injured. Amblin's been shot in the legs."

"All right," said Galloway, quietly. "Thanks, sergeant."

He rang off, and was even more conscious of the tense gaze of all three men. He spoke in the same quiet voice: "I'm sorry, gentlemen. Now, Mr. Lumsden, will you continue, please? You were about to divulge the name of the person or persons who would inherit this fortune if Miss Waring were to die before her twenty-fifth birthday."

Lumsden said: "That is true," and looked at McKinley.

The Colonel stood up. His eyes were very bright, and his grasp on the curved handle of the umbrella was very tight.

"Matthew," he said. "I am fully aware of the obligations placed upon you by the law, but I question whether you need make this disclosure at this stage of the proceedings."

Lumsden said very slowly, brokenly: "I understand exactly what you mean, and I am greatly distressed, but I really don't see that I can take any other course. Here is a copy of the dossier which was prepared, at your request, by a private inquiry agent whom we employed. I can well imagine that you hoped to find some weakness in Miss Waring's legal claim, but you were unsuccessful. You are the second cousin of Miss Waring and would inherit the fortune in the event of her death."

Colonel McKinley stood absolutely still.

So it was over, Galloway thought; all except the shouting. McKinley caught, Amblin caught, the girl . . .

He heard footsteps in the outer office.

A woman protested, and the door was opened violently. A tall, rugged-looking man strode in, gray eyes red-rimmed and tired but very bright, his massive body moving with great ease.

Silence; then:

"Ron!" cried Muir, and rushed swiftly. "Oh, my boy."

Ronald Muir said: "Dad, is there any news? Which is the Yard man? Is there any news of Isobel?"

So Galloway told him.

Ronald Muir walked along Kilner Road about three months later, aware that most of the windows hid someone looking at him. He didn't mind. Isobel didn't, so why should he. They'd talked about her moving, but she'd preferred to stay, because within

a few weeks of the trial they would leave for the United States, for at least five years in a new world. He was thinking about that, and told himself that it was exactly what Isobel needed: a complete change of environment. Not that there seemed much the matter with her, for she seemed to have shaken everything off very well.

Even the trials.

Her part was done, her evidence given; the second case was over, barring the jury's verdict and the judge's sentence. It was the second case simply because Amblin had already been tried and found guilty of the charge of murdering Mrs. Fyson.

The Colonel had been tried on a charge of inciting to murder.

No one would ever know why he had exerted himself to be so friendly towards Isobel, unless it had been to make him appear the last person to wish her harm.

Ronald Muir found himself musing on the work of the police. He had been in court and heard all the evidence, had followed the painstaking inquiries which the police had made and had been fascinated by the way in which they had traced the man whom Amblin had met in the Strand Hotel. In court, each step had seemed the inevitable consequence of the one before, but starting from scratch, as it were, the Yard had done a magnificent job. The man Galloway, who looked so dull, had given his evidence in such a way that no one could have challenged the verdict—brilliant, in its way.

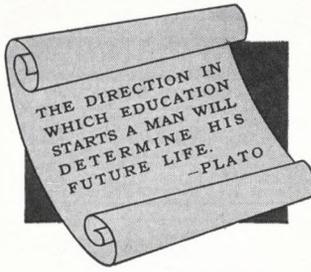
He had dug deep, to find that Colonel McKinley had been heavily in debt for years, living on mortgages and loans to the day of his inheritance. Among his creditors had been a ruthless man, who squeezed the Colonel dry, threatened him with the disgrace of bankruptcy, put the thought of murder into his mind, put the Colonel in touch with crooks—like the one who had been with Amblin in the Strand Hotel.

Just one thing had come out during the Colonel's trial which Isobel didn't yet know about. Ron Muir hoped that she need never know. It went back almost to the beginning, to the day the man pointed out Isobel to Amblin, Colonel McKinley had been walking with Isobel so that she could be identified with certainty and so that there would be no possibility of a mistake.

Ron reached Number 49.

He saw the top window open, and Isobel lean out; she was in a neighbor's flat. She waved eagerly, then disappeared inside. He had another golden moment to remember, and there were so many more to come.

THE END



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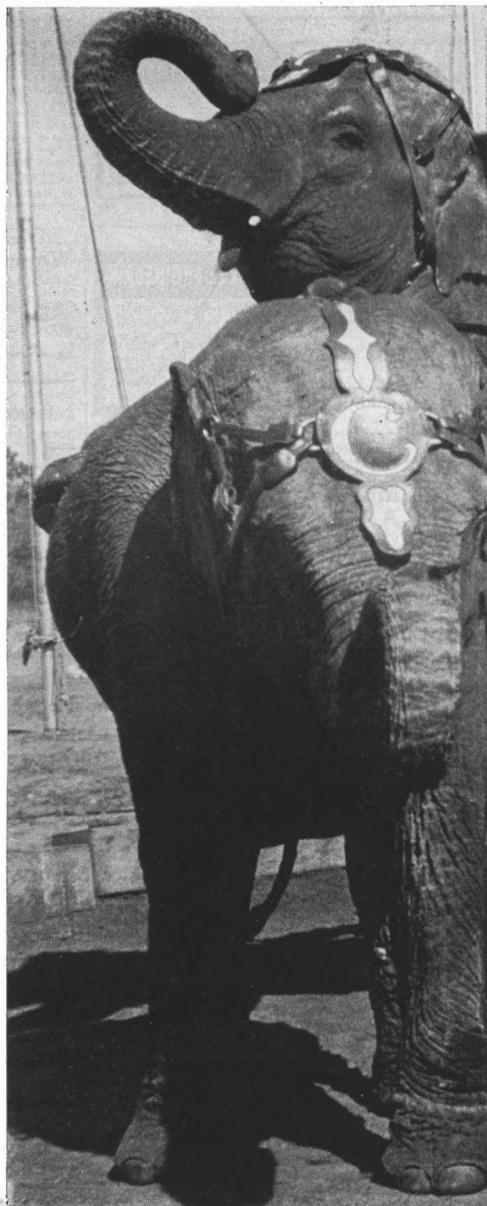
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# Big Top's Royal Family

They're Walt Disney's choice for Disneyland's circus—the death-defying Cristianis, who, for years, have kept audiences gasping at tricks nobody else dares try

**FORMER TRAPEZE ARTIST, acrobat, and contortionist, Mama Cristiani still goes on the road with the family, keeps them strong with ground raw beefsteak. Like his famous father and grandfather, Papa started his circus in Italy. He had already toured Europe, become a medal-winning sensation in Paris before John Ringling saw him.**



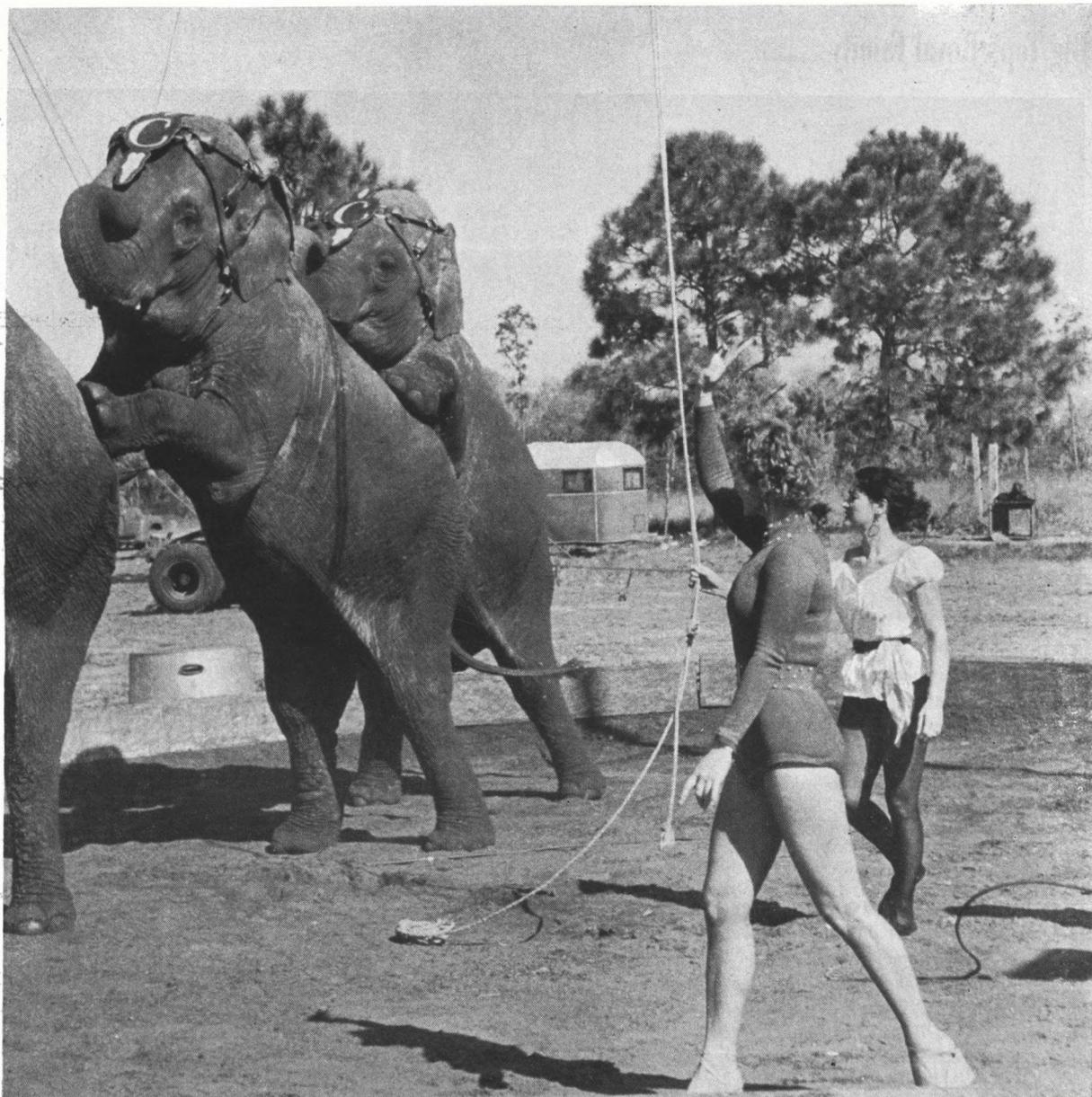
**BY HARRIET LA BARRE**

PHOTOS BY GEORGE HEYER—PIX

**I**n the brass band the drums begin to roll, and into the glitter and tanbark of the three-ring circus come fast-trotting, magnificent circus horses carrying lovely ballerinas poised on tiptoe.

Before you know it, the three rings are alive with acrobats of breathtaking skill, top-hatted animal trainers, and trapeze artists floating through the air.

What's so strange about this is that it's all one family—the famous and incomparable Cristianis. The blonde girl riding bareback is the daughter of the acrobat you see spinning like a dervish in



**FOURTH GENERATION** at work—Papa's daughter-in-law Marion and daughter Corky train elephants at their Sarasota, Florida, winter quarters, usually back up commands with a four-foot stick topped with an iron hook. After acrobatic, trapeze, and bareback-riding practice, they relax in separate homes. The Cristianis have fourteen houses, in the \$20,000 class, in Sarasota. The families now eat individually (except when on tour), and all own cars, mostly sporty convertibles.

dizzy somersaults. The tumbler dropping through hoops of fire is the brother of the pretty girl high on the swaying trapeze. In the troupe, at one show or another, are thirty-two Cristianis—nieces, cousins, sons, brothers, nephews, sisters.

To Walt Disney, it looks as though the Cristianis Circus is exactly what he wants for Disneyland, his mammoth new amusement park in Anaheim, California. For, through five generations, the Cristianis have been creating and perfecting dangerous stunts no one else can match. And they are no streamlined Ziegfeld Fol-

lies circus, but a real, traditional one.

The whole thing started with Papa Cristianis's grandfather, who left his job as blacksmith to the King of Italy to join the circus. In Europe, where Papa's twenty-two brothers and sisters have all been in the circus business, "Cristiani" has come to *mean* circus.

Way before Walt Disney, John Ringling spotted Papa's family troupe in Belgium; he brought it here in 1934. By 1950, the expanding Cristianis family again started its own circus, which now gives them a net income of up to \$150,000 a year.

At family discussions around the kitchen table in Papa's \$32,000 Sarasota, Florida, ranch house are born a daredevil trapeze act, a thrilling bareback trick. On one such evening, third son Lucio talked and showed diagrams for hours before winning permission to perfect his famous three-horse "suicide" trick.

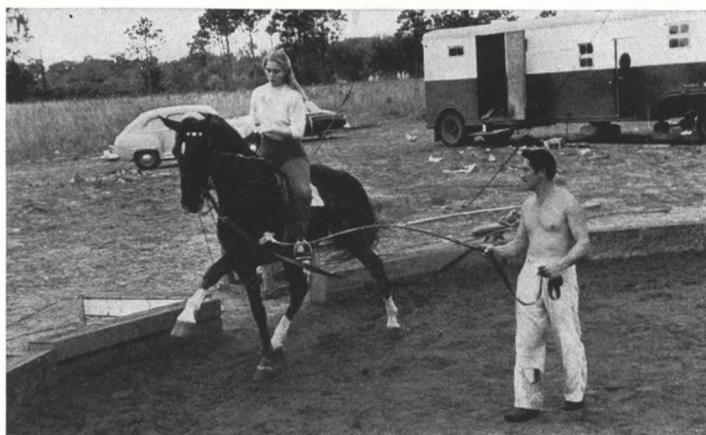
Papa and Mama still run the whole show, though now in their seventies. The Cristianis like Papa at the helm. "It's why we never had a fatal injury in the family. Papa won't let us perform a trick unless we're positive we can do it."

## Big Top's Royal Family (continued)



**THIS "SUICIDE" ACT** took three years to develop, was filmed at friend Leo Carrillo's California ranch. From horses, three Cristianis somersault through hoops, land one place behind. Lucio (center), the only man ever to somersault from a first horse to a third successfully, won medals in Paris and London for the feat, which still tenses the family. Even routine acts carry danger, since a horse, though perfectly trained, can stumble on a pebble, destroying split-second timing.

**FIFTH GENERATION**—Antoinette practices a riding act on a dancing horse while her father, Papa's second son and the family's horse trainer, guides her. Pretty, nineteen-year-old "Tony," like all of the Cristianis boys and girls, began her circus training by studying ballet, which Papa considers basic. On the road, she and her parents live in air-conditioned comfort in the \$5,000 trailer attached to their car.



**TWO YOUNG CRISTIANIS** warm up for some acrobatics with their elders. In the troupe are seventeen grandchildren and a smattering of cousins. At left is a nylon trampoline (springboard) for making a lively entrance onto a stage, at center a pedestal for jumping (beloved of the ten-year-olds) and a teeterboard. Winters, most of the youngsters attend boarding school, but some perform during vacations.

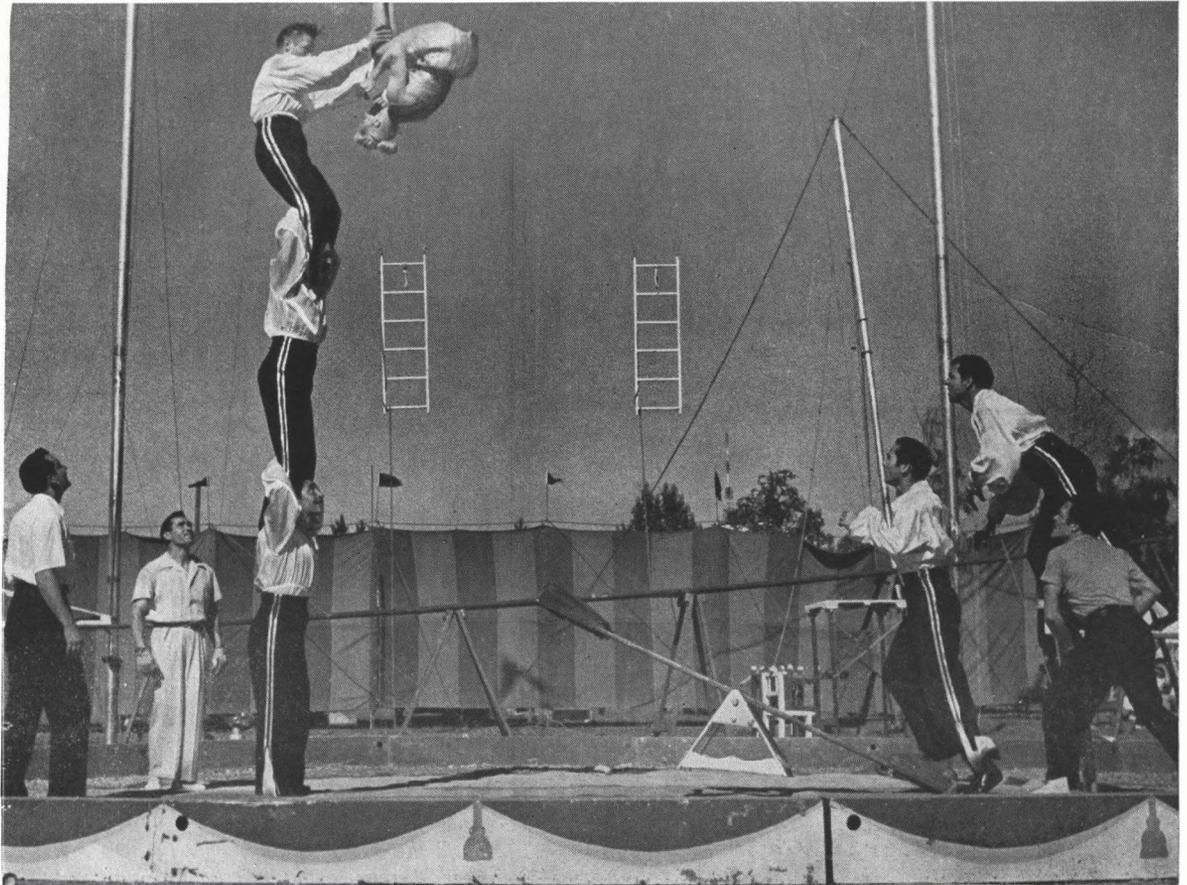


**FOUR-YEAR-OLD LIVIO** bones up on balance with Uncle Belmonte. Livio's godfather is author Paul Gallico, whose meeting with the Cristianis led to the story on which the carnival movie, "Lili," was based.



**CHITA** held friendly little Livio, her son, tightly after he tried to shake hands with a particularly dangerous bear. Papa's oldest daughter, Chita annually does an acrobatic act at New York's The Latin Quarter.

**THE DIFFICULT "SOMERSAULT** four high to the shoulders" stuns audiences. Twenty-eight-year-old Ortans is catapulted into the air, does a triple somersault before landing on brother Lucio's shoulders. In the original trick, Ortans landed sitting in a chair, but the act was revised because the shock always knocked her unconscious.



## Poker at Papa's, homemade music, a \$5,000-a-day tab

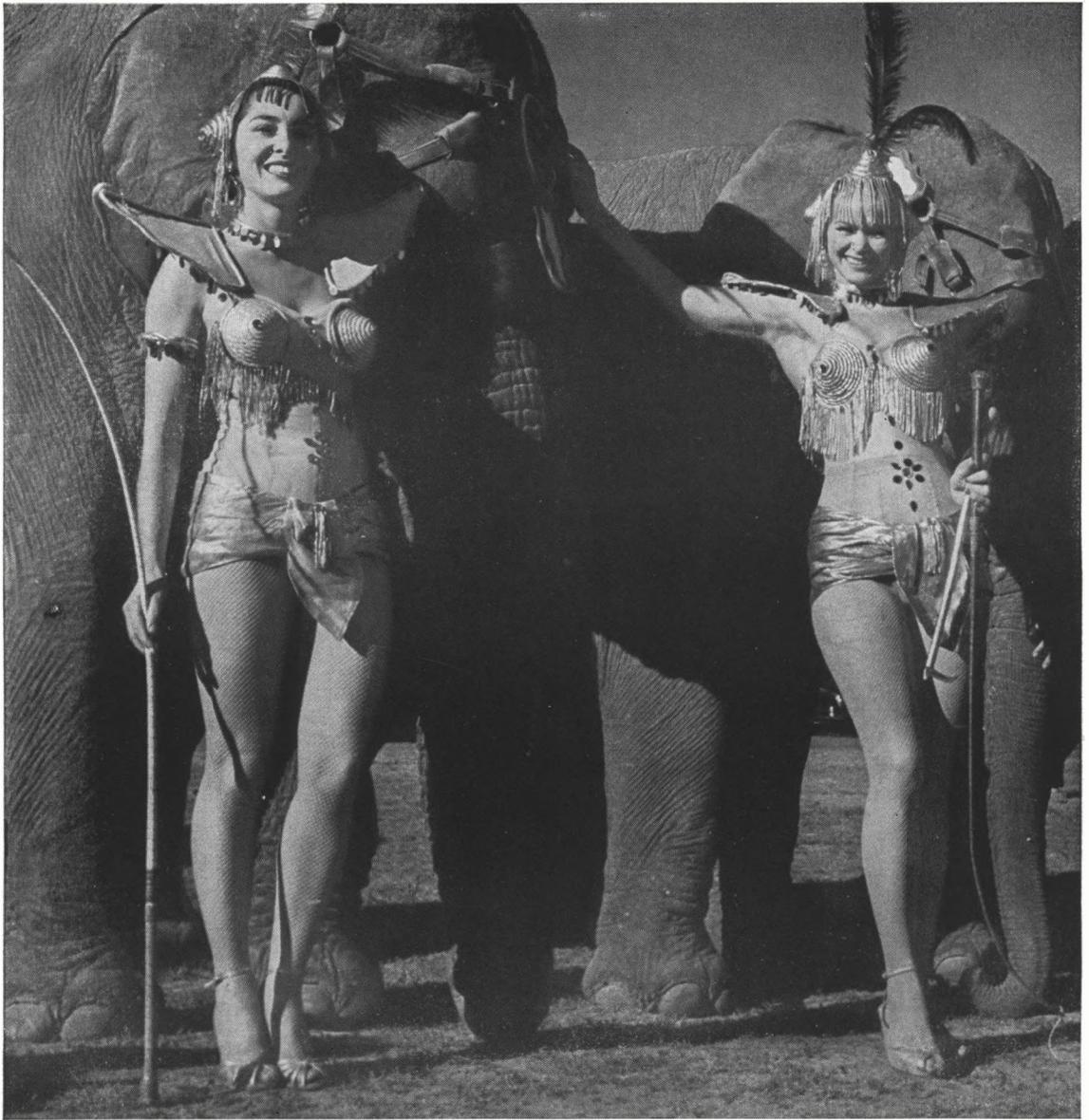


**BEFORE THE NIGHTLY POKER GAME,** *Lucio gives nephew Ray Anthony a token sip of beer. Papa Cristiano, who trains most of the children, began getting Ray Anthony used to balance and height when he was only four months old. Papa also oversees his sons' management of the circus, which costs \$5,000 a day to run. Sponsored by groups like the Shriners and Masons, the circus works indoors, has none of the old worries about being stranded. So far, the family thinks it has played just about every U.S. town of over 10,000 people at least four times. But as Disneyland's circus, they will move around less.*

**THE DRINK** *that Papa says cured his stomach pains is half a glass of milk combined with half a glass of Italian brandy. He's in the kitchen of his Sarasota four-bedroom house with two baths, maid's quarters, and two-car garage. In more precarious days, Papa's circus was destroyed by storms twice in one year, once in Messina, once on the outskirts of Milan. With the rebuilt remnants he began his worldwide tour. "One of my babies was born in Morocco," Mama says, "one in France, one in Spain, several in Italy." She and Papa became U.S. citizens in 1945.*



**LUCIO** *gets pensive with his guitar while one of the Cristianis' numerous friends listens approvingly. From childhood, all the Cristianis sons were taught to play the violin, saxophone, trumpet, concertina, and guitar. A music teacher and a tutor traveled with the family so that the children's schooling would not be neglected. Two of the girls, Corky and Chita, can design clothes. They buy material and, with the whole family's help in cutting and sewing, completely outfit the circus with costumes for only \$30,000 a year, thereby saving an estimated \$60,000 a year.*



**TRYING NOT TO SHIVER** in the thirty-degree temperature of Fairbanks, Alaska, Cristiani elephant girls manage warm smiles. On this trip, Mama, used to facing foreign foods, fed the family moose meat "browned in oil and butter, and then simmered slowly with red wine and garlic."

**ELEPHANTS,** here held by Corky and Marion, intrigue the Cristiani children. Oldest son Oscar, still a brilliant acrobat at the age of forty-eight and grandfather of Ray Anthony, points out the way Marion (right), his wife, holds the elephant quiet.





*Money may not grow on trees, but there are magic ways to make your dollars go a lot further. What's more, you won't have to skimp and save or give up your pet extravagances to—*

# Live Better for Less!

**BY HARRY HENDERSON**

**I**f you are a typical American with a median family income, \$5,330 a year according to the latest U.S. government figures, you are wasting between \$500 and \$1,000 a year because you often can't tell the difference between a dime and a dollar. If your income is higher than the median, you're not any smarter. You are simply wasting more money—say, between \$1,000 and \$2,000 in the \$10,000 a year class.

We Americans take pride in being the best-educated, best-paid, most literate,

cleanest, and most efficient people on earth, but we often spend money as though we secretly believed it did indeed grow on trees. Consumer credit in the U.S. has now reached the staggering level of 29 billion dollars. *In short, we are in hock as families to an extent unmatched in anybody's history, and millions of us are already living on next year's income.*

At the same time, unless you happen to be living in the primitive wilds of Idaho or some similar region, you are

probably surrounded by opportunities to *save* money. Economists estimate that, by acquiring some simple buying know-how, most American families could actually increase their *real* income between ten and twenty per cent—and live better than ever. What's more, they could do all this without any bleak "austerity" living, without any tightening of the belt or do-it-yourself solutions. If you drink bourbon, you can keep on drinking the same brand. If you drive a new car, you can stay in the driver's seat—but it won't

cost you nearly as much as it does now.

Here are just some of the ways of know-how buying and some of the opportunities which will help you get more for your dollar, whether you're making \$2,500 or \$25,000. Not all will fit everybody's situation and pocketbook, but they can give you a big start toward increasing your real income—and getting better living out of the money you do have.

### The Grocery Bill

Food costs account for one-fourth to one-third of the average family's income. With a little know-how you can save dollars. Don't tramp around comparing prices; the few cents it saves is hardly worth the time you'd rather spend more enjoyably. Where you'll save money in large chunks is in buying by grade.

Fruits and vegetables, for instance, are graded by appearance and size. Nutritionally, Grade C is just as good as Grade A. It's also just as tasty. Under a blindfold test you couldn't tell the difference. Yet you save from seven cents to ten cents by buying Grade C. Grade A makes sense only when you want food to look extra attractive, as in a fruit salad. Learn the trade names that companies use for their different grades. For example, A&P labels its Grade A "A&P"; Grade B, "Sultana"; and Grade C, "Iona." Jot down the information on the flyleaf of your cookbook; with what you save you can splurge on *pâté de foie gras*.

Meat costs? Follow the "loss leaders" which most markets offer each week. Eggs? You can save money on brown eggs—and they are just as fresh and nutritious as Grade A whites.

Milk costs can be cut by using non-fat dry milk for cooking.

Savings on food may strike you as picayune. But a thirty-cent saving a day totals \$127.75 a year, enough to buy a new stove.

Your best approach to saving money—and eating better—is learning nutrition. Many food experts believe that with a thorough understanding of nutritional values the average American family could not only eat better, but reduce its dental and doctor bills—and save as much as \$1 a day on food: \$365 a year. Over a period of twenty years of marriage, that would amount to a sizable sum: \$7,300. Most people don't accumulate such savings; they spend the extra money on better living. But this is how, in many instances, some low-income but shrewd families own cars, send children to college, and pay for appliances.

### Interest on Mortgages

Millions of home-owning young Americans do not realize that the most expensive single cost of their home is interest. In some instances they could reduce this

expense by renegotiating their mortgage.

As in any form of credit, as long as you owe money on a mortgage, you pay interest on the debt. The shorter the period, the less money you will have to pay out in interest.

This is an important point today when homes are being sold with no down payment and 30-year mortgages. For instance, on a \$10,000 mortgage for 30 years with no down payment, the monthly payment, including principal and interest at 4½ per cent, will be about \$51. On a shorter, 20-year basis, the payments will be about \$63. However, the 30-year mortgage means you will pay a total of \$18,252 to pay off the original debt of \$10,000. In short, you are paying in interest alone almost what it cost to build the house.

To save money, you should make the largest down payment possible, even if it means borrowing from friends and delaying other purchases for a while. You should also seek to make the monthly payments as large as your spending plan will comfortably allow so that the mortgage will be paid as rapidly as possible.

If you are unable to make a large down payment and have to take a thirty-year mortgage, you should insist on a clause giving you the right of prepayment without penalty, allowing you to pay off the debt earlier if your circumstances improve.

### Electrical Appliances

If you can free yourself from the hypnotic trance induced in many Americans by the words "latest model," you can save a lot in heavy appliances. Often the differences between last year's model and the "latest" are trifling. Such items are usually disposed of during inventory and clearance sales, when they are marked down 20 to 50 per cent, especially by large department stores and mail order houses. In a recent clearance sale one



It's less of a trick to borrow money than to stagger along under the debt.

mail order house offered a \$30 saving on a \$210 stove—and a stripped-down model of the same stove for \$140.

In nearly all buying you can save money by determining what function you want the item to perform, and then buying the item that fulfills that function at the lowest cost. This can be applied especially well to items which perform hidden tasks. For instance, you can get a secondhand hi-fi loudspeaker at a fraction of the cost of a new one—and the difference is often indiscernible to human ears.

You should also look for modified and "stripped down" models. Such models don't have decorative trim and gimmicks, like built-in clocks, which you don't need anyhow. Among such items on the market today are stoves, refrigerators, automatic washers, and TV sets. These generally sell between \$20 and \$60 below fancier models. Typical of this kind of appliance is the TV set with side controls, which permits the manufacturer



By following one simple rule you save grocery dollars today you can spend tomorrow on the caviar or filet mignon even your richer neighbor can't afford.

# Live Better for Less! (continued)

economies in material and labor and which sells for \$20 less than the same set with front controls.

Wall-to-wall carpeting makes little sense economically because so much waste space is covered by material costing between \$5 and \$12 a yard. A rug is a much better buy. This is especially true if you live in an apartment: you may move some day, leaving your carpeting unusable at your next apartment or home. This happens so often in major cities that, if you aren't going to insist on wall-to-wall carpeting for yourself, you can really make sizable savings in buying used but often unworn broadloom at warehouse auctions.

## Cars, New and Used

There's nothing like a gleaming new car to give you a psychological lift. But it has one expensive aspect you can't do anything about—depreciation. Even if you never move it out of the garage, it will lose value when new models come out. Thus, roughly \$500 of your money goes down the drain while you sleep.



Small kids, small income? Get friendly with the life insurance that's for you.

Even so, if you do a lot of driving, or if a new car is necessary to your business, it may be worth it.

If you're coining money, keep on buying new cars. If you're not, remember that a new car depreciates another 20 per cent in its second year; after that, depreciation slows down. So this is where you step in and save money: you can save the most by buying a car that is two years old.

Of course there is one danger involved in buying a used car: you may have to pay for someone else's motor job. It is best to pay a mechanic to examine and road-test any secondhand car you plan to buy.

When should you buy a used car?

Prices are at rock bottom from November to March.

Do you want to sell your new car? In the spring, car prices start climbing. You'll get the most money for your car starting about July 4th. The downgrade begins after Labor Day.

Next to food and shelter, a car is the most expensive item many families have, especially if it is a new car. Assuming you drive the national average of 10,000 miles a year, your chariot expenses average \$66 a month for gas, oil, tires, maintenance, insurance, and licenses—more than the average American family spends on rent!

Yet much of the money spent on a car is thrown away. Savings in car operation depend on your knowledge. Some city shrewdies, for instance, put their cars in dead storage in cheap suburban garages for the winter, and thus save on insurance, operating costs, and license fees.

If you are using high-test gas, are you sure the extra cost is necessary? Most cars don't need it. Nearly all American cars, even those with fairly high compression ratios, are built to run on regular gasoline with no appreciable loss of power or efficiency. For those that aren't, the manual that comes with the car will specify the use of high-test.

Good driving habits can put more money in your pocket. On a 1,000-mile trip, if you speed along at 65 miles an hour, you'll burn up 100 gallons of gas. If you stick to 35 miles an hour, you burn up only 60 gallons. You'll save the most by cruising at 45 to 50 miles an hour; your gasoline will go about 25 per cent further than it will if you travel at 65 miles an hour.

If you live in a neighborhood where there's strong competition among gas stations, the owner will usually be glad to give you a 10 per cent discount on gas, oil, tires, and other accessories—provided you deal exclusively with him. Don't be shy—this arrangement has become standard practice. If you're an average motorist, it will save you at least \$30 a year—the price of a battery, most of the cost of a new tire.

The anguished cries of car owners bemoaning expensive automobile insurance echo across the country. Yet most of the complaining owners are foolishly paying far more than they need to, and getting little for it. A good driver can drastically reduce his automobile insurance by insuring with one of the mutual companies. This can save him as much as 40 per cent through dividends and rebates.

## Doctor and Hospital

The average American family pays out about 5 per cent of its income each year for medical care. With hospital care at \$20 a day, even the high-income family

Drawings by John Huehnergarth



Almost anyone can bask at millionaires' resorts if he knows when to vacation.

cannot afford to ignore hospital insurance—yet many do! The cheapest hospital and surgical insurance, such as Blue Cross and Blue Shield, is obtainable under a family plan or group plan covering employees. Costs are low. In New York, for example, the monthly group rate for Blue Cross hospitalization is \$1.60 for a single person and \$4.27 for a family—even one with 18 children.

Incredibly, a staggering number of otherwise intelligent people waste money on medical care and surgery, simply because they don't know what they are insured against. Some don't know they are insured. One corporation executive says, "Secretaries, salesmen, even our top executives, absentmindedly file their policy in a desk drawer and forget it." If you're one of the vast number of people who work for large corporations, the chances are you have a company doctor whose services you can have free. But despite notices of the doctor's hours and his availability, we discovered that in one firm only 60 per cent of the employees were aware of this service. Four young women employees of this firm had planned to vacation in Europe and had needed shots against disease. Three of the young women had gone to their own doctor and paid \$10 for the visit. The fourth had gone to the company doctor and paid only for the shot serum—10¢. Of the three girls who spent \$10, one didn't know about the company doctor, one "thought you had to be sick to get him," and one said, "It just never occurred to me."

## Life Insurance

If you work for a company, you can probably buy the cheapest life insurance there is—group term insurance. It sells for a minimum of about \$5 per \$1,000 of insurance. It is generally available to groups of employees. In some instances the employer pays part of the cost. If your company's employees don't have it, it will be worth your while to form a

committee to find out what can be done to get it.

There are several types of insurance, and each has its advantages, but term insurance is also the cheapest form of life insurance you can buy as an individual. It is based simply on the actuarial death tables, and hence it is called "pure insurance." You are insured for a "term"—one year, five years, ten years. The best term insurance can be automatically renewed. It is simply insurance against death. Term insurance is cheap during the years when your children are small and the family income low. Although the cost increases with your age, it will remain cheaper than straight life, and much cheaper than limited payment or endowment insurance, until a man nears sixty. Term insurance can be decreased in amount as the children grow up and take jobs and the family's need for protection changes.

#### Off-season Vacations

Only a handful of people so far have caught on to the fact that by arranging to take your vacation during the "off-season," you can save 10 to 50 per cent of your regular vacation costs—in some cases even 75 per cent. You can either have the savings in money, which can then be spent on anything from clothes to furniture, or you can spend it vacationing in spots you thought only a millionaire could afford. Vacation spot prices are high because year-round costs and profits must be made during a short season. As a Bermuda hotel manager once told me, "Anything after our winter season is gravy." If you go during the off-season, you share in the gravy.

Thus an Adirondack cabin may cost \$75 a week during the summer, but drop to \$35 in the spring and fall. Similarly,



Get the right clause in your contract and you save some of that \$8,000 interest.

hotels in the major southern vacation areas start dropping their prices in April. Miami Beach hotel rates drop as low as 50 per cent. One hotel in Miami

Beach that charges \$35 a day for a couple during the tourist season, drops its prices to \$11 a day per couple the rest of the year. Prices have sometimes plunged to only 25 per cent of the season's rates. In some less expensive hotels you'll pay \$19 a week. Travel costs drop, too, during the off-season. You can, for instance, obtain first-class passage to England on the U.S. Lines' sparkling *America* for \$295 during the off-season. In the summer it would cost you \$325.

All this would cost you would be a five-minute chat with your office manager—who'll be delighted to find someone he won't have to worry about through the hectic schedules of summer vacations.

#### Borrowing Money

At one time or another we all need to borrow money. "Credit," as this process is called, permits the easing of tight temporary financial situations and makes it possible for us to purchase many things at a time when we need them and don't have the cash. Some sources for credit are: credit unions, commercial banks, department stores, industrial banks, installment stores, and licensed small loan companies.

You establish a sound credit rating by applying for it, supplying whatever information is required, and then faithfully meeting your promise to pay. Your performance as a payer then becomes the gauge for future loans. Not long ago I sat in a credit union office and listened to loan applications. A truck driver wanted to borrow \$2,300 for a new car, although he earned only \$4,900 a year. The credit union's officers agreed to the loan because he had previously paid off \$6,000 meticulously.

You pay interest, and often other "service charges," for the privilege of paying later. Therefore you should shop for "money" and obtain it at the cheapest rates obtainable.

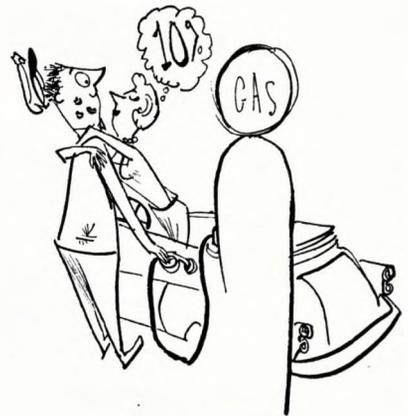
But *do* you shop for money? Or, like most people, do you assume the role of a supplicant, just because you're borrowing? If you do, you're liable to agree to anything. And you're probably paying too much interest on the money you borrow.

Installment-store credit rates, for instance, are high. You can obtain the same loan from a bank at a lower rate and then get a discount for cash from the store. This can greatly reduce the cost of a stove, washing machine, or other major appliance.

The cheapest way to borrow money? Aside from a secured bank loan, in which you put up property to guarantee your loan, the cheapest is a loan from a credit union, which is simply a cooperative society formed, usually by employees of a company, for the purpose of loaning

money economically to its members. To borrow, you must be a member of the credit union. Some seven million Americans already belong to credit unions, and you can learn all the details of their operation from a U.S. Government publication titled "Federal Credit Union Act," and published by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Another of its publications, "Ten Close-ups of Consumer Credit," details all the ins and outs of credit buying. Should you be one of the five million American families that own even a small amount of stock, you can put it up to guarantee the loan.

One young couple I know recently



There are some standard practices that can save you money at your gas station.

wanted to take a trip to Europe. If they sold the small amount of stock they owned, they reasoned, they could pay for the \$1,500 trip—and arrive home flat broke. Instead, they decided on a secured loan. They turned over their stock to the bank as a guarantee. They paid 4½ per cent interest. To their happy surprise, the stock dividends they kept receiving more than covered their interest payments to the bank. When they paid off the loan, they still owned their stock investment—which in the meantime had risen in value—and were just a little ahead on the dividend side. Also, they had saved the two brokerage fees that would have been involved in selling their stock and later starting to buy again. Not only that, but they saved the \$15-a-year cost of the safe-deposit box in which they had formerly kept their stock!

All of which goes to show that in today's world you usually have several choices as to how to spend your money on each luxury or necessity—a home for your family, a Bermuda vacation, or a can of peas. Making the *right* choice helps save that 20 per cent of your income you may be throwing away!

THE END

# The Last Word

**JACK LESCOULIE**



*Newark, New Jersey:* That was a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at Jack Lescoulie [June]. He is one of my favorite TV people, but since he is not a star, it is almost impossible to find out about him. Now, thanks to COSMOPOLITAN, I feel I know him as well as my next-door neighbor. And I am not, incidentally, one of those old ladies who want to smooth his hair!

—MRS. AGNES GALLAGHER

**HAPPY WEEKENDERS**

*Brooklyn, New York:* Your fine article, "The American Weekend" [June], was of special interest to my husband and me. We have been increasingly aware, since our marriage three years ago, that our leisure hours are few and precious. We own a piano and phonograph instead of a TV set—to the dismay of our friends! We rarely plan weekends in advance, and often spend a good part of them in reading and conversation. I have yet to see this in homes with TV. Many "weekend neuroses" would vanish if people asked themselves, "What do I really want to do?" and *did* it, without trying to keep up with the Joneses.

—RUTH K. FRIED

**HEP CAT**

*Frederick, Maryland:* In your record reviews for June, you have the one and only President, Lester Young, blowing an *alto*

sax in the Epic "Lester Leaps In" LP. The Prez is strictly tenor, except for the rare Commodores on which he blows clarinet; but *alto*—never. —BOB SMITH, JR.

*Mr. Smith wins a blush from our Paul Affelder, who says he never intended to type "alto" in the first place. His typewriter's voice must have changed on him.*

—The Editors

**NANETTE FABRAY**



*New York, New York:* I was so delighted and impressed by the wonderful piece you did on me ["I'm Home at Last," May. Miss Fabray was also our cover girl that month.] The whole layout was simply beautiful. Thank you for the best article about me that's ever been published.

—NANETTE FABRAY

**PAY TV BATTLE**

*Lynchburg, Virginia:* Your article, "Turnstile TV" [June] was most informative and frightening. I can't understand how any sane person can advocate pay TV in its projected form. Any idealistic thinking about it is certainly buried under the almighty-dollar interest of the advocates. I would love TV without commercials, but not at that price. We buy a television set for hundreds of dollars—and then pay for periodic upkeep which, in the case of TV parts, can be an expensive business. We have to own that set for many,

many months in order to realize even an intangible profit in terms of good viewing. Now it is suggested that we have some gadget attached to our sets at our expense. The Committee Against Pay-As-You-See-It TV is right in arguing that, in the long run, most of the good talent and planning will leave free TV (if such a thing survives) for the pay productions. How do I go about casting my vote against this fiendishness?

—MRS. ELLIS SHORB

*Anyone wishing to express an opinion for or against Pay Television should write to the Federal Communications Commission, Washington 25, D. C.*

—The Editors

**WORRIED WORRIER**

*Milwaukee, Wisconsin:* Your tape-recorded interview on worry [June] was a real shocker to me. I never classified myself as a worrier, but your searching analysis of the phenomenon revealed me as one. At first, this caused me to worry all the more, but now I am grateful for the shock and I think I will be better off because of it. My career was my major worry. I find that less worry makes me a better salesman.

—JOSEPH POTTER

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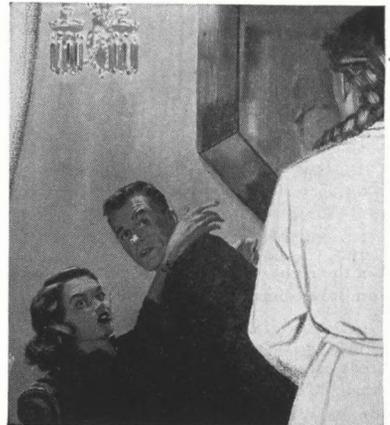


## Looking into September

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