COSMOPOLITAN

DECEMBER 1953 · 35¢

FOR MEN ONLY:

Christmas Lingerie Gift Guide

HOLIDAY BONUS:

TWO Complete Novels

including "Loose Ends," the mystery of the month

GALE STORM

"My Little Margie" hits the Big Time

COSMOPOLITAN DECEMBER 1953

Anyone for playing Santa Claus ?

PARKER "51" PENS, SLIM REGULAR SIZE, $12.50 AND UP.

PARKER "51" PENS, SLIMMER DEMI-SIZE, $12.50 AND UP.

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new Christmas Parker Pens

. . . WITH NEW ELECTRO-POLISHED ep POINTS SO SMOOTH-WRITING WE ASSURE 100% PERFECTION AND SATISFACTION

We're old hands at this Santa Claus role at Parker Pen. This year we expect to do our share toward putting several hundred thousand more brand-new, smooth-writing Parkers in eagerly waiting hands —building even more character for Father Christmas, as well as for those who give them.

The new Parkers this year, we think, make the best gifts yet. They've been finished to an incredible degree of writing smoothness by a new development—"Electro-Polishing." These points are so smooth you can buy one for giving without even trying the point first! This really new invention employs a special electrically charged solution that dissolves even the microscopic roughness that might linger on the points of these nibs.

When you consider also that Parkers have long been the world's most-wanted gift pen (by far!) you can see why they make such a perfect solution to the Christmas gift hassle. Why not do your Christmas shopping right now, right here? Or see all the beautiful new selections at your Parker dealer's. The Parker Pen Company, Janesville, Wisconsin, U.S.A.; Toronto, Canada.

So MANY ways a COLD can get started!

At the First Sign of a

COLD OR SORE THROAT

Gargle LISTERINE ANTISEPTIC—Quick and Often!

Any of the conditions shown at the top of the page may weaken body resistance so that threatening germs, called 'secondary invaders', can stage a mass invasion of throat tissue and stir up trouble.

But, if you gargle Listerine Antiseptic promptly and systematically, you can often halt such mass invasions . . . help head off colds, and sore throats that accompany them, or lessen their severity.

Kills Germs on Throat Surfaces

That's because Listerine Antiseptic reaches way back on throat tissues to kill germs, including the 'secondary invaders', by millions. Tests showed that germs on mouth and throat surfaces are reduced as much as 96.7% fifteen minutes after gargling . . . as much as 80% even an hour after.

Obviously, when you feel a cold coming on, it's wise to gargle Listerine Antiseptic early and often . . . to attack the trouble before it attacks you.

Remember that tests made over a 12-year period showed that regular twice-a-day Listerine users had fewer colds, and usually milder ones, and fewer sore throats, than non-users.

Kills germs like these way back on throat surfaces

(1) Pneumococcus Type III, (2) Hemophilus influenzae, (3) Streptococcus pyogenes, (4) Pneumococcus Type II, (5) Streptococcus salivarius.

These, and other "secondary invaders," as well as germ-types not shown, can be quickly reduced in number by the Listerine Antiseptic gargle.

We mean your breath, of course! Listerine keeps breath sweeter, longer. You see, Listerine Antiseptic kills millions of germs, including germs that are the most common cause of bad breath when they start the fermentation of proteins which are always present in the mouth.

Tooth-brushing does not give you antiseptic protection. Chewing gums and chlorophylls do not kill germs. Listerine does. That is why it averaged four times better in reducing breath odors than the tooth pastes and chlorophyll products it was tested against.

Stops bad breath 4 times better than tooth paste

PICTURE of the Month

This month's big "Bravo!" goes to "Escape From Fort Bravo". It's M-G-M's tale of love and flight and fight. And it held us so decidedly spellbound that we feel delightedly duty-bound to recommend it.

"Escape From Fort Bravo" really covers ground! Not only across a vast colored canvas of the legendary West's wide open spaces—but also across the deepest, inmost places of the heart.

Churning with violent incident, and charged throughout with a sense of peril, this story may well be the movie that brings William Holden his long-overdue Academy Award. His portrayal of Capt. Roper—brooding, fierce, smoldering with every passion known to the fighting man—bears the brand of greatness.

And it is certain to be the movie that brings a new acclaim to Eleanor Parker, the bright beauty of "Above and Beyond" ...and a new fame to the Broadway stage sensation, John Forsythe. Miss Parker is cast as a sultry Southern sympathizer who engineers the escape from the Union-held Fort Bravo of a brave band of captive Confederates. They are all held not only in the blazing fury of Death Valley, where the ominous Mescalero Indians close in from every side, but in the blinding force of Capt. Roper's hate — and love!

For it is Capt. Roper, the martinet more feared than the terror-taut Indian bow, who goes after them. The pursuit is climaxed when the Curtain of Arrows closes around hunter and hunted, an inescapable and ingenious ambush never filmed before that makes for a spectacular finish to a story stinging with reality and power. And it is in these precious, perilous moments that the love between the valiant Captain and his lovely captive come to thrilling realization.

If you seek escape, make a point of seeing "Escape From Fort Bravo". For sheer suspense and surefire excitement, there are few movies that have ever matched it.

★ ★ ★

M-G-M presents WILLIAM HOLDEN, ELEANOR PARKER and JOHN FORSYTHE in "ESCAPE FROM FORT BRAVO" with William Demarest, Richard Anderson and Polly Bergen. Screen play by Frank Fenton. Story by Phillip Rock and Michael Pate. Photographed in Ansco color. Directed by John Sturges. Produced by Nicholas Nayfack.

Watch for "Knights Of The Round Table", M-G-M's first Cinemascope production. Color by Technicolor. A great screen event!

COSMOPOLITAN

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DECEMBER, 1953 Vol. 135, No. 6

STORIES

ARTICLES

SERVICE

FEATURES

TWO COMPLETE NOVELS

COVER *Commotion-raising Gale Storm, who won her name in a movie contest, turns corn into gold on "My Little Margie" by proving every week to radio and television audiences that life with an "over-twenty-one" daughter is about as tame as sharing a cage with a playful wildcat. (See the article on page 8.) The cover photo is by Don Ornitz—Globe.*

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE HEARST CORPORATION, 57TH STREET AT EIGHTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 19, N.Y. YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION PRICE IN UNITED STATES AND POSSESSIONS, AND CANADA, $4.20. RE-ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER, MARCH 25, 1952, AT THE POST OFFICE, NEW YORK, N.Y., UNDER THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1879. AUTHORIZED AS SECOND-CLASS MAIL, POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, OTTAWA, CANADA.

why Dial soap protects your complexion even under make-up

Dial clears your complexion by removing blemish-spreading bacteria that other soaps leave on your skin.

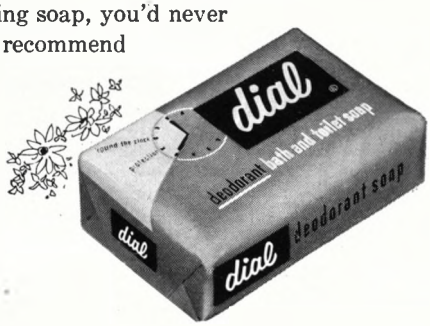
No matter how lavishly or sparingly you use cosmetics, when you wash beforehand with Dial, the fresh clearness of your skin is continuously protected *underneath* your make-up.

For mild, fragrant Dial washes away trouble-causing bacteria that other soaps (even the finest) leave on your skin. Dial does this because it contains AT-7, known to science as Hexachlorophene. And there's nothing else as good. It clears the skin of unseen bacteria that often aggravate and spread surface blemishes.

Until Dial came along, no soap could remove these trouble-makers safely and effectively. Photomicros at the left prove it.

No. 1 shows thousands of bacteria left on skin after washing with ordinary soap. (So when you put on make-up, they're free to cause trouble underneath.) No. 2 shows how daily washing with Dial removes up to 95% of them. And Dial's AT-7 clings to your skin, so it continually retards the growth of new bacteria.

When you first try this beauty-refreshing soap, you'd never guess it gives you such benefits. Doctors recommend it for adolescents. With Dial *your* skin becomes cleaner and clearer than with any other type of soap. Let mild, fragrant Dial protect your complexion—even under make-up.



P.S. Shampoo a Diamond Sparkle into your hair with new Dial Shampoo.

What Goes on at Cosmopolitan

WRESTLING FANS, PRESENTS, ECCENTRIC LIGHTS

Hatching place of writers in the nineteen twenties and thirties was the newspaper. Behind the pushed-back hat, the tie awry, the drooping cigarette, were the authors-to-be. Theirs was a roving, unbusinesslike world, a far cry from the breeding place of today's crop—the advertising business. Now it turns out that lurking beneath the adman's well-cut suit and Sulka tie are writers as hard-hitting as the newsmen. First to make this plain were some adman authors who appeared in COSMOPOLITAN, like best-selling Cameron Hawley and Frederic Wakeman. How to explain the phenomenon?

William D. Magnes

Adman William Magnes says, "An adman is a writing man to begin with. And today nobody steps out of college right into advertising. Beneath the well-dressed exterior, there's usually a guy who's had a rubbed-in-the-face close-up of the world." Magnes had his in Korea, a baptism that brought his story, "Wild Oats," on page 66.

The Ladies and the Wrestlers

When Arthur Godfrey mentioned one night on his show that he was baffled by his wife's fascination for wrestling on TV, he struck something that had been nagging us on Saturday nights when, during the wrestling show from Chicago, we heard the sweet young thing next door screaming, "Murder him!" while she cheered on the Mighty Atlas. We, too, were baffled.

"Women hate men," a wrestler explained. "They like to see us get it, but good." "Women are sadistic," two others insisted. The Mighty Atlas had a simpler interpretation: "They're nuts about me."

Turn to page 120 and find out just how close the boys were hitting.

Merry Megalomania, Jon

Jon Whitcomb and anyone who turns to page 64 are due for a surprise. For four years COSMOPOLITAN has never been without Jon's wonderful illustrations and comments. For this issue, Jon and our Executive Editor planned a feature on people Jon would like to invite to a Christmas party, but next day, Jon collapsed. Complete exhaustion, weeks in bed, was the verdict.

Not content with mere expressions of sympathy, Jon's artist friends secretly sketched for us what they'd like to give Jon for Christmas. Small gifts, of course —nothing that wouldn't fit into Yankee Stadium. We are delighted to bring you and Jon their assorted megalomaniacal conceptions.

Italy's Rube Goldberg

Giovanni Guareschi is a handy man who makes his own furniture and wine, fixes household gadgets, and has even designed his country house in Italy. He is also that rarest of gifted writers, one who can move us to tears and laughter in the space of seconds, as he did in his "Don Camillo" books and as he does now in the four great stories we bring you (beginning on page 56) from his new book, *The House That Nino Built.*

The house that Guareschi himself built, in Buesseto, is itself a trifle startling, due to his passion for light—a luxury he missed in childhood. Lamps, wall lights, chandeliers, neon bars, and fluorescent lights stud the house, and because of Guareschi's zealous but Rube Goldberg wiring system, some light plugs and switches ended up behind closet walls and have an unusual eccentricity: when the Guareschis open a closet door, they

The Guareschis

never know what part of the house will unexpectedly light up. It'll stay that way, too. "Why not?" says Guareschi. Well, why not? **H. La B.**

There's no gift like the gift of sleep—no gift like "*Customized*" Playtex® Pillows

Playtex Pillows are "Customized"... Choose from 3 different heights.

"REGULAR" HEIGHT "EXTRA-PLUMP" "KING-SIZE"

Each available in soft, medium, firm!

Beautifully gift packaged. The perfect gift for everyone near and dear to you. Especially thoughtful for sickrooms and shut-ins.

Your gift of sleep is so personal, so precious, so welcome. With it, you offer the best of wishes for the best of health.

To give *refreshing* sleep, make sure you choose Playtex Pillows. For Playtex Pillows are entirely different from ordinary pillows. They're made of the very finest foam latex, allergy-dust-free. And *only* Playtex offers "*customized*" Pillows: "Regular" Height, "Extra-Plump," "King-Size," each in soft, medium and firm, to please *every* pillow preference.

There's joy in the thought that for *years* to come, your gift of sleep *will keep on giving* the best of rest!

At department stores, furniture and sleep shops everywhere... Playtex Pillows are priced as low as **$7.95**

International Latex Corp'n . . PLAYTEX PARK . . Dover Del. Playtex, Ltd., Arnprior, Ont., Canada

The most important name in high-quality foam latex pillows

New Help for Rheumatics

Science increases hope for those disabled by our costliest disease

BY LAWRENCE GALTON

Ten million people in the United States suffer from rheumatic ills. These ailments lead all other diseases in the crippling and economic loss they cause. Rheumatic ills take an annual toll of more than 97,000,000 man-days and more than $100,000,000. No panacea is in sight, but a number of advances offer new promise:

• A relatively new drug, phenylbutazone, has given excellent results in a group of 800 patients with varied rheumatic diseases, including acute and chronic gout, psoriasis with arthritis, painful shoulder, rheumatoid arthritis, and osteoarthritis. In a group of 40 with arthritis of the spine, 80 per cent made immediate and marked gains. Phenylbutazone is no cure and must be used under strict medical supervision, for it sometimes produces serious toxic effects. Yet in some patients it proved more effective than ACTH or cortisone, especially in terms of long-run improvement.

• Rheumatoid arthritis in some women can be helped by placental blood serum obtained from the afterbirth. In 10 of 15 patients who ranged in age from twenty-six to seventy-five and had had arthritis for from two to thirty-one years, it produced six months of sustained, rapid, and marked improvement, without further treatment. Stiffness and pain were reduced; so were muscle spasm and joint swelling. The patients slept and ate better, and had greater ability to work.

• Gold treatment offers effective help for many with rheumatoid arthritis. First, weekly doses to control the arthritis, then monthly doses to prevent recurrences, benefited 89 per cent of 29 patients.

• An improved form of gold compound, aurothioglycanide (Endo), effectively brings rheumatoid arthritis under complete control in some patients, producing fewer undesirable reactions than previous gold compounds. It can be used on more patients and for longer periods.

• In gout, colchicine has helped relieve *acute* attacks. Now another drug, probenecid, is an effective *long-term* help. It spurs the kidneys to eliminate the excessive uric acid in the blood and diminishes the chalklike deposits in the joints that are characteristic of chronic gout. Within six months, once bedridden and crippled patients have been able to move joints without pain and have returned to work.

• In osteoarthritis of the knee, injections of hydrocortisone acetate directly into the joint now offer relief for at least some patients. Out of a total of 41 cases, there were very satisfactory results in 8, satisfactory in 3, fair in 19.

• In the painful, disabling hip-joint osteoarthritis, malum coxae senilis, local hydrocortisone injections helped three of five patients to perform activities previously impossible. A fourth patient improved moderately. Recently, too, a conservative method of rehabilitation has worked well in over 140 hip-joint cases. It includes permanent elevation of the foot of the bed by two to four inches, daily exercises, a laceable elastic brace about the pelvis and thigh, plus built-up shoes. Although they still limp, patients have returned to work without pain and have a good range of movement.

Vertigo is sometimes triggered by sudden turns of the head and neck or even by getting out of bed in the morning. In seven patients, the attacks usually lasted only a minute or so but recurred frequently. Nausea and occasionally vomiting accompanied the vertigo. Usually these attacks were interrupted and their recurrence was lessened by neck stretching and prescribed exercises.

Pain following oral surgery was markedly reduced and healing time was speeded in most of 555 cases treated with antihistamines Co-Pyronil and Pyronil. Swelling and bleeding were reduced.

A new anticough drug promises to be twice as effective as codeine sulfate, which is now commonly used. Even though still experimental and in the process of development, the drug, dextromethorphan hydrobromide, given in half the usual codeine dosage, in recent tests reduced the severity of cough spasm. There were fewer unpleasant side reactions, such as nausea, drowsiness, and constipation.

Air travel is not detrimental to the great majority of sick persons. Flying may be inadvisable for people with severe anemia, lung or chest difficulties, or serious heart trouble. It is also unwise for those with active peptic ulcers, since gas in the gastrointestinal tract expands at higher altitudes and may cause ulcers to perforate. Patients with mild asthma may fly safely, but a patient subject to frequent attacks should not, nor should any asthmatic fly during an acute attack. Flying is out, too, for persons with acute upper respiratory infections and sinusitis. Infants tolerate air travel well and seem to be less susceptible to airsickness than adults. No reason has been found why a woman should not fly during pregnancy, up to the last month.

Penicillin taken by mouth is equally effective in children, whether given at twelve- or four-hour intervals, if the total amount daily is the same. In a recent study, children given a dose of 300,000 units twice a day did just as well as those who received 200,000 units to begin with, followed by 100,000 units every four hours.

Epileptic patients have been helped by deep sleep—in many cases, after other methods failed. The patients are put into a profound state of unconsciousness by massive doses of diphenylhydantoin, an anticonvulsant drug, supplemented, if necessary, by paraldehyde or phenobarbital. They get special diet, intravenous injections when they become too sleepy to eat or drink, plus glutamic acid and small hourly inhalations of a carbon dioxide–oxygen mixture. The period of sleep usually lasts four days and the entire treatment about two weeks. Sixteen of 25 epileptics, previously unrelieved by standard drug treatment, were freed of seizures for a long period. Another five patients improved 75 per cent, and the remaining four improved less than 50 per cent. There were no fatalities. A long period of freedom from attacks was followed by relapse in three cases. But one of these has been free of seizures for four years since a second course of treatment. Repetition of treatment in the second patient moderated the seizures, and in the third patient, kept the attacks under control for over a year. The use of anticonvulsant medicine has to be continued after the treatment is completed. THE END

THE STORM BEHIND "MY LITTLE MARGIE"

After an uninspired decade in the movies, Gale Storm at twenty-nine has suddenly rocketed to stardom as the unpredictable "over twenty-one" miss of TV and radio

BY RICHARD GEHMAN

Every once in a while, in almost every branch of the entertainment business, there occurs a phenomenon that makes the critics feel like scuttling to the corner pharmacy for a nice sloe arsenic fizz. "Abie's Irish Rose" was one of these critic-killers. The wiseacres murdered it in print, but it remained triumphantly alive on the Broadway stage for over five years. It's a tough life, indeed, for the poor critic who happens to call a dog a dog, and life has never been tougher for the TV critics than since the summer of 1952, when they gleefully attempted to put to death a half-hour situation-comedy show called "My Little Margie."

Some of the phrases the critics used in welcoming—and attempting to dismiss—"Margie" should not be used in a family magazine. They pulled out every homicidal stop they knew, and even built in a few new ones so they could pull them out, too. "My Little Margie" sailed right by, pert as a pretty girl ignoring the whistling wolves in front of the cigar store. Today she can laugh in their faces, for "Margie" is viewed on 70 stations over the NBC-TV network by 12,810,000 people, and the radio version is heard on 205 CBS and 373 Mutual stations. And her audience rating is still climbing.

And the commotion she has caused! The program has taken Gale Storm, formerly a less-than-sensational actress, and made her a star of a magnitude approaching that of Lucille Ball. It has taken Charles Farrell, a retired silent-film matinee idol, and made him something of a middle-aged idol. It has given steady employment to two lovable veteran character actors, Clarence Kolb, who made his theatre debut in 1895, and Gertrude Hoffman, who admits to being eighty-two.

Just Good Healthy Corn

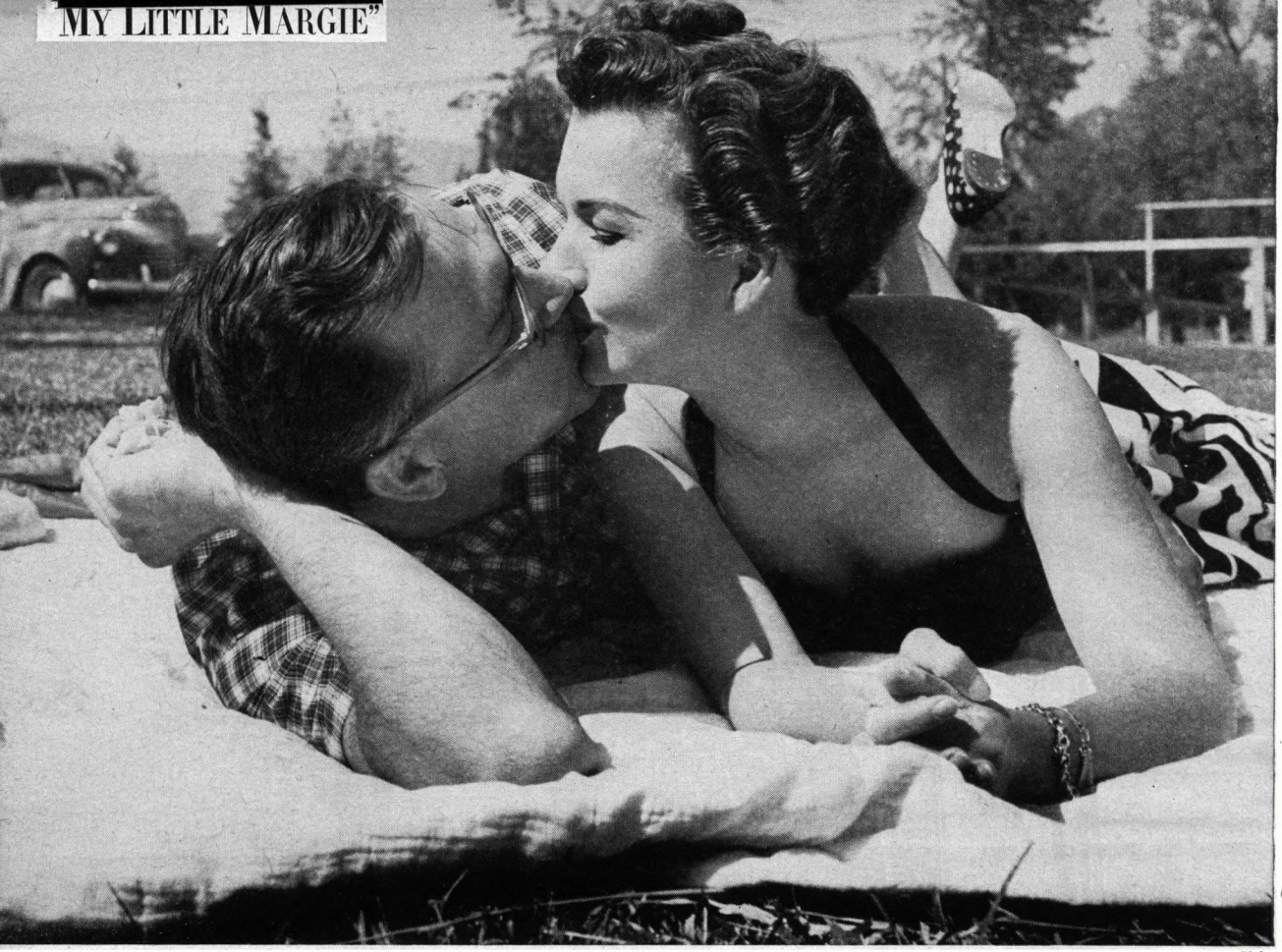
The miraculous thing about all this is that "Margie" does not pretend to be anything but good, healthy corn. In many respects, it is like the "Ma and Pa Kettle" series, or the "Francis" series. Kids love it—and as Gale Storm, who has three boys of her own, remarks with some satisfaction, it's the kids who control the dial. But adults must love

(continued)

Globe

MAKING TELEVISION FILMS is "much, much tougher" than making movies, Gale says. She squeezes in as much time as possible with her sons, Peter, seven; Paul, six; and Phillip, ten; and her husband, Lee Bonnell. The frantic pace agrees with her, and she's got a convincing twenty-one-year-old figure to prove it.

Globe



Globe

DURING A FAMILY PICNIC OUTING, she kisses her husband and most loyal fan. They met when both won a national movie-talent contest. After a lackluster film career, he quit and became a successful insurance executive.

it, too. The program draws around 1,500 fan letters each week.

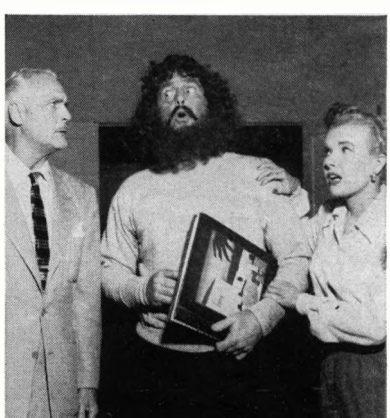
The format of "Margie" is not meant to tax one's attention too severely. Gale Storm plays Margie Albright, a girl who is "over twenty-one." Charles Farrell plays Margie's father, Vern Albright, a widower of fifty-odd. The plot lines are drawn broadly, as in a bold charcoal sketch. Vern can neither understand nor get accustomed to the actions, romantic and otherwise, of his daughter. Margie, on the other hand, regards her father with an amused tolerance. Her ever-present suitor, Freddie (played by Don Hayden), adds to the complications, and so does Roberta Townsend (Hillary Brooke), who supplies the love interest in Vern's life. Then there is Clarence Kolb as Mr. Honeywell, Vern's boss, and Gertrude Hoffman as Mrs. Odetts, the sprightly old lady next door.

How "Margie" Was Inspired

The idea for "My Little Margie" leaped practically full-blown from the brain of Hal Roach, Jr., a burly, vigorous Hollywood producer whose hobby seems to be doing what people tell him he can't do. Roach's was one of the first of the Hollywood studios to begin producing TV films. Hollywood smarties scoffed at this move, and now are hurrying to get into production themselves.

Roach has a fifteen-year-old daughter, Shari. One evening, father and daughter had a mild spat over whether or not she could go to the movies on a school night. The battle ended with the girl stalking off to her room. Roach turned to his wife and exclaimed, "My Lord, she's hard enough to handle now. What'll happen when she's over twenty-one and we have no legal control over her?"

Right then and there, the situation



CHARLES FARRELL, GALE'S TV FATHER, was talked back to work after nearly twenty years of retirement. A matinee idol in silent-movie days, he opened Palm Springs' fabulous Racquet Club and started making millions.

was born. Roach and his father, the famous Hal Roach of "Our Gang" fame, began batting the idea around. "The basis of good comedy," Roach junior says, "is a normal situation, twisted a little. I started to think of this father-daughter relationship. If he couldn't control her, it would pose all sorts of threats and situations. Then I figured he ought to be a single man—middle-aged but still in good shape. I thought right away of Charlie Farrell. I go down to his place at Palm Springs all the time, and he's as lively as many guys twenty years younger. Then I thought of Gale. I'd watched her for years and thought she had terrific possibilities that had never been exploited."

With no more than an idea in mind, Roach got on the telephone, and in a few minutes, he sold the idea to an advertising agency that was looking for a summer replacement for "I Love Lucy." Then he called in writers Frank Fox and George Carleton Brown, who created the original characters. The two have written most of the "Margie" scripts, though Roach has also used a half dozen other writers. A few weeks after Roach got the idea for the show, it went into production in Culver City, where it is filmed by Roland Reed Productions.

There is no question but that the popularity of "Margie" is due in the main to Gale, who instantly proved that Roach's faith in her was justified. Gale, who has reddish-brown hair and blue eyes, is exceptionally pretty and even more exceptionally gifted. She has a maneuverable face and a vivid sense of robust comedy. In "Margie," she consistently rises above her material.

The "Storm" behind "Margie" was born Josephine Owaissa Cottle, last of five children of Walter and Minnie Lee

(continued)

Greenhaw Cottle, in Houston, Texas. "Owaissa" means "bluebird" in some obscure Indian dialect, and was bestowed upon her by her elder sister, Lois, whom she has since forgiven. "Gale Storm" was awarded to her by Jesse L. Lasky, a Hollywood producer whom she has not quite forgiven but to whom she is grateful after a fashion.

In 1939, Lasky was conducting a nation-wide talent search called "Gateway to Hollywood." Josephine, a fifteen-year-old veteran of countless triumphs in living room, school, and back yard, was urged by friends to enter. There were to be two winners, a boy and a girl, and each was to get a new name and a seven-year RKO Radio movie contract. The names were Terry Belmont and Gale Storm.

The male winner was Lee Bonnell, a slender, sensitive-faced young man from Indianapolis. The two babes in Hollywood were instantly drawn together, not entirely out of mutual exasperation at their new names. They wanted to get married immediately, but decided to wait until Gale was older. She says, "I lasted a fast six months on the contract I won, and out I flew." Young Bonnell played it cagier. By dint of accepting tiny parts and keeping himself out of sight of the studio moguls, he stretched his contract up to the point when he entered the Coast Guard in World War II. By that time, they were married. Bonnell served three and a half years, returned, and took up another year of the time coming to him. For a while he considered the ministry, but finally, at the urging of an older friend, he went into the insurance business, and was an immediate smash.

"Little Margie" Has Three Boys

Bonnell's interest in religion has increased over the years. He and his wife and their three sons, Phillip, ten; Peter, seven; and Paul, six, regularly attend Hollywood Beverly Christian Church, where Gale, until she got tied up in TV, taught a Sunday-school class. They live in an overcrowded house in Sherman Oaks, California, with a nervous, white, gray-eared poodle named Jolie. They are planning to build a new, roomier house sometime next year.

Gale's only complaint these days is that she cannot spend as much time as she'd like with her boys, but when she moans about the tightness of her schedule, Lee reminds her that she would be moaning even more extravagantly if she were back in the movies, or worse yet, "at liberty." She compensates by sometimes taking the boys with her to the set, where they spend their time ruining takes and calling Charles Farrell "Grandpa." Farrell studiously ignores them.

The career Josephine Cottle embarked upon when she became Gale Storm was, to put it bluntly, undistinguished. She was under contract to Universal, RKO, and Monogram, and endured a succession of roles as inappropriate for her talents as her new name was for her personality. She was the girl who got scared half to death by Boris Karloff and the one Roy Rogers kissed in the last scene, with Trigger benevolently looking on. Shortly before "My Little Margie" took over her life, she began studying with a voice teacher, feeling this might haul her out of the crevasse. "It wasn't that I was a frustrated actress," she explains. "I did have a few good parts at Monogram—pictures nobody saw. But the roles weren't too interesting. I was always the sweet girl, and I wasn't exactly what you might call hot in pictures. I wasn't really me. I'm not exactly me as Margie, either, but I get to do more interesting things. Why, one week I played a bald-headed opera singer, and another time a Russian spy, complete with long cigarette holder and marabou.

Not the least of the fascinations that "Margie" holds for Gale is the fun of working with Farrell. For the benefit of those whose memories do not reach back to the late twenties and early thirties, this agile fifty-two-year-old was once the hottest matinee idol in the movies. His performance in "Seventh Heaven," with Janet Gaynor, sent the ladies of the thirties into moist-eyed rapture. Other hits, including "Street Angel" and "Sunny Side Up," followed in rapid succession, and Farrell reigned until around 1934, when his fans started deserting him. Instead of drying up like one of "Sunset Boulevard's" silent-cinema antiques, he wisely went into business, opening the Racquet Club in Palm Springs. On the first day, Christmas, 1934, he took in eighteen dollars. Since then he has done slightly better. Friends estimate that he now nets something approaching $750,000 a year.

Farrell is married to Virginia Valli, who was also a star in silent pictures. He had no thought of a comeback until

LEARNING HER PART demands many hours of study. Filming the show requires two full days, and the radio version takes most of another.

Pix Inc.

DURING HER LEAN MOVIE PERIOD, she had plenty of time for raising her family. Now, even with her heavy schedule, she can't relax the habit. She always tries to supervise the boys' dinner after getting home from work.

he was asked to do "Margie." At that, he almost turned it down. He was planning a marlin-fishing trip with a friend, and the part did not interest him enough to postpone it. Hal Roach finally won. Since then "Margie" and Farrell have never been off the air.

Farrell's Role Is Strenuous

A product of Boston and the university of the same name, Farrell originally came to Hollywood as a stunt extra. He fell off cliffs and out of autos, and kept in shape by playing near-championship tennis and polo. He still plays both today; he stands six feet, weighs a flat-stomached 185, and has the energy of a U.C.L.A. freshman. This is fortunate, since his life as Vern Albright thus far has required him to fall through a trap door into a tank of water, tramp around for three days in a suit of armor (which left him black-and-blue), and get chased by a genuinely angry bull.

Gale's part has been no less strenuous. It has rewarded her, thus far, with a broken nose (an actor opened a door unexpectedly) and a crack on the head which laid her out like a shad (she bumped into an actor's flailing arm). One day she had to change clothes twenty-three times. The schedule for the shooting of "My Little Margie" films is a fiercely demanding one. The actors have to be on the set at seven-thirty each morning, and when they are able to knock off at five-thirty in the afternoon they regard it as a short day.

"It's much, much tougher than making movies for theatres." Gale says. "We shoot a half-hour film in two or three days. It takes weeks and weeks to shoot a movie an hour and a half long." The company makes two or three movies at a crack, then hies itself to the recording studio and tapes two or three half-hour radio shows ("Margie" is one of the few cases where a radio show grew out of a TV feature; usually it is the other way around). After the radio stint, the cast gets a blessed four or five-day rest. "And boy!" says Gale, "do we need it! But," she adds hastily, "I'm not complaining!"

Gale has had several offers to do pictures from studio executives who wouldn't have spoken to her on the telephone two years ago. She has happily turned them down. The only outside engagement she has taken is a night-club date at the Thunderbird in Las Vegas, where she sang a mixture of classical and barrel-house lyric soprano and was loudly received. She plans to do more night-club work when she gets time, and is still working on her voice.

This whirlpool existence nourishes Gale's spirits, sending her into new flights of excitation. To the seasoned Farrell, the experiences of the second time around are somewhat less breath-taking. He responds to the new movie contracts, the myriad TV guest-spot offers, and above all, the seemingly infinite appearances ahead on "Margie" with a heartful of humble contentment.

"It looks now," he says smiling ruefully, "as though I'll never get that fishing date in." THE END

BEST PRODUCTION —*Esther Williams is in top form in M-G-M's Technicolor splash, "Easy to Love." Pursuing males Van Johnson, Tony Martin, John Bromfield and lavish water ballets make for gala fun.*

Cosmopolitan Movie Citations

BY LOUELLA O. PARSONS

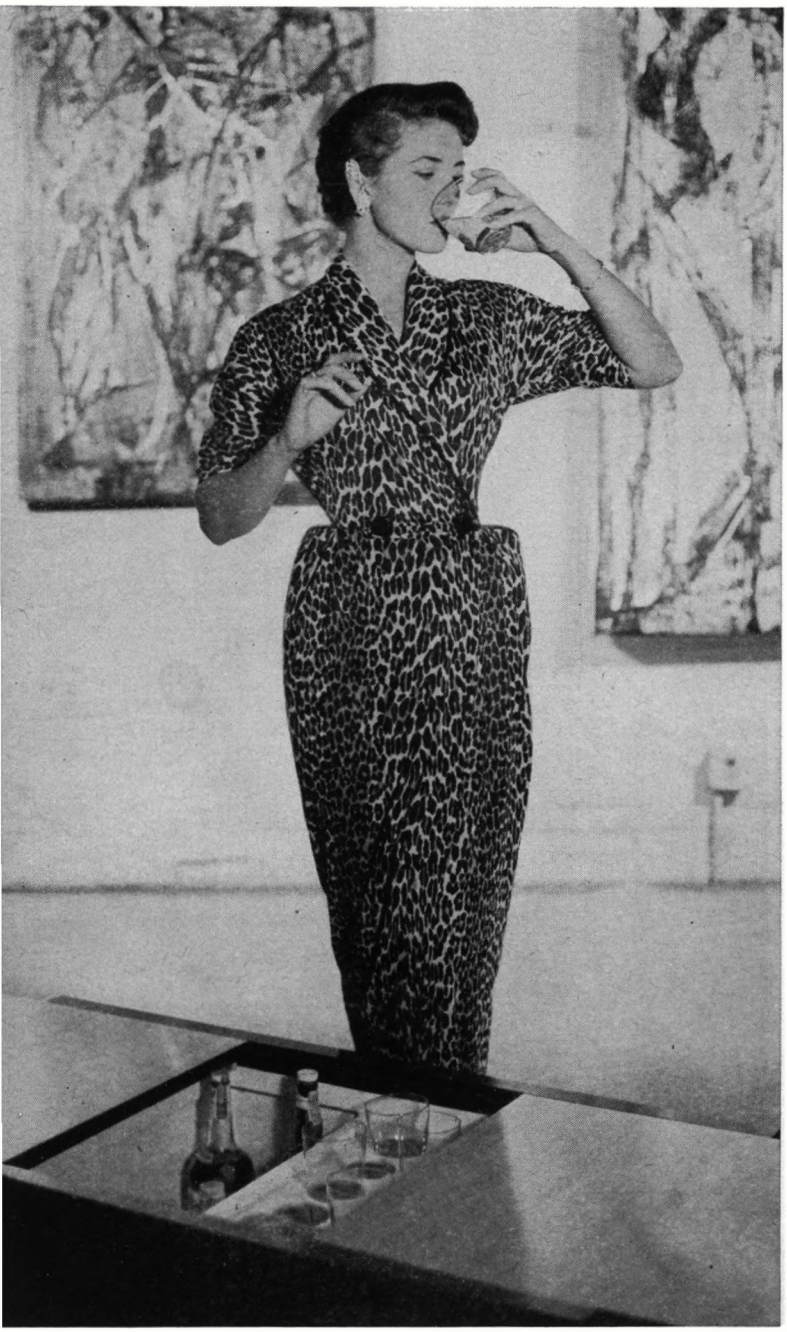
MOST SURPRISING PERFORMANCE—*Janet Leigh turns song-and-dance girl with Donald O'Connor in Universal-International's "Walking My Baby Back Home," a Technicolor musical about life backstage.*

BEST ADVENTURE—*Paramount's "Botany Bay" is the lusty saga, in Technicolor, of the shipload of convicts who braved the cruel seas to settle Australia as free men. It stars Alan Ladd as a wronged American but is stolen by James Mason as the brutal, sadistic captain.*

BEST DRAMA—*Now it's "The Eddie Cantor Story." Tailored after the Jolson epic, it boasts a better actor, Keefe Brasselle, but a less exciting sound track. Warner Bros.' result, in Technicolor, is a superb panorama of show business in the twenties plus many laughs.*

"Any man can shop for feminine froth and emerge alive and in triumph." May Wynn, featured in "The Caine Mutiny," means it—and models here to prove it

Mainly for Men



PHOTOS BY GENEVIEVE NAYLOR

The male tends to go to pieces, buy anything to escape, and learn later what he's bought. A disastrous method. Take a long, slow look to the right. Be able to describe what you see: "Gown with black velvet straps and lace bodice. Peignoir with black lace. Nylon tricot."

Several colors. About $19.95 each.
By Fairy Silk Mills.

This one's easy. Merely remember the word "leopard" and your lady's size. She'll wear this robe for serving cocktails or just looking delectable. Don't forget to add it's nylon tricot with velvet piping and buttons.

About $29.95. By Vanity Fair. "Silent Hostess" cocktail table about $130. By Merton Gershun for American of Martinsville, Virginia.

All fashions shown on these pages are available at B. Altman & Co., New York, New York.

Mainly for Men

Basic rules: Know the lady's three favorite colors. Know her size. Bring notes. Don't get rattled

Even a man about town can go hayseed-red when a clerk holds up filmy negligees. Best defense is to bring notes; the clerk won't even have to unbox your choice. Key words: "jester collar and cuffs." Nylon tricot, waltz length. In blue, white, or pink. Gown about $15, peignoir about $25. By Terris Bros.

No need to panic at words like "pettiskirt" (fancy for petticoat). Jot it down, step inside, say it. They'll gift-wrap it before you can whistle. Black velvet flocking on marquisette over pink taffeta, all nylon. About $17. By Terris Bros.

This rivals evening gowns for glamour. Ask for a "lace-appliquéd nylon-tricot gown and matching nylon-net peignoir." In blue, pink, or white. By Vanity Fair. Gown about $25, peignoir about $39.95.

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*CHOOSE from no less than seven wonderful, fashion-right Crown Luggage colors . . . all washable and scuff-resistant, thanks to *Plasti-Hide, Crown's exclusive, miracle vinyl plastic. Beautiful Celanese linings—removable, waterproof zipper pockets for toilet articles—and many other outstanding features. In Grey, Air Force Blue, Green, Russet, Ivory, Ginger and Lipstick Red. ENDBOUND Train Box and Weekender (below right) $16.50 each. TOPSIDER tapered Train Box $17.50, Weekender, $19.50 (below left). Larger pieces also available at better department, luggage and gift stores. Crown Ski-Liner luggage begins at $11.50.*

CHOICE OF THESE SEVEN SMART, FASHION-RIGHT COLORS. ALL PRICES PLUS 20% FEDERAL TAX

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*Reg. Trade Mark

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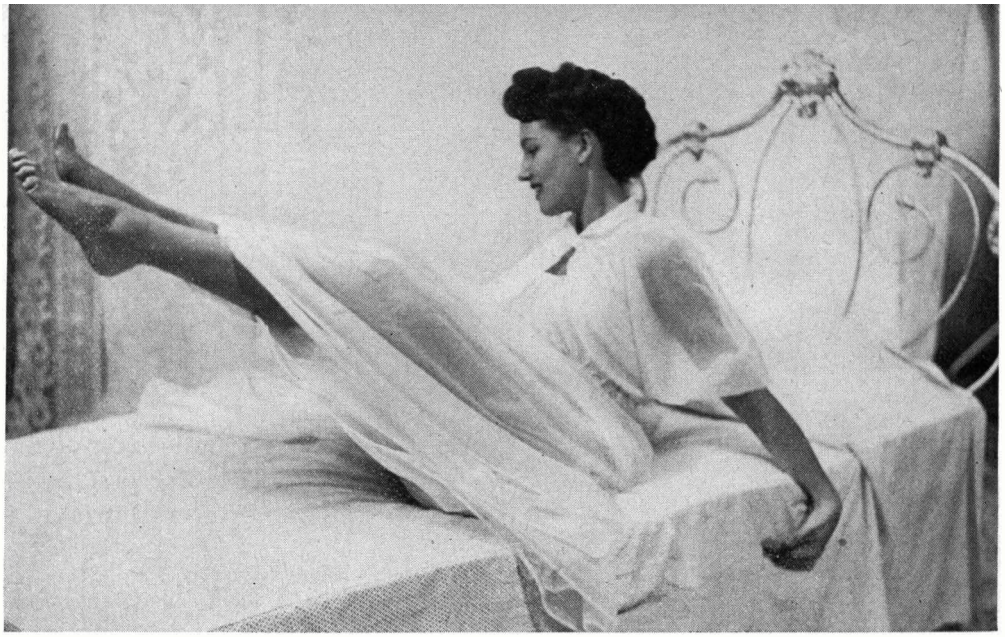

Throwing yourself on the saleslady's mercy is fatal. Big as her heart may be, she's no mind reader. Describe this one as an "iridescent gown with seed pearls and waist smocking, and peignoir with seed pearls at yoke," and you can't miss.
In several colors. About $22.95 each. By Carter.

Mainly for Men

Study your lady. If she's an early rising, tailored type, she'll love this pajama-and-shirt set displayed by Columbia Pictures' new discovery. It's a classic. In nylon tricot.
In navy, red, green, or pink.
About $14.95. By Vanity Fair.
Chrome Osterizer about $44.95.
By John Oster Manufacturing Company.

THE END

Shampoo this diamond sparkle

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DIAL SHAMPOO

Only Dial Shampoo gives this complete cleanliness, because only Dial contains Hexachlorophene

Now you get a *complete cleanliness* with new Dial Shampoo that you've never been able to get with ordinary shampoos. Because Dial Shampoo contains a new freshening agent, Hexachlorophene, that gives your hair clean-smelling freshness.

And Dial Shampoo leaves your hair so clean it has a diamond sparkle!

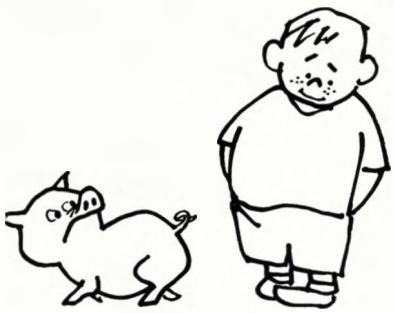
Today, ask for Dial Shampoo in the unbreakable squeeze bottle—so easy to use!

No other shampoo gives this glorious Dial beauty
—yet leaves your hair so easy to manage

"She-Wolves," Fat Kids, and the Decline in Spinsters

LOOKING INTO PEOPLE BY AMRAM SCHEINFELD

Fat kids. Do overplump children eat too much and scrawny ones not enough? Dr. Penelope S. Peckos, Boston nutritionist, claims the popular theory is wrong in most cases. When the food intakes of children, aged six to fourteen, of different physical types were compared,



the results showed that the fat youngsters as a group were actually eating less than the skinny ones. In some cases, overeating may be the cause of obesity, but generally, Dr. Peckos concludes, the key to a youngster's plumpness lies in how his body utilizes food and converts it into fat, how body heat is lost and conserved, and how active the child is. She warns that trying to reduce fat children by cutting down on their calories may often mean bringing their diet below the minimum needed for proper growth and development. For obese adults, too, she believes reducing diets that noticeably cut down weight are, in most cases, below health requirements.

Human "she-wolves." Challenging Dr. Kinsey's contention that women are low in sex drive, psychologist Herbert D. Lamson (Boston University) maintains that sex-hungry women are a big problem to many college youths. He reports numerous cases of men students who were pursued and enticed by "she-wolves" and who said they were often drawn into sex relations against their will or desires. Further challenging the Kinsey conclusion that plentiful premarital sex experience by a girl makes for better adjustment in marriage, Dr. Lamson cautions young men that women who are too easy and aggressive with sex are both undependable as sweethearts and bad risks as wives.

Overgenerosity. Just as extreme stinginess is an emotional disease, so, too, may be extreme generosity, says psychoanalyst Hilde Lewinsky. Such pathological generosity usually indicates a deep-rooted feeling of insecurity, which leads to excessive giving in an effort to win favor or affection, to impress others, or to bolster one's self-importance. Dr. Lewinsky discusses two pathologically generous women whose parents had wanted them to be boys. Their lavish giving to charity was traced to their wish to be loved as much as if they were males. Among people you know, pathological givers may include those who make lavish donations in fund-raising campaigns, at the expense of their own family's needs, or who greatly overtip in public, although they are niggardly in home expenditures.

Spinster decline. The risk of being an old maid is less for American girls (glory be!) than it's ever been before or is today in any other modern country. Latest figures show that American women are marrying at steadily earlier ages. Seventy per cent are married by the age of twenty-four as compared with 53 per cent in 1940. Less than 7 per cent are still unmarried by the age of forty-four, as compared with 10 per cent in 1940. Despite Ireland's romantic reputation, 25 per cent of its colleens never marry. Cupid is lazy in Norway, Sweden, and Scotland, where 20 per cent of the girls

Drawings by McKie

remain spinsters. But in Yugoslavia, only 5 per cent of the women remain old maids; in England, it's 15 per cent; in France, 11 per cent. THE END

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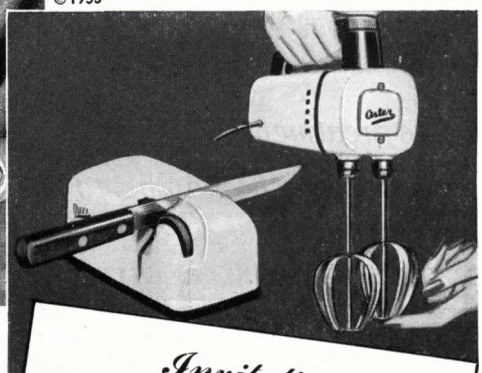

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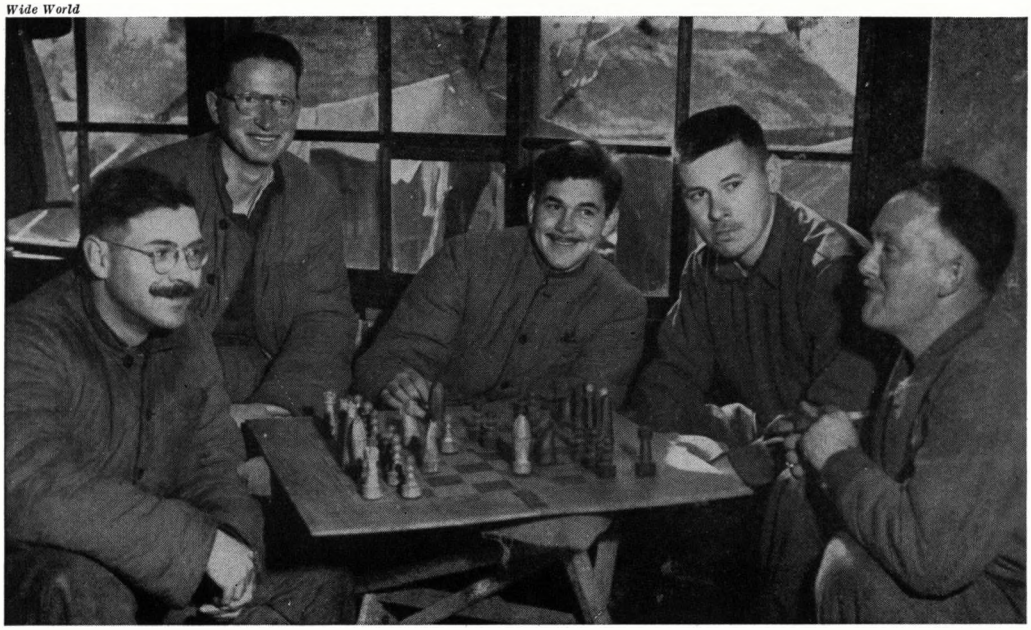

North Korea; winter, 1952: *Captain William Shadish, second from right, and other U.S. prisoners were fattened up whenever truce talks went well and repatriation seemed near.*

"I Missed Them Most at Christmastime"

The treatment was harsh, the loneliness cruel, but nothing was so bad for the captain as having to spend three Christmases in a Korean prison camp

BY ALBERT MOREHEAD

William Shadish was born in Pittsburgh twenty-nine years ago, the youngest of thirteen children. He was a pre-med student at Pittsburgh and Syracuse universities, and took his medical degree at Long Island College of Medicine. He met and married his wife, Maryjane, who was a nurse there, and interned one year in Oakland, California. A World War II veteran, he enlisted when the fighting broke out in Korea in June, 1950. He was sent to Japan and then to the front, while Maryjane and their two babies, seventeen-month-old Billy and three-month-old Mary Elizabeth, went back to Queens Village, New York, where the Shadishes had lived before. On December 1, 1950, Captain William Shadish was captured. He was a prisoner of war in North Korea until September 5, 1953, when he was released and returned to his wife and children.

Talking to Bill Shadish, you'd never spot the man General Dean called "one of the great heroes of the prison camps —many prisoners have told me they would not be alive today without the help and courage they got from Captain Shadish." Bill tells his story without self-pity or self-praise. Pretty Maryjane, listening with quiet pride in the man she married, might like to say more, but she takes her cue from her husband.

Yet between the lines of Bill Shadish's understatement can be read his own deep feeling and a message important to everyone as Christmas, 1953, approaches.

This is Bill's own story, in his own words.

Every time Christmas would roll around in those Korean PW camps, we would dream about the first Christmas

(continued)

Dick Hanley

"Alone for three years, *Maryjane made a heroic effort to keep the Christmas spirit alive in our home. It must have been rough for her. This year, she and I began rehearsing for our biggest Christmas ever."*

Christmas, 1950: *Mary Elizabeth and Billy prayed for Daddy.*

"On the march, some tried singing carols, but it took every breath to keep moving and stay alive"

after we got home, and somebody would say, "What a humdinger that one's going to be!"

It's going to be a humdinger for me, I know. Just being back with Maryjane and the kids would be enough, plus all the little things you never appreciate till you don't have them anymore, like being warm and well-fed and free. But there are many who won't be here to enjoy it. I hope you'll remember them in your prayers when Christmas comes.

For me, there were three Christmases in the PW camps, because they got me so early. My unit was one of the ones that got cut off when the Chinese came in, late in 1950.

I'm not like some of the boys; I don't mind talking about those times, and thinking about them doesn't depress me. In fact—believe it or not—now that it's all over, I'm glad it happened. I learned things that will do me a lot of good all my life.

But this Christmas, when we eat turkey and sit around the tree and watch the children play and hear them laugh, I won't think about the first Christmas in Korea, not if I can help it. That came in the month I was captured, and we were on our way to the first of our prison camps. On the maps it is Hofong. We called it Death Valley.

CHRISTMAS, 1950

For eighteen days we had marched; now, as it grew dark on Christmas Eve, our march was nearing its end. One more hill to climb, and the other side of the hill to go down, and we would be there.

But it was twelve miles up the hill, and on the steep grade and rocky road we couldn't do better than a mile and a half an hour, so we had more than seven steady hours uphill. We hadn't forgotten it was Christmas, and every now and then somebody would start a carol in a thin voice, but one of the Communist guards would stop him. They don't like religion. Anyhow, there wasn't any breath to spare for singing. It took all our strength to keep marching uphill. We hadn't been prisoners very long, and our clothes were still in good shape, but it gets awfully cold over there; I've seen it go down to thirty below. If anybody dropped out of line, they just left him there to die.

Along about midnight of Christmas Eve, they marched us off the road and into a big unheated shed. There wasn't any floor, nothing but the frozen earth to sleep on, but everybody was too tired to care. The next morning we marched again. After two or three hours, we turned the top of the hill, and after that we made better time. Christmas night we reached camp. I'd say we were more dead than alive if it weren't for those who really were dead somewhere along the way. We were cold and tired and hungry; they hadn't fed us for twenty-four hours. There was no singing that night, and our prayers were silent prayers. That was the first Christmas in Korea.

CHRISTMAS, 1951

By the time the second Christmas rolled around, we'd gotten so we could live with it—those who were strong enough to live at all. I'm not supposed to guess how many prisoners died, and I can't be sure, but it was well over half.

Living wasn't a matter of moral strength; everybody had so much it made you proud to be an American. But you also needed physical strength, plus luck in escaping the worst diseases. Some had luck; some didn't.

At first I was one of two doctors in the camp. Altogether there were nine of us doctors, at one time or another, and five of us survived. It's pretty hard on a medical man to see people dying and be helpless to do anything about it, but for quite some time there was not much we could do. No anesthetics, no disinfectants, no drugs. After a few months, they gave me one rusty scalpel, and we got that cleaned up and sharpened, but I still couldn't operate with any great hope of avoiding infection.

Pneumonia was sure death. Almost everyone had dysentery, and when you're so weak, that can be fatal, too. The water was contaminated, and we didn't always have the fire to sterilize it. But the biggest cause of death was starvation.

Most of the time our daily ration was a double handful of corn, about 900 calories. In such extreme cold, a man needs 3,000. Of course, our own people tried to send us food through the Red Cross, but they never got even one package through—not till a month before we were released. I know why, because I learned something about the Oriental mind. Those people are very proud. They figured they'd lose face if they let anybody else supply food.

They would march us down to the dock and make us unload big cases of rice, but we never saw any of it—not for a couple of years. Under the Geneva Convention, they aren't supposed to make officers work, but the Communists were fond of telling us they treated us much worse than enlisted men because we were more a symbol of capitalism. Sometimes their tactics backfired. In the first camp, in Death Valley, they packed twenty-five or thirty men into rooms only six or seven feet square. It was like a subway at rush hour. But actually it saved our lives. In a bigger room, where our body heat wouldn't be conserved, we might have frozen.

Sometime late in 1951, they brought in twelve young Chinese doctors and announced we wouldn't have to take care of prisoners anymore, because they had their own superior people to do it. These Chinese boys were typical. They hadn't had very good training and they were very anxious to learn what we knew.

but they couldn't admit it. We had to be very careful. If I said, "This man has pneumonia and needs sulfa," the Chinese doctor would think he had to say, "No, he has a cold and needs aspirin." So instead, I'd say something like, "It looks like cholera to me; or do you think it's more like pneumonia?" Then he would say, "Only a fool would think this is cholera. Obviously it is pneumonia, and the man needs sulfa."

One or two of the Chinese doctors were very nice—until they got caught. Then they'd become like all the rest. It was the same thing with some of the new guards. They would act like human beings; then one of the politically minded officers would catch them and put the fear of death into them. After that we couldn't get away with anything.

Some of the prisoners knew how to play on the Oriental mind. When we were first captured and searched, they took away any watches and fountain pens and similar things that we have and they don't. But about six months after we were captured, they let us write letters home, and five fountain pens showed up in camp. Everybody took turns using them.

There were about three hundred men in our camp most of the time—the new ones they brought in made up for the ones who died—and it's a wonder the fountain pens stood up, but they did. We must have written fifteen thousand letters with those pens. I wrote about fifty myself, but not all of them got through.

Maryjane: The first two never reached me at all. Bill numbered all his letters, and the first one I got was number three, written on September 2, 1951. No warning, either; I just went down to the mailbox, and there it was! And I hadn't even known whether Bill was alive.

Bill: We knew all along that, tough as it was for us, our wives and families back home had it even worse, with all the uncertainty.

Maryjane: Oh, *no*, we didn't. Why, I never went to the mailbox without sort of expecting a letter would be there. But when it really was, I didn't know what to do, laugh, or sing, or cry, or what. I hugged the babies, and called my mother, and later on I went down to the church and said, "Thank you."

Bill: So did all of us. They say "There are no atheists in the foxholes." Well, it's twice as true in the PW camps. Prisoners don't lose faith in God; they get more and more of it. I was reasonably devout before I went in, but afterward, I came to turn more and more to prayer in difficult moments. It was the same way with nearly all of the men.

During the first few months, there weren't any chaplains among us at all,

(continued)

Dick Hanley

"It still seems strange *to sit at the same table with my family. The children were babies when I left, but Maryjane kept sending me pictures. Though I didn't really know them, I memorized what they looked like."*

Dick Hanley

"Back in Queens Village, *where we lived before the war, we spent long hours just getting used to one another. I'll have more time for that, though, after I get my final release from the hospital."*

but we had smuggled in a few Bibles and Testaments, and we had services on Sunday mornings, reading from the Bible and singing a hymn or two. Some time in 1951, an Anglican padre came into the camp, and he managed to keep his prayer book. The Communists censored all the services in advance—they had to know what passages we would read from the Bible and what hymns we would sing—and they only allowed services on Sundays and on Christmas and Easter. We had memorial services for the dead on the sly.

You'd never believe what human ingenuity can do when it's put to the test. The men made knives by taking the metal strips out of the sides of their boots and honing them on stones found around the yard. With these knives, they did sculpturing and wood carving; they carved me a stethoscope out of a piece of firewood and a length of wire, and I still have it. They painted pictures with colors made from mud. As Christmas approached, we made and "sent" Christmas cards to our friends in camp.

On this second Christmas, they gave everyone a ration of tobacco and a piece of Korean or Chinese candy, along with a long lecture on why they were doing it. They sure are a great people for lectures. Almost any time, one of their officers might come into the barracks with an interpreter and make us listen for hours to a speech on what nice people they were and how bad the capitalistic warmongers were. No matter what subject they started with, it always wound up this way.

The only books they let us have were propaganda, but I decided I would read them so I could learn all about my enemy. I read everything I could lay my hands on, and I know practically everything there is to know about Marx and Lenin and Stalin. So do some of the others who were there.

Did anybody get converted to Communism this way? I don't think so. There were a few who "co-operated," but I think they had had that tendency all along. Nobody paid any attention to them.

"Their favorite punishment was 'the hole.' They'd leave you there for as long as a month. You got fed only if they remembered"

When the Communists first let us write letters, they said our return address had to be the "Chinese People's Committee for World Peace and Against American Aggression." We all refused to write, so they let us make it simply "Chinese People's Committee for World Peace." About four months before the truce, they had paper printed with the full name at the top, so we didn't write any more letters.

CHRISTMAS, 1952

We could always tell how the truce negotiations were going from the way we were treated. If it looked as if the truce was going through, they'd start feeding us like mad—putting out lots of rice and telling us to eat as much of it as we wanted to. They wanted to fatten us up so we wouldn't look too bad when we were exchanged. And how we ate! My normal weight is 175, and I was down to 120. They had me back up to 155 when they finally let me go.

That's how it was on the third Christmas. This time we got not only tobacco and candy but also half a chicken per man—not without the lecture, though. They stood us out in the yard while the commandant talked to us for somewhere between three and five hours. (You lose track.) He started off by telling us that they don't believe in Christianity or approve of Christmas, but they are very kind and generous. Before he wound up, we were hearing all about the capitalistic warmongers again.

When truce negotiations were going badly, we found out about it right away. The rice would disappear, and we'd be back on corn.

How did we know there were any truce negotiations at all? Our first information came from a "leak"; one of the Chinese doctors told us. After that, we had no news for quite a while. Then new prisoners would come in and bring us up to date.

I've read all about the grapevine by which prisoners know everything that goes on. There wasn't really any grapevine in our camps, but we had a pretty good idea of what was going on. When the Chinese first entered the fight, we knew it was pretty bad for our side, because our lines were thin and our communications were pretty far drawn out. But we figured we wouldn't have to fall back any farther than Seoul, and none of their propaganda made us believe anything different, though they made all sorts of claims of victories.

Maryjane did something almost nobody else did. She sent new pictures in every letter, so I could know how she and the children were getting along and what they looked like. Of course, I didn't get anywhere near all the letters. If the censors didn't like anything, even one sentence, they'd throw the whole thing out. You'd think they'd let the pictures come through, even if the letter couldn't, but that isn't the way they worked.

When truce negotiations were going badly, they would keep telling us that if there was no truce, we'd never get home alive. We knew it was true. The Communists didn't go in for torture in the usual sense, like twisting you on a rack or burning you with cigarettes. They didn't have to. All they had to do was let you die. They would have moved us to some camp in North China and left

(continued)

"I told the fellow who did this sketch to fatten me up."

"If we ever have Communism, every Christmas will be like those I spent in North Korea"

us there to freeze and starve to death.

The principal punishment was the "hole." This was a cell four feet in each direction, not high enough to stand up in, not long enough to lie down in. They'd make you crawl in there and leave you there for as long as a month, cramped and lying in your own filth. They'd feed you if they thought about it, the usual double handful of corn. But nobody died in the hole. Two or three days before you were going to die, they'd take you out and move you to the barracks and let you die there.

I was in the hole, off and on, quite a bit. So was everybody else. You couldn't escape it. They would put you there for anything they didn't like—failure to salute, or grumbling, or slowness in responding to an order. Their favorite reason was "hostile attitude." That didn't take any evidence.

CHRISTMAS, 1953

Yes, this is going to be a happy Christmas for me, the happiest ever, and I hope it will be for you, too. But there's one thought I'll have all the time, and I want to leave it with you.

If I could express to you everything I know, everything I have seen, you would know why I am so determined never to expose my wife and my children to Communism.

Because to me, Christmas has a special meaning now that it never had before. It's an expression of our American way of life. Believe one who has been there, if we ever have Communism, every Christmas, every year, for everybody, is going to be like those Christmases I spent in the prison camps of North Korea.

I don't intend to let this disturb the seasonal rejoicing at our house, but neither do I intend to forget it, even in the midst of my Merry Christmas.

THE END

Dick Hanley

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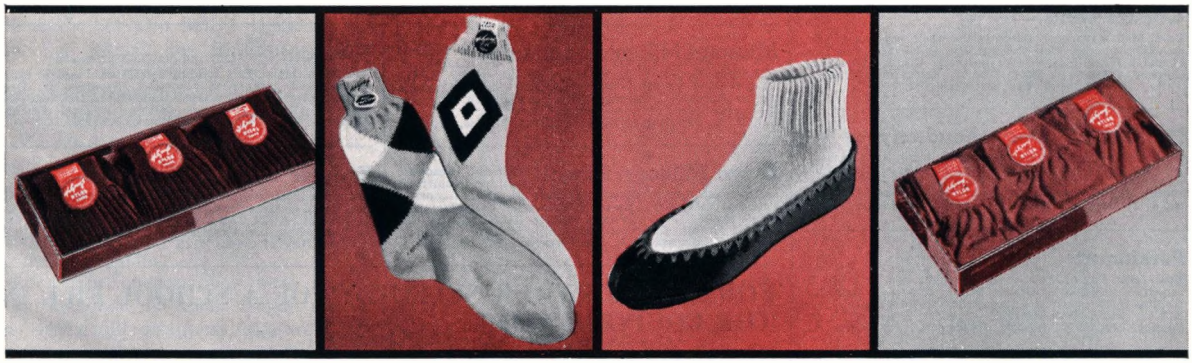

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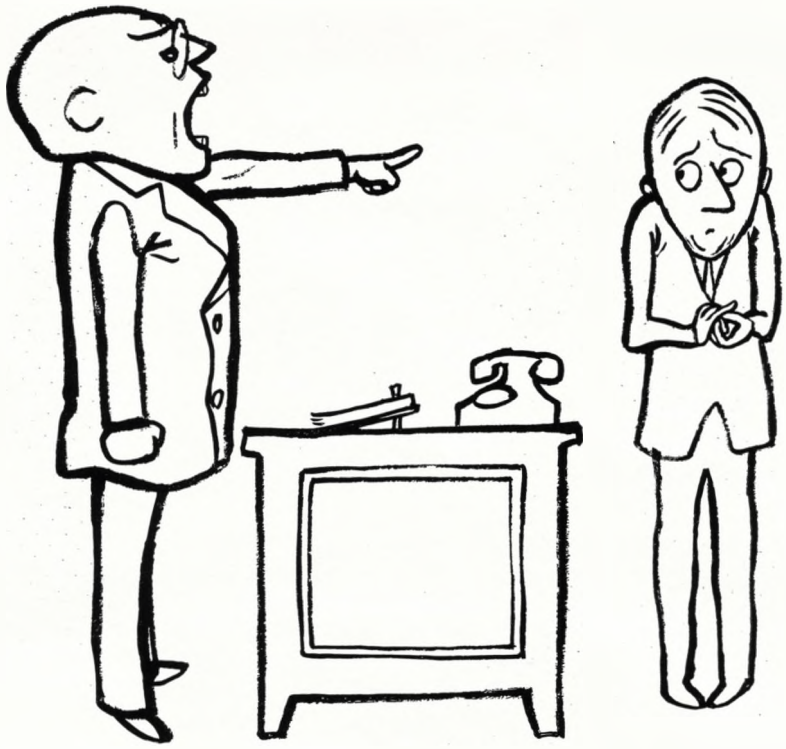

Be Glad You Got Fired

Chances are you'll wind up with a better job. Most top executives are grateful they once got the ax—and were cut loose from shackling work

BY JACK HARRISON POLLACK

Approximately a half million American employees were fired last year. At this very moment, at least fifty thousand others are on the verge of being discharged.

Naturally, a fired person feels worried, defeated, and unhappy—and isn't easy to live with. But if your husband is fired, don't jump to the conclusion that he's a failure and rush off to Mother or Reno. Ironically, being fired may very well be the making of him.

Studies and case histories show there are definite advantages to being fired. Instead of being a disaster, it can be a blessing in disguise. If your husband is young, able, and ambitious, it's likely that the boss who gives him a pink slip is, in the long run, doing both of you a favor.

"Probably everybody who went ahead or got ahead should have been fired at one time or another," says M. W. Clement, board chairman of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

"To be fired is to be aroused and sharpened," explains Philip D. Reed, board chairman of General Electric. "It frequently produces another success story."

Your Next Job May Be Better

Countless plucky men and women—after being fired—rose to the top of their profession. About sixty-five per cent of those who are fired ultimately wind up with better jobs, according to the conservative estimates of employment psychologists. A fired employee often emerges from his experience a wiser and more successful human being.

Take Clarence Francis. As a Wall Street messenger, he had to bring his boss a glass of water every hour and carefully place it on a blotter so it would not stain the desk. "Once I failed to use the blotter," he recalls, "and became the subject of a lengthy lecture. During the course of it, my boss learned I had left school before graduating. He fired me on the spot, saying no young man who didn't finish what he started could work for him!" Clarence Francis went back to school and today, as board chairman of the General Foods Corporation, he says, "That lesson of finishing what you start was the most important one of my life."

Many women have also achieved success after being fired. Take, for example, Amy Vanderbilt, who lost her first job, as a publicity assistant, in an economy wave. She went out and became her own boss and a noted etiquette authority. A woman who is an executive of one of New York's large department stores was

fired as a salesgirl in a competing store.

You may even land a husband after being fired. One talented girl who was discharged for demanding that the boss come through with the five-dollar raise he'd promised her was later hired by a man with a reputation for being a hard-boiled businessman. Within two years, she married him. Today this girl, Denny Griswold, is publisher of *Public Relations News.*

Employers, too, believe firing a person is helpful to him. "I can't recall a single person I fired who didn't profit from it, usually through getting into work he was better fitted for," reflects James Webb Young, senior vice-president of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency.

It Happens to the Best People

Pick almost any business or profession in America, and you'll find a little-known Horatio Alger success story that had its start when someone got the ax.

Take the automobile industry. Some years ago a cocky young man named K. T. Keller was working for a small Detroit auto firm, where the boss didn't appreciate his colorful personality. Result: Keller was fired for "putting on airs" and walked the streets for several fruitless months. But eventually he found a job and began the climb that finally brought him the chairmanship of the Chrysler Corporation.

As a young telegraph messenger, David Sarnoff was abruptly fired by his office manager for observing the Jewish holidays. Years later, the same manager —who didn't recognize his former employee—asked Sarnoff, by then president of RCA, for a job. "As a reward for having fired me, I gratefully gave him a job," recalls this pioneer in radio and television.

Other top businessmen who became tremendously successful after being fired include Harold P. Borer, now general manager of the Cunard Line, who was fired as an office boy; Robert R. Young, board chairman of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, who was dismissed as a financial adviser for predicting the 1929 crash of the stock market; A. C. Fuller, founder of the Fuller Brush Company, who got the brush as a Boston streetcar conductor; Robert E. Wood, board chairman of Sears, Roebuck, who was fired as a Montgomery Ward official.

"Firings in American industry are far more common than company records show," reveals Maude Lennox, the head of a prominent New York personnel service. "Many resignations and retirements are requested. Unless there is a concurrent announcement of a new appointment, you can be pretty sure that a resignation is a face-saving firing."

A male executive who "resigns" often blames his departure on office politics, his health, his disapproval of company policy, the awful climate, or the fact that the local schools are poor and no place for his children. Sometimes he abruptly disappears by going on "sick leave" or "special assignment."

Why Pretty Girls Get Fired

When a pretty, conceited girl who has been discharged as a secretary, typist, or receptionist is asked why she was fired, the standard alibi is: "The boss got fresh!" To this, personnel experts uniformly reply, "It's hard to believe *that* many bosses spend their time chasing girls around desks!"

What is the *real* reason people are fired? A study of office and clerical employees dismissed by seventy-six corporations reveals that carelessness, non-co-operation, and laziness are the most common causes of dismissal. Other reasons are absenteeism and dishonesty.

All firings, of course, aren't justified. The capable employee who incurs the jealousy of his immediate superior feels understandably bitter when he is fired. In the long run, though, it's far better for him to move to a friendlier atmosphere, where his abilities won't be resented and he'll be able to get ahead.

But most employees are fired simply because they are square pegs in round holes. Less than half of America's workers consciously choose their occupations. The majority drift into them through economic necessity, accident, or family pressures. But a firing usually awakens them to a realization of what they can—and want—to do.

For instance, a talented, restless young woman was bored with her fashion-promotion job in a large Eastern department store. "Since we had no other job suiting her abilities, her discontent forced us to fire her," discloses her superior. Within a month, she took a job with a leading fashion-publicity firm, and now she's a top executive.

Similarly, a young man who landed a white-collar job in an insurance firm through family connections was very unhappy in this position. His mental attitude so affected his work that one day he was abruptly fired. Promptly, he took a job as a gas-station attendant and showed marked talent in servicing and repairing automobiles. Today he owns a successful chain of gas stations in the Midwest.

Nevertheless, many employers are reluctant to fire square pegs because of the tight labor market, fear of unions, cowardice, or sentiment. Such squeamish bosses are doing an injustice not only to their companies but also to the misplaced workers. One big utility company has the whimsical reputation of never firing anybody except for murder—and then it has to be done on the premises!

But the longer an employer delays firing an unfit worker, the harder it is all around. "My boss made the mistake of not firing me fifteen years ago when I first came here," a $6,000-a-year, forty-nine-year-old man poignantly mused. "Now he has to live with that mistake. If he had only fired me, and I had had to find my right niche, I might have amounted to something."

Beware a Demotion

A favorite method of firing is to demote. "When that happens, it's a cue to get out and not be imprisoned by false security," warns one employment psychologist. Paul G. Hoffman, board chairman of Studebaker, told me that his father, at fifty, was demoted from department head to district manager by the American Radiator Company and his salary cut in half. Calling a family conference, Papa Hoffman announced he wanted to go into business for himself. He borrowed several thousand dollars and began producing a new line of radiator valves. "Within three years, he was making more money in a week than his former company wanted to pay him in a year," discloses Paul Hoffman.

Conversely, some executives are fired

(continued)

Drawings by Mitzi Melnicoff

Time's awasting for the square peg whose abilities lie elsewhere.

by being "kicked upstairs" into dead-end jobs with fancier titles but fewer responsibilities. But when you're young and in a rut, that's an ideal time to fire yourself, experts advise.

Many farsighted people have done precisely that, even though it meant less income for a time. When Charles Donald Dallas, Revere Copper and Brass board chairman, was tipped off by an American Brass Company secretary that he was about to be laid off, he went out and triumphantly launched his own business. Similarly, Philip D. Reed fired himself as a lawyer for the Van Heusen shirt company because he felt there was little more he could do for that firm. He entered an entirely different field, and within fifteen years, he became board chairman of General Electric. Still another successful self-firing is the case of Harry L. Loynd. Back in 1931 he fired himself from an $8,000 job as manager of a California drugstore to take a position with Parke, Davis & Company at $4,000 a year. What happened? Today he is president of the firm.

But human nature being what it is, people generally wait until a superior pushes them off the employment plank. They don't heed Edison's advice: "Every man should change his job at least every seven years."

One Advantage to Being Fired

There's one advantage that being flatly fired has over "resigning." Prospective employers are leery of the judgment of a person who quits without another job in sight. "But a discharge usually establishes the reason for the separation," explains Ben F. McClancy, general manager of Cleveland's Associated Industries. "Once that reason is established, the prospective employer can readily decide whether or not that shortcoming will have any effect on the job he has in mind."

Many firings have later proved quite ironic. Consider Colonel Henry Crown, the world's largest materials supplier and board chairman of the Empire State Building, who was once fired for "not knowing the difference between sand and gravel"; Al Barker, the world's largest publisher of novelty greeting cards, who was tossed out of school for, among other things, his corny poetry; Harry Kanter, one of America's leading necktie manufacturers, who was fired from his first sales job for being unable to knot a tie correctly.

Strong-willed individuals have succeeded even when fired by their fathers! Take Robert W. Woodruff, who worked for his father, Ernest Woodruff, as a purchasing agent for the Atlantic Ice and Coal Company. Believing that mule-wagon delivery was inefficient, he purchased some early automobile trucks—without paternal consent. But his father, who thought the automobile was a passing fad, kicked his son out. The young man went to Cleveland as a motor-company salesman and rose to a vice-presidency. Meanwhile, his father had obtained control of Coca-Cola. When its sales lagged, the board of directors called in young Woodruff. His father kept his mouth shut during the deliberations, neither approving nor disapproving the appointment. "The young Woodruff, of course, made the Coca-Cola Company what it is today," Ralph McGill, editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*, told me.

Five Rules for Job Losers

What does all this add up to? Here are some guide rules based on talks with employment psychologists:

1. Don't let being fired damage your personality. Sit down, objectively take stock of yourself, and try to improve your weak points. Try to see your former boss's side, and don't be resentful, surly, or uncommunicative. "When seeking a new job don't get discouraged. Follow up every lead, no matter how remote," advises Homer N. Calver, executive of the Paper Cup and Container Institute, who has followed his own advice with considerable success.

Gloom will tempt him to settle for the first job that turns up.

2. Many employees are never told the *real* reason they're fired, especially those who get perfunctory "your-services-are-no-longer-required" slips or telegrams from small concerns. But many enlightened big companies now have exit interviews and exit questionnaires, in

which both the employer and the fired worker try to learn from each other.

3. However beneficial your discharge may ultimately be, don't broadcast it. There's still a strong prejudice against discharged employees. "I advise job seekers leaving an unsatisfactory position to use the term 'laid off' instead of 'fired' on their applications," explains William D. Ingham, president of the Engineering Employment Service, in New York.

4. If your husband is fired, be tactful and understanding in the difficult period he is going through. "He needs your encouragement then more than ever," declares Maude Lennox. "Be a sympathetic listener, and don't harangue him with questions if he doesn't feel like talking. Help him plan his job campaign, type his résumés, remind him of his skills and strong points, keep family expenditures down, and don't let him sell himself short by desperately grabbing the first job offered. Persuade him to wait for the right one, if your budget can take it."

5. If you're young, you should expect frequent job turnovers. Some of this shifting may not be of your own choice, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's a bad thing. Even a recent study of older discharged workers made in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, reveals that many landed better or more interesting jobs.

All this doesn't mean you should deliberately go out of your way to get fired tomorrow. But if you are, remember that it may be a boot on the road to success—a phenomenon that is uniquely American.

A man now occupying one of the nation's highest positions recalls how he once came home from his job, infuriated, and bitterly vowed, "I'll never work for that lousy boss of mine after what he said to me!"

"What did he say?" his wife asked.

"You're fired!"

This Man Is Almost Fireproof

But probably the only person alive who can remain unperturbed by these unpleasant words is a shadowy young man reputedly employed in the adjustment section of a big department store. When irate customers can't be satisfied any other way, he is summoned and publicly rebuked: "You made a terrible mistake on this lady's order. You're *fired!*" Sadly he shuffles out and goes around the corner for a quick beer—before coming back to re-enact the performance for the next implacable customer. This young man is, of course, never worried about being "fired"—though it may *really* happen to him some day if he doesn't hurry back from his beer. THE END

Spanish Tourist Office

Spain's Mediterranean islands offer the twin attractions of inexpensive living and a colorful setting.

Two Weeks in Europe for $100

BY EDWARD R. DOOLING

Two weeks in Europe for $100 sounds fantastic, but it can be done —if you know how. Spain's island of Majorca is the spot, and the mainland city of Barcelona, from which it is reached, comes close to the same bargain classification.

Round-trip fare between Barcelona and Majorca is $12, whether you take the overnight boat ride or the one-hour plane flight. A de luxe hotel costs $7.50 a day for two people, including all meals. A $1 bus tour takes visitors to the cathedral at Palma, whose windows many art experts consider the most beautiful in Europe; the gypsy caves, where these colorful people will play a full concert of Beethoven for a bottle of wine; and the Carthusian Monastery of Valldemosa, where Chopin composed some famous works.

Barcelona combines the bad and the beautiful. It has water-front *bistros* frequented by the rough seagoing populace and tourist night clubs where a single show displays Spanish flamenco, Parisian apache, African voodoo, and New York jitterbug. Still, a night out, including dinner, costs under $10 for two.

One of the most popular sightseeing tours is the all-day bus journey from Barcelona to the monastery at Montserrat. There is a legend that any unmarried young lady making this pilgrimage will find a husband and either be married at the monastery or return there on her honeymoon. The tour costs $4, including lunch.

This is "the season" at Viña del Mar, seaside suburb of Valparaiso, Chile, and South America's answer to France's Nice. During the summer—December through February—the roster of international blue bloods there reads like an Elsa Maxwell guest list.

Viña is elegant, with its topflight hotels and restaurants, tropical gardens, fine shops, and decorous façades, and there's plenty of gaiety in the night clubs and casinos and around the swimming pools.

THIS MONTH'S BUDGET TRIP

So many people have asked for a winter trip to Southern California that I have outlined here a two-week vacation from New York that uses air-coach service both ways and includes all this playground's highlights.

Your overnight flight from New York lands you at Los Angeles in the morning with time to see its busy downtown section. Next day, you are off on a bus tour along Hollywood Boulevard and the Sunset Strip to the homes of movie stars in Beverly Hills, the Will Rogers estate, and Santa Monica.

A visit to Warner Bros.' studio is on your third day's agenda, along with a trip to Echo Park, Angelus Temple, San Fernando Valley, the Walt Disney studio, the Toluca Lake district, and the Hollywood Bowl.

The next day you go to Santa Barbara, where you will see the street of Spanish shops and the famous old Franciscan Mission. The return to Los Angeles is by way of the Malibu shoreline drive.

The journey's fifth day includes a visit to famous Knott's Berry Farm, with its old ghost town and a mine where you can pan gold. On the sixth day, you go to San Diego and dip south of the border for a visit to Tijuana in Old Mexico.

The seventh day is spent exploring the area around San Diego, and next day you are back in Los Angeles for a night at Ciro's. A short flight takes you to San Francisco on the ninth day to visit Chinatown, the missions, Seal Rocks, and the Cliff House, and take a cruise around San Francisco Bay.

The Muir Woods "big trees," Oakland, and Berkeley provide a fitting climax to your quick California vacation before your return flight to New York.

Total costs for this trip—including air-coach transportation, hotels, meals, tips, sightseeing, and taxes—are estimated at about $410. THE END

From Scotland—an impressive gift for important friends

A gift of Drambuie honors both the giver and the recipient and, because it is an after-dinner liqueur, it is a reminder of your good judgment long after the holiday season. Made in Scotland since 1745 from the secret recipe of Prince Charles Edward's personal liqueur, Drambuie is famous for its exquisite bouquet and unique dry flavour.
Imported by W. A. Taylor & Company, New York, N.Y. Sole Distributors for the U.S.A.

Drambuie in the distinguished new Bonnie Prince Charlie gift box, illustrated, is priced slightly under ten dollars.

80 PROOF

After dinner—there is nothing like a **DRAM** of

DRAMBUIE

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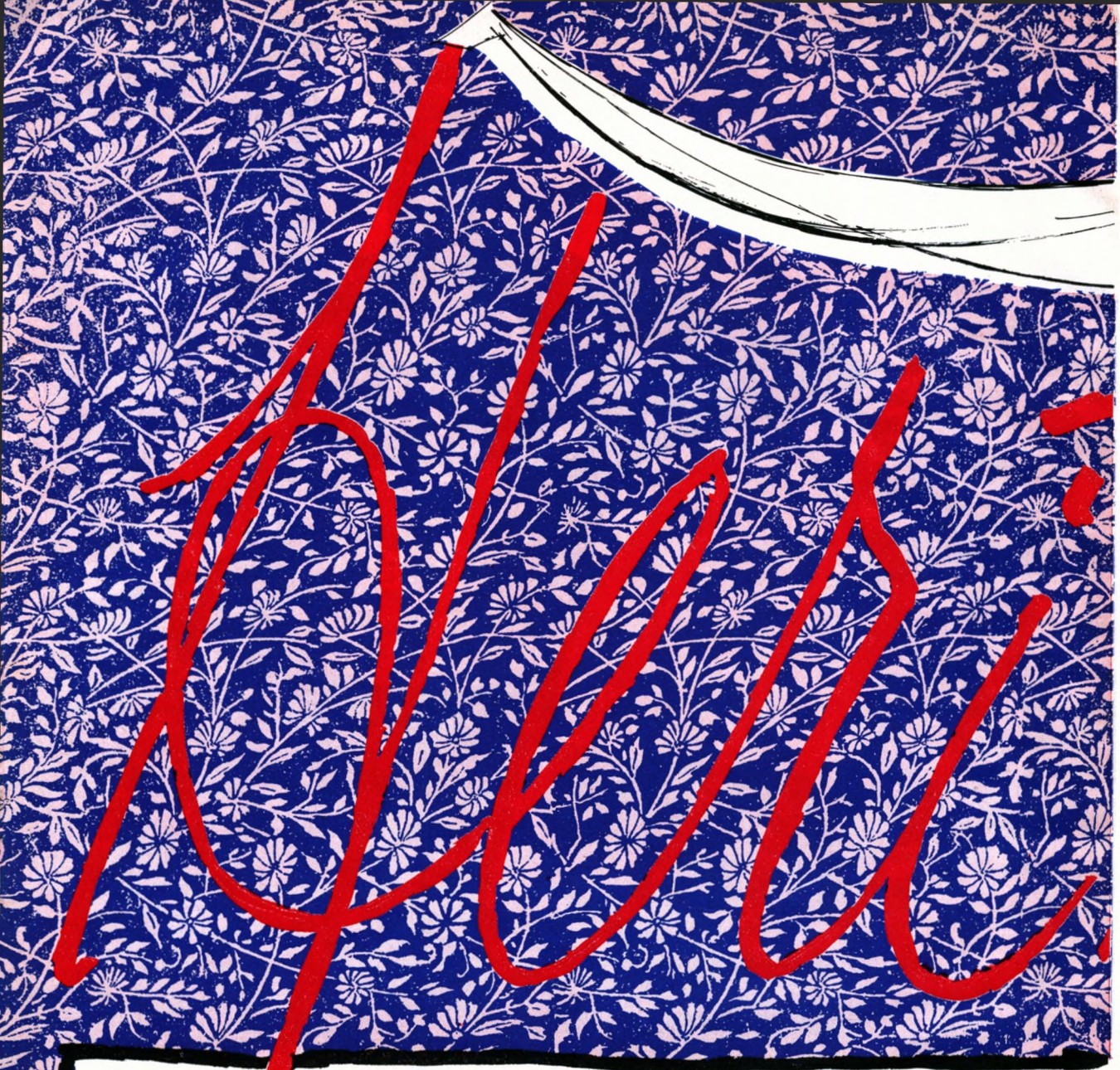


There was one thing he longed to tell her. Now, in this final hour, it would be his wedding gift to her— if he could find the words

ILLUSTRATED BY AL PARKER

BY COSMOS J. REALE

Suddenly the house seemed strangely quiet. Mart Chambers paused in the writing of the letter, his ears straining for some familiar, reassuring sound from the kitchen, where Rita and Delly, his wife and daughter, were having a cup of tea before going to bed. But from the second-floor bedroom where he sat at his desk, Mart could hear nothing, and it occurred to him that from now on the house would always seem strangely quiet.

He sighed and blinked his eyes quickly, a middle-aged man in a faded maroon robe, whose handsome face was too lean and whose mind was too confused.

Slowly he reread what he had written, shaking his head in disapproval. He knew what he had to say in the letter, but he couldn't quite express himself, not without sounding melodramatic or senile or just plain foolish. He wished emotions

could be expressed as simply and unequivocally as an arithmetic equation. He was an accountant, and he understood numbers. You put certain numbers down, added them, subtracted them; if you did it correctly, you obtained the correct answer. But it wasn't that easy with emotions.

Deliberately he tore up the letter and placed the bits in the palm of his right hand and made a fist around them, wondering desperately how many other men had shared his failure.

In a little while, he heard the click of a switch from downstairs, followed by Delly's soft laugh. Make her happy, Lord, he prayed silently, and his eyes stung suddenly. The familiar footsteps came up the stairs. Rita's and Delly's.

"See you in the morning, Mother," he heard Delly say.

"Good night, dear," Rita said.

In a moment, Rita entered the room and was surprised to see him still at his desk. "You came up an hour ago to get to bed early."

"I know," he said.

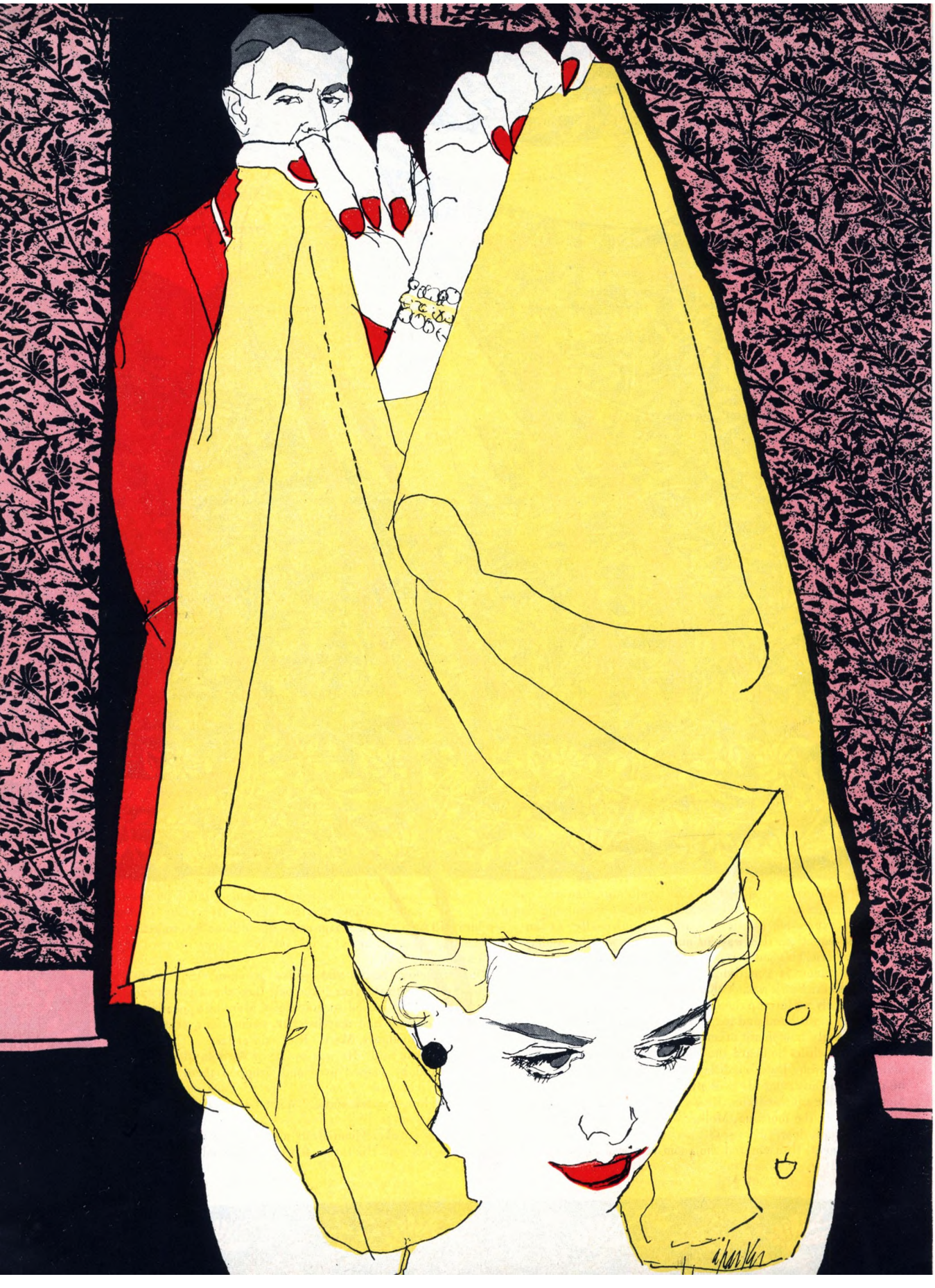
Rita stretched lazily and stifled a yawn. She hadn't changed much with the years. The pert face, the sensitive eyes, the trim body that moved so gracefully, were as appealing to him as the day he had married her, twenty-four years ago.

"I feel kind of funny, Mart," Rita said at last.

"I do, too," he said. He was aware of the bits of paper in his hand, and he leaned over and dropped them into the wastebasket.

Rita gave him a quick smile. "What have you been doing, Mart?"

"Thinking, mostly. About Delly and you and me. How it's been. How it'll be." His throat felt tight. "I tried to write her



a letter." He smiled sheepishly and jerked a thumb toward the wastebasket. "I couldn't go through with it."

Rita's eyes widened, glowing. "You should have finished it, Mart. She'd treasure it."

He shrugged. "I'm not good at that sort of thing."

She smiled wistfully. "I know, Mart. But it doesn't make any difference, really. Delly knows how you feel, without any letter."

"I don't know, Rita. I hope so, though."

Rita slipped off her shoes and rose. "We'd better get to bed. Big doings tomorrow." She started unbuttoning her dress.

"Johnny'll make her happy, don't you think, Rita?"

Rita pulled the dress over her head and then fluffed her golden hair with that brisk, attractive gesture he'd seen Delly imitate as a child but never master. "If Johnny can't, no one can, Mart," Rita said. "They've been gone on each other since they were kids. Must be fifteen years they've known each other."

"Sixteen," he corrected her. "They moved next door the year after we bought." Without wanting to, he was retracing the years of Delly's growing, the formative, binding years that were forever gone. He wished fervently he could go back to one or two episodes of the past so he could act differently, act as a father should act.

He sighed and was grateful Delly called then. "Bathroom's clear," she said. "'Night, now."

Rita and Mart answered good night, and Rita said, "It's little things like that, Mart, that make me feel funny."

He nodded, fully aware of what she meant.

"We've done our job," Rita said. "Now they'll have their chance."

Have we done our job? he thought. Have I?

An hour later he had not yet fallen asleep. He lay in bed, staring into the darkness, remembering a seven-year-old girl with pig-tailed, golden hair and remorseful brown eyes. She had stood timorously next to his desk, and as he'd entered the room, she'd looked at him with large, pleading eyes. He'd glared back at the eyes, and it wasn't until later he'd really become aware of what they were trying to communicate to him. He'd been too filled with the sight that confronted him—the bottle of ink spilled across the charts he had labored over all weekend.

"For the love of all that's holy," he'd exploded. "Must you forever meddle, Delly?"

Delly's eyes had widened, the fear naked for him to see. "I was trying to put the cover on the ink bottle. You—someone left it off."

"You have no business in here," he'd snapped, taking her by the arm and jerking her toward the door. "Now please don't touch anything on Daddy's desk."

Obediently Delly had gone out of the room, not turning to look at him, and he'd tried to salvage what he could of his work. All that night he'd re-formed the charts, and when he was done and the charts were in order, he couldn't see them. He could see only Delly's remorseful eyes.

He'd gone to her room then and tiptoed to her bed. She'd been fast asleep, and he'd leaned over and kissed her gently on the head. "I'm sorry, honey," he'd whispered, but, of course, Delly had not heard. And if she had, he'd told her too late.

It had been that way during all of Delly's growing up. He was always quick to rebuke her, and quickly, too, did he regret it. But never, never could he bring himself to apologize for his impatience, his lack of understanding. Until now—and now it was really too late.

A car turned into the driveway next door and skidded to a halt in the gravel path. That would be Johnny coming home from his bachelor send-off, and Mart could sense the boy's excitement in the movement of the car. In a moment, Mart heard the light, insistent tapping against Delly's window. Johnny had called for Delly that way since they were kids. He'd scoop up a handful of gravel from his driveway and toss it lightly against Delly's window. Only a handful was ever needed before Delly would appear at the window. But this time Delly did not answer.

Mart rose, careful not to disturb Rita. He went to the door of Delly's room. The door was open, and he could hear the staccato call of the gravel. He could hear this, and nearer still, he could hear Delly's quiet sobs.

For a long time he stood motionless, wondering what to do. Then he went downstairs and opened the front door, and immediately Johnny asked, "That you, Delly?"

"It's me, Johnny," Mart said.

Johnny looked up from the driveway, his young face eager and excited. "Thought I'd get another look at my future ball and chain, God bless her. She asleep?"

Mart nodded. "Probably dreaming about what a rough time you're going to give her," he said, keeping his voice light.

Johnny sighed happily. "I still can't believe the day is finally here."

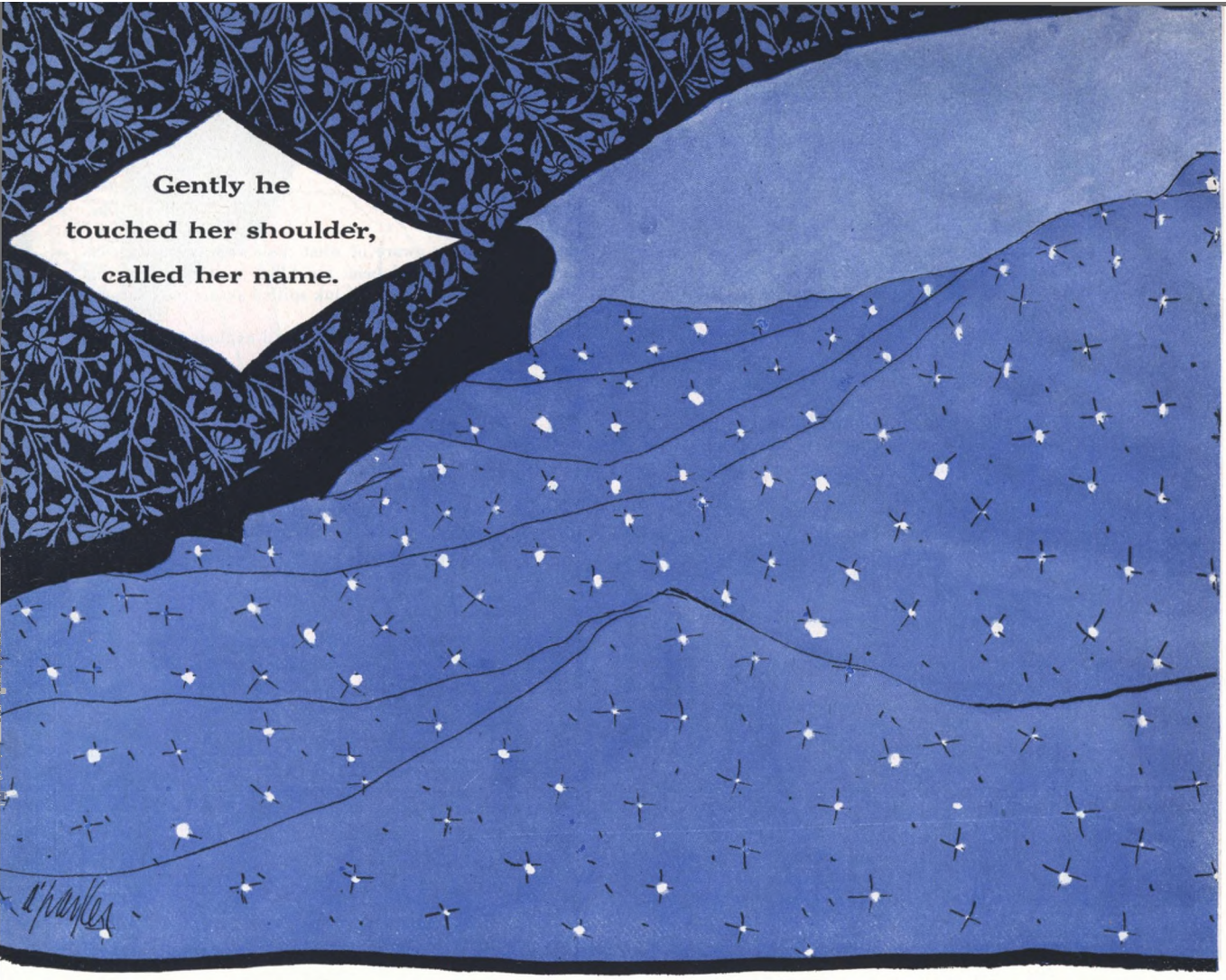
"Just be good to her, Johnny."

Johnny's face sobered. "You bet I will, Mr. Chambers."

Mart swallowed. "Thank you, Johnny," he said. He wanted to add, I hope you do what I haven't been able to do, be good to her. "You'd better hit the sack now, don't you think?"

"Yes, sir. Though I doubt if I'll get any sleep." He waved

He told Rita about the letter while they were getting ready for bed. "You should have finished it, Mart," she said wistfully.



Heritage (continued)

casually as he said. "See you at the altar, Mr. Chambers."

"Good night, Johnny."

Mart watched Johnny enter his house. Then he turned and went upstairs again. He paused outside Delly's room. He couldn't hear her crying now. The house was quiet again, as it would be tomorrow night and the nights to come. Suddenly he walked into her room.

Delly was lying face down, and gently he touched her shoulder and called her name. He had done this very thing numberless times. This would be the last.

Delly turned over, facing him in the darkness. "What is it, Dad?"

"May I put on the light, Delly?"

After a pause, she said, "Sure." And as he stretched for the switch, he made out the quick movements of her hands across her eyes. She was sitting up when the lights went on, her eyes a little red, her cheeks flushed. "What's wrong, Dad?"

Mart rubbed a hand along his chin. What should he say? How should he say it? He forced himself to raise his eyes. "I heard you . . . crying. I told Johnny you were asleep."

She glanced away. "Thanks, Dad." She shook her head, the long, fair hair tumbling. "Right then, I just couldn't face him." She turned to him again, smiling. "I'm all right now."

He sat on the bed, his gaze on the green rug in the center of the floor. "I wrote you a letter tonight, Delly. But I tore it up." He moistened his lips and went on with half a smile. "It was supposed to be a sort of wedding present, the intangible kind." He looked at her. Her eyes were large and round and waiting for him to continue. "I should have told you long ago what I put in the letter."

"What was in it?" she asked.

"A series of incidents, Delly. All the same, really. Some happened when you were a little kid, others when you were in grade school, then in high school. But basically they were all the same."

Her eyes were larger, seemed brighter now. "What were they, Dad?"

Mart swallowed, smiling wryly. "For example, the time you spilled the ink over my charts and I bawled the daylights out

of you. You were only trying to help, but all I could think was that you'd ruined my work. I was so sorry I'd been impatient with you, but I couldn't bring myself to tell you, somehow." He shook his head. "I don't know why I couldn't tell you. Maybe I thought you wouldn't respect me if I told you I was sorry. Maybe I was ashamed to admit I'd been wrong." He shrugged. "At any rate, I came to your room and kissed you that night, and told you I was sorry—after you were asleep. When it was too late." He met her eyes again. They were glistening, and her lips seemed to tremble. "That's the way it was all the other times, too. I'd be impatient, and then I'd regret it, but I wasn't close enough to you or honest enough with myself to let you know."

"I know," she said softly. She took a deep breath. "That night I spilled the ink, I didn't hear you come into the room or kiss me or tell me you were sorry." She paused and smiled wanly. "But a lot of other times I did hear you. I'd hear you apologize and then you'd kiss me. But I could never let on. I always pretended to be asleep."

"But why, Delly?"

"I was like you, I guess. I was either ashamed of myself . . ." She paused and shrugged abruptly. "I just don't know why. Maybe because I didn't know how to yield." She brushed at her cheek with the back of a hand. "That's why I was crying. I was afraid for Johnny and me, because I've never been able to yield. In marriage, both parties have to yield, Dad."

He nodded. "Of course. You have to yield to each other, and to your kids. It works both ways, Delly."

"Yes. Both ways." She forced a smile. "I don't feel much like sleeping. How about a cup of tea, just the two of us."

"Love it."

She threw back the sheet and slipped into her robe. She turned to him. "I'm not afraid anymore, Dad," she said seriously. "Thanks for talking to me."

"I'm glad, honey."

She flung herself roughly against him and buried her head in his shoulder. "I love you," she murmured.

He held her tight. It had taken them a long time to get here. But they had arrived, they had made it. "Be kind to each other, Delly, always." THE END

Silent Night

Few bachelors have escaped a party like this—or discovered a better solution

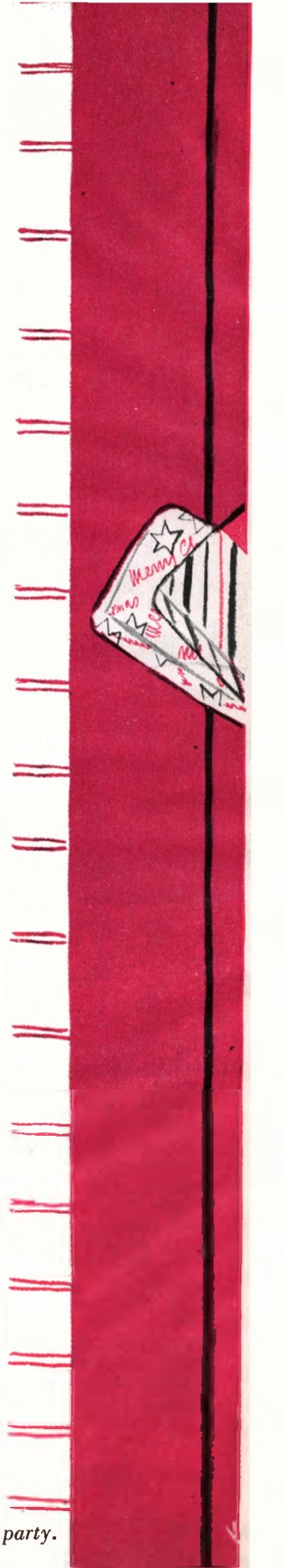
BY NATHANIEL BENCHLEY

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERIC VÁRADY

It was shortly before noon when Ralph Hammond arrived at Pennsylvania Station, and the area near the Long Island Railroad gates was packed solid with people. There were men and women who, like Hammond, carried Christmas packages under their arms; there were children who either tugged at their parents' hands, or sat forlornly on small suitcases, or simply stood and cried; and there were people who looked about as though they were lost, or frustrated, or angry. I hope I'll be able to get a seat, Hammond thought. I never realized there'd be this much of a crowd on Christmas. Maybe I should have come earlier.

It wasn't until Hammond tried to force his way through the crowd toward the gate leading to his train that he noticed that nobody else was moving anywhere. The people were just standing and waiting, and the bits of conversation he heard included things like "I suppose we ought to call Edna," and "Well, don't look at me—it's not *my* fault." Then Hammond saw the gate to his train was closed, although it was only five minutes before the train was due to leave, and he looked around and saw that none of the other gates was open, either. With a feeling of unreality beginning to creep over him, he turned and made his way toward the information booth, which was surrounded by an impatient, jostling circle of people.

After several minutes of waiting, Hammond found out there had been a small fire in one of the trains going through the tunnel; all the power had been turned



He waited, arms full of bundles, and wondered idly who was at the party.

off, and there was no reliable guess as to when the trains would start running again. His face a complete blank, Hammond drifted away from the information booth and joined a long line of people waiting to use the public telephones.

When, finally, it came Hammond's turn to wedge himself into a phone booth, he balanced his packages on his lap, then reached in his pocket and spread his loose change on the shelf beneath the telephone. He gave the operator the number, and then, after putting in the required amount of change, he heard Fred Burleigh's voice on the other end of the wire. In the background, there was laughter and the sound of many voices.

"Fred, this is Ralph," Hammond said.

"Well—Merry Christmas!" Burleigh said. "You on your way?"

"Yes and no," Hammond replied. He told Burleigh what had happened, and concluded, "I guess you'd better not wait for me. I'll grab a bite here, and you go ahead and eat as you'd planned. Lord knows when I'll get there."

"Look, I can drive in and get you," Burleigh said. "It's only about forty—"

"Don't be silly," Hammond interrupted. "You go ahead with your dinner, and I'll make it when I can. I'll take a taxi from the station."

"Well, we'll save something for you," Burleigh said. "I mean it—I'll be glad to come in and—"

"I wouldn't think of it," Hammond said. "You stay right where you are."

"That's a lousy way to have Christmas dinner," Burleigh said.

"Don't worry about me," Hammond replied. "Just save me a drumstick, or something, and I'll be all right. Really."

"Okay," said Burleigh. "I'll save you a few cocktails, too."

"You do that," Hammond said. "I'll probably need them."

It was three o'clock before the trains started running again, and it was after four when Hammond got off at the bleak, nearly deserted station. The air was sharp and cold, and although the sun was out, it cast a thin yellow light that made the leafless trees stand out sharply, and in the gutters and on the lawns were scatterings of gray, trampled leaves. As the taxi bounced and rattled through the empty streets toward Burleigh's house, Hammond had the feeling it was a Sunday afternoon; the only reminders of Christmas were the wreaths on the house doors, and at one corner, a child dragging a shiny new sled along the bare sidewalk.

There were four automobiles in front of Burleigh's house when Hammond got out of the taxi. He paid the driver, wondering idly if the cars belonged to friends or relatives, and then went up the front walk and sniffed appreciatively at the holly wreath as he rang the bell. From inside, the voices of several children rose in chorus, and then were suddenly stilled, and the sound of footsteps approached the door. Then he heard Burleigh's voice say, "And I mean it," and the door opened.

"Well, look who's here!" Burleigh said. "Come on in." Burleigh was tall, about Hammond's height, but he looked somehow chunky and disheveled.

"If I'm still allowed," Hammond said pleasantly, and entered. The house smelled of candy, cigar smoke, and turkey.

"You can get in any time," Burleigh said. "Here, let me take your coat." He helped Hammond off with his coat, and hung it in a closet already bulging with coats, hats, and mufflers.

"I brought some loot, here," Hammond said, indicating the packages, which he had put on the hall table.

"I think Alice has got something for you, too," Burleigh said. "Let's open them up later." He turned, and slowly led Hammond toward the living room. "The first thing you'll need is a drink," he said. Four children, of assorted ages and sexes, darted noisily past them and disappeared into the library. "Take it easy in there," Burleigh called after them. "That's not a gymnasium, you know."

The living room was hot and full of people, all of whom were sitting or reclining in various positions of stunned immobility. Their eyes rolled toward him as he appeared in the doorway, and across the room someone set down a coffee cup with a clatter. The Christmas tree, which was at the far end, was lighted, but the lights looked dim in the afternoon sun that shone through the windows, and the tinsel appeared dull and stringy. All around the room—on tables, on the floor, and on the piano—were boxes and paper and ribbon and neckties and shirts and handkerchiefs and cigarette lighters, and there was a shiny wood-and-steel contraption that appeared to be an aid to carving, and on the back of the sofa lay a neatly folded orange-and-black dressing gown. There were children's toys, too—a tricycle, a model garage, a doll carriage, and a yo-yo with electric lights in it—and they were strewn about the floor in those places where, it seemed, people would be most likely to walk. A crushed cardboard packing box burned sullenly in the fireplace.

Burleigh, moving clockwise, introduced Hammond to the other people, some of whom Hammond knew but most of whom were strangers. There was Mrs. Dunstan, Burleigh's mother-in-law, a small, round-faced woman with white hair; Aunt Kate and Aunt Millie, maiden aunts of Burleigh's whose pinched, stern faces were reminiscent of Grant Wood; Theodore Dunstan, a tall, gaunt man who wore

Someone started on "Silent Night," and suddenly that did it.

a heavy watch chain; Roger and Ada Griswold, Burleigh's sister and brother-in-law, both of whom looked pleasant, although, at the moment, slightly anesthetized; a small middle-aged blonde who was introduced only as Mrs. Cushing; and Leonard Hernweight, a thin, slightly bald man whose relationship to the rest of the group was obscure. Hammond shook hands with the men and muttered "Merry Christmas" once or twice, and then the men sank back into the chairs they had risen from and Hammond looked around the room and smiled at nobody in particular.

"Now, what can I get you?" Burleigh asked. "Do you want food, or drink, or what?"

"Well, I ate in the station," Hammond said. "I'm not particularly hungry at the moment."

"A drink, then?" said Burleigh, without enthusiasm.

"That would be fine, thanks," Hammond said. "A Scotch, if you have it."

"I should hope to tell you." Burleigh moved toward the bar, in one corner of the room, and mixed a highball for Hammond. Then he splashed a little whisky and water in a glass for himself.

"Where's Alice?" Hammond asked, as Burleigh gave him his highball.

Burleigh looked about the room. "In the kitchen, I guess," he said. "She'll be out in a minute." He raised his glass, said, "Cheers," took a small sip of his drink, and shuddered.

"Fred, don't you think you've had enough already?" said the woman who had been introduced as Aunt Kate.

Burleigh's jaw tightened, and he said nothing.

"Well," Hammond said, and reached in his pocket for a cigarette. "It's good to see you."

Burleigh smiled thinly. "It's good to see you," he said, and paused. "Let's sit down. I'm having hot flashes."

They sat down, and Hammond took a chair between Burleigh and Mrs. Cushing. Hammond sipped his drink, and for a moment there was silence.

"Mr. Hammond, here, was in a train wreck," Burleigh said to Mrs. Cushing. "That's why he was late." Mrs. Cushing's eyes widened to a point where they were slightly more than half open.

"It wasn't a wreck, exactly," Hammond said. "There was a fire on one of the trains, and they had to turn off all the power." Mrs. Cushing accepted this news with complete calm.

"My," she said.

"Bad go," said Hernweight, staring glassily at Hammond's left ear. Hammond put his hand to his ear, then took it away quickly.

From across the room came a soft, strangled, gargling noise, and everyone looked and saw that Mr. Dunstan had fallen asleep, his head on one side and his mouth hanging open.

"Theodore," said his wife, "*Theodore!*"

Mr. Dunstan's eyes popped open, and his head came upright. He stared, unseeing, for a moment, then cleared his throat and sat up in his chair. "Sorry," he said. He shifted his position, examined the black, unlighted end of his cigar, then began to grope through his pockets for a lighter.

There was another brief silence, and then Aunt Millie said, "I remember the day Albert passed on. It was just ten days after Christmas. Poor Hester was left with all the Christmas bills, *and* the cost of the funeral. It always seemed to me rather inconsiderate of Albert to do it just at that time. But then, he passed away in his sleep, so I suppose he didn't have much to say about it."

Mr. Dunstan regarded Aunt Millie for a moment. "Was that remark intended for me?" he asked.

"If the shoe fits," replied Aunt Millie, "then put it on."

Mr. Dunstan snorted, lighted a match, and drew loudly on his cigar.

Alice Burleigh came into the room, wearing an apron and carrying a stack of newly washed ashtrays. "Well, hello!" she exclaimed. "Merry Christmas! When did you arrive?"

Hammond rose, and kissed Alice on the cheek. "Merry Christmas yourself," he said. "I just got here a few minutes ago." He held up his drink, which he had consumed about an inch of. "That much ago," he said.

"Well, I'll be with you in just a few minutes," she said, distributing the ashtrays about the living room. "Have you eaten? There's plenty of turkey left."

"No, thanks, I've already eaten," Hammond said. "I got something in the station. Can I help you, though? Wouldn't you like a hand?"

"No, thank you." Alice replied. "I'm almost done. You just relax, and I'll come and be a proper hostess in a few minutes." She turned and went back into the kitchen.

From the library, across the hall, came the sounds of children quarreling. First there were two voices, then three, and then four, and they rose in pitch and intensity until their noise filled the living room. Burleigh sat still, clutching his all-but-untasted drink and staring straight ahead. Finally, Ada Griswold spoke up.

"Roger," she snapped, "for heaven's sake, go and see what the trouble is. Tell them if they can't be good, we'll take them home."

Griswold sighed, and started to rise, just as a girl of about five, in a rumpled pink dress spattered with cranberry stains down the front, came into the room weeping. "Louis hit me," she sobbed. "First he took my doll, and then he hit me." She leaned against Ada Griswold's knee, opened her mouth wide, and delivered herself of a long, anguished wail.

"Well, it can't be as bad as all that," Ada said, stroking the child's head. "I'm sure that if you asked him nicely . . ." She left the sentence unfinished, and looked at Burleigh, who suddenly exploded from his chair and stamped into the library. His voice could be heard, harsh and angry, and then a small boy walked, whimpering, down the hall toward the kitchen, and Burleigh returned to his chair and sat down.

"While you're on your feet, Fred," said Aunt Kate, "I think I will have another cup of coffee."

Burleigh closed his eyes for a second, then rose, picked up her coffee cup, and took it out of the room.

In the silence that followed, everybody watched the little Griswold girl, who had left her mother's lap and was now playing happily in the middle of the living room. After a couple of minutes, Burleigh returned with Aunt Kate's coffee. He placed it in front of her and then sat down. He looked at Hammond.

"You all right?" he asked. "Do you have everything you need?"

"I'm fine," Hammond said.

Burleigh drew a deep breath, then exhaled slowly and painfully. "You're lucky," he said. Something caught in his throat. "Pardon me," he muttered.

"Who's for a walk?" said Hernweight suddenly. "I think it would do us all good."

There was silence in the room for a moment, and then Aunt Millie said, "No good can come of exercising on a full stomach. That was what killed Lester Milbank."

"Lester Milbank died of drink," said Aunt Kate. "Everybody knows that."

"That was what they said," Aunt Millie replied. "I happen to know different. Lester Milbank was a drinker, yes, but what killed him was digging a fence-post hole after Thanksgiving dinner. Dr. Willis came to see me right after he'd come from the Milbanks'—it was when I was having a spell of sciatica—and they'd just taken Lester away. Dr. Willis said Lester would have lived another three years if he hadn't tried to dig that posthole on a full stomach. It knotted him all up, he said. Constrictions."

"Lester Milbank would be alive today if he'd left the bottle alone," said Aunt Kate. "And nobody can tell me different."

Hernweight settled back in his chair

and resumed his staring at the fireplace.

There was another silence, and then Mr. Dunstan began to breathe heavily and his head nodded forward.

"Theodore!" said Mrs. Dunstan sharply. "*Really!*"

Mr. Dunstan raised his head, opened his eyes, and looked around. "What?"

"If you *must* take a nap, why don't you go upstairs and lie down?" Mrs. Dunstan said.

"Nonsense," said Mr. Dunstan, trying to find his cigar lighter.

"How many cocktails did you have before dinner?" Mrs. Dunstan asked.

"Fifty-seven," replied Mr. Dunstan. He picked up a wooden match, lit it with his thumbnail, and relighted the stump of his cigar.

I guess I'm lucky, Hammond thought. If I'd got here for dinner, I'd be feeling the way the rest of them do. He drained the last of his drink, set the glass down on the floor, and reached in his pocket for a cigarette.

Alice, who had taken off her apron and rearranged her hair, came into the room. She looked at the clutter of paper and boxes, and said to Burleigh, "Don't you think we ought to burn some more of that stuff? All the trash barrels are full to the brim already."

"It'll just make the joint hotter," Burleigh replied. "Can't it wait?"

"Well, we can't leave the room the way it *is*," she said. "Look at it—it's a mess." She picked up a piece of wrapping paper, wadded it into a ball, and threw it in the fireplace. It smoked for a moment, then blazed brightly.

"Here, let me help you," said Hammond, getting up from his chair.

Alice looked at him and smiled, "Thank you, sir," she said. "You really don't have to."

Between them, Alice and Hammond collected all the paper and empty boxes, and then, bit by bit, Hammond fed them into the fire, which by now was roaring up the chimney. The heat gave added impetus to the drink Hammond had had, and he felt a little dizzy, but he told himself it was better to be doing something than just sitting between Burleigh and Mrs. Cushing, both of whom were on the verge of unconsciousness.

Suddenly, Ada Griswold said, "No, no, Lucille!" and there was a clattering crash as a glass bowl full of candy smashed on the floor. "Oh, *really*, Lucille!" Ada said, and the little girl began to cry again.

"Fred, would you go in the kitchen and get the dustpan?" Alice said, and Burleigh heaved himself out of his chair and moved slowly away.

When the candy and broken glass had been cleaned up, Ada looked at her watch and said, "I'm afraid we really ought to be going. We've got a long drive, and I think Lucille is tired, and . . ."

"The traffic will be getting bad in another hour," Burleigh said, dropping back into his chair. "You ought to beat that, if you can."

"Oh, that's right," said Mrs. Cushing, sitting up. "And the roads may get icy later on, too. I just can't *stand* the thought of driving on icy roads. I get all tensed up." She reached around behind her for her purse.

"It's not so many years ago," Aunt Kate observed, "women were driving clear across the country. In covered wagons."

Mr. Dunstan muttered something, and Aunt Kate looked sharply at him. "I beg your pardon?" she said.

"Nothing," said Mr. Dunstan. "Nothing at all."

As the Griswolds were gathering their belongings, Larry, the Burleighs' nine-year-old son, came into the room, bouncing a basketball. "Have a game of catch with me, Pop?" he asked.

"No," said Burleigh. "And don't bounce that thing in here. Take it outside if you want to play with it."

"It's getting dark out," Larry said. "You can't see."

"Well, I'm sorry," said Burleigh. "There's nothing I can do about that."

Larry turned and left the room, still bouncing the basketball.

When the Griswolds had left, Mrs. Cushing rounded up her two children (it surprised Hammond that she had children) and they left. Hernweight went at the same time, and offered to carry some of their possessions to the car, and a few minutes later Mr. and Mrs. Dunstan said they thought they'd better be getting along, too. There was a great deal of embracing in the doorway, and a wait while the Burleigh children were rounded up to say good-by to their grandparents, and then the door closed behind the Dunstans, and there was quiet in the house. In the living room, Hammond and the two aunts sat in silence. Hammond wanted another drink, but the thought of Aunt Kate's watching him while he poured it made him hesitate. Then Burleigh and Alice came into the room and settled heavily into their chairs.

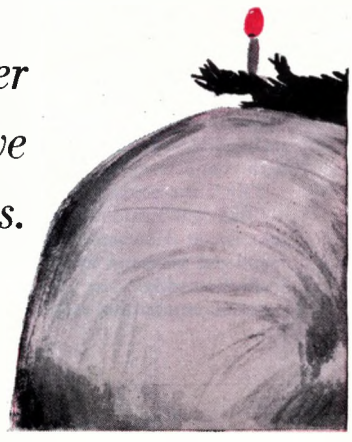
"Wow," said Burleigh.

"I suppose I ought to be looking up trains pretty soon," Hammond said. "I don't know how they'll be running this time of night."

"Oh, no," Alice said. "Don't *you* go. I've barely had a chance to say hello to you."

There was a sharp thud, and Larry's basketball bounced in a looping arc into the living room and hit the base of a standing lamp. The shade clattered, and

As festively as possible, he kissed her cheek, conscious of the glassy and impassive gaze of the assembled guests.



Silent Night (continued)

Larry nervously came in to get the ball.

"How many times do I have to tell you to keep that thing out of here?" Burleigh said loudly. "Now, stop bouncing it around here or I'll take it away from you." Larry got the ball, and scuttled away.

"You don't have to snap his head off," Alice said. "He didn't mean to do it."

"I told him before not to play with it in here," Burleigh replied. "There's been enough breakage as it is."

There was an uncomfortable silence, and then Hammond said, "Say, I have an idea. Is that tavern still open? You know—Frank's, or Jack's, or whatever you call it."

"Sure. I guess so," said Burleigh.

"Would you like to go down there for a while?" Hammond said. "I would be delighted to have you as my guests."

Alice considered this for a moment. "I ought to get something for the kids' supper," she said.

"Martha can do that," Burleigh said. To Hammond, he said, "That sounds like a fine idea."

"Well, let's go, then," Hammond said.

Alice was still hesitant. "Let me talk to Martha," she said, and got up and went into the kitchen.

Burleigh stood up and stretched. "I think you've got a good idea, there, boy."

"Is this a saloon you're going to?" Aunt Kate asked.

Burleigh relaxed his stretch and exhaled sharply. "No," he said. "It's an opium den. Come on." He beckoned to Hammond, and they went into the hall and picked up their coats.

Alice joined them in a couple of minutes. "It's all set," she said. "Martha says she'll stay until they're in bed." She went to the closet and took out her coat, and Burleigh snapped on the outside front light.

When they opened the front door, they saw it was snowing. The small, scurrying flakes sparkled in the light from the door, and the ground had already started to turn white. The snow fell against a curtain of darkness, through which they could see the lights of the houses across the street.

"Oh, look!" Alice exclaimed. "Look at it!"

They walked to the car with their faces upturned, breathing deeply of the cold air, and the snow fell on their cheeks and their eyelashes and their lips. When they got in the car, Burleigh started the windshield wipers, then rolled down the window next to him.

"Let's have some more of this air," he said. "This feels good."

It was snowing quite hard by the time they reached the tavern, and when they got inside, their faces were red and glowing with the cold. They took off their coats, and sat in a booth in one corner.

The tavern was about half full. Many people were sitting in the booths, and there was a single line of people at the bar, among them several servicemen and a few older, quieter men, who stared placidly into their drinks and spoke only when someone spoke to them. There was a jukebox in one corner, but not many people played it, and for the most part, the sounds that filled the room were of conversation, laughter, and once or twice, singing.

"All of a sudden, I feel wonderful," Burleigh said. "Do you think that air was all I needed?"

"I wouldn't say it was *all* you needed," Alice said, smiling. "But there's no denying it helped."

"I'm sorry," Burleigh said. "I guess I wasn't very charming, at that."

They gave the waiter their order, and then Alice turned to Hammond.

"And as for *you*," she said. "What kind of Christmas dinner did *you* have?"

"Splendid," Hammond replied. "Perfectly splendid. Roast beef and salami on rye, a bottle of beer, and a dill pickle. I couldn't feel better."

"You must be starved," Alice said. "I'll whip something together for you when we get home."

"Incidentally, why don't you spend the night?" Burleigh asked. "I can drive you in in the morning. There's no point trying to get one of those trains now."

"Yes, please do," said Alice. "We can put you in the spare room. Please. It's a *long* time since we've seen you."

"You know, I might just do that," Hammond said. "We'll see."

The waiter arrived with their drinks, and for each glass of water there were two shot glasses of whisky.

"Hey, what's this?" Hammond asked. "Did we order doubles?"

"No, sir," the waiter said. "Those soldiers, there"—he indicated three corporals standing at the bar—"they're buying a round for everyone who comes in here. They give me standing orders, they say."

"Well, I'll be damned," Burleigh said. He looked at the bar, and the soldiers looked at him, and smiled and raised their glasses, and Burleigh and Alice and Hammond raised *their* glasses, and everybody drank.

The next round, Hammond ordered drinks for the soldiers, and then down at the other end of the bar, someone started singing "Silent Night," and shortly everyone in the tavern was singing.

"You know," Burleigh said, when the song was over, "*this* is the place we should have come for dinner. Don't you think so?"

Alice exploded with laughter and put her face in her hands. "I can see Aunt Kate in here," she said, choking slightly. "And Aunt Millie, too, for that matter."

"Your father would like it," Burleigh said. "He'd have a good time here."

"How about that Hernweight?" Hammond asked, and both Burleigh and Alice laughed so hard that tears came to their eyes.

"It's the most glorious idea I've ever heard," Alice said, when she had regained control of herself. "And to think it was your idea we come here," she said to Hammond. "I love you for it."

"Oh, hey," Hammond said. "I forgot. I brought out presents for all of you. They're back at the house."

"And yours–I forgot to give you yours," Alice said. "How stupid of me."

"There's plenty of time," said Burleigh. "We've got all night to open them in."

"I hope it's still snowing," Alice said. "Let's have another round and then go walk around in the snow."

They had another round, and then Hammond paid the check. As they were getting into their coats. Alice looked at the bar, and then at Burleigh.

"Fred," she said, "let's go thank those soldiers."

"Fine," said Burleigh. "Good idea."

They went to the bar and thanked the soldiers for the drink, and Burleigh said, "Say, how about coming home with us? Would you like to come back and have a drink at our house?"

"Well, thanks," said the tallest of the soldiers. "I think we'll stay here for a while. You going right now?"

"Yes," said Burleigh. "I'll give you the address, though. If you want to come around later, we'd be glad to have you."

"Well, thanks," the soldier said. "That's very nice of you."

Burleigh gave him the address, and then he and Alice and Hammond went outside. It was still snowing, and there was about an inch of snow on the ground, and their feet made a dry, crunching noise as they walked to where the car was parked. They got inside, and Burleigh started the engine, and Alice began to hum "Silent Night." By the time they reached the Burleighs' house, they had sung all the carols they knew, and were starting on "Silent Night" all over again. THE END

Still singing, they tramped through the falling snow—and now, for all three, Christmas had really come.

The House that Nino Built

In four delightful short stories, the author of "The Little World of Don Camillo" tells with tenderness, laughter, and a rare humanity something of his own world, one he lovingly shares with Margherita, his wife; the Duchess, their daughter; and Albertino, their son.

By Giovanni Guareschi

ILLUSTRATED BY ISA BARNETT

BRINGING UP THE CAT

Our neighbor, Signora Marcella, was at our house on the day of departure and heard the Duchess' remark: "If the cat turns out to be a boy, it doesn't matter. But if it turns out to be a girl and lays eggs, please let me know."

After the Duchess—the name by which, for good reason, we call my young daughter, Carlotta—had gone, Signora Marcella gave vent to considerable indignation.

"That child has reached the age of reason!" she exclaimed. "To think she can't distinguish a tomcat from a tabby and imagines felines lay eggs, like hens or canaries! There are certain essential facts that ought to be made clear even to the very young."

But Margherita, my wife, wasn't in the least worried.

"As long as the cat is in the know, that's all that matters. I don't mind if my child is ignorant of certain essential facts, but of course, it wouldn't do for the cat to behave like a chicken."

I found this statement both logical and reassuring, but Signora Marcella didn't agree. "It's a mistake to keep children in the dark," she insisted. "Even the most old-fashioned educators believe they ought to be instructed."

Margherita has a limited number of ideas, but each of them is crystal-clear.

"Even the most old-fashioned educators are a filthy-minded lot," she replied. "That cat has never had any sexual instruction, but she'll know what to do when the time comes. No one ever talked very much to me about these things, but when I grew up, it never occurred to me to lay eggs like a hen or a canary."

Signora Marcella isn't the sort to appreciate Margherita's reasoning. "If you bring a girl up on fairy tales, how can she cope with the crude realities of life when they impinge upon her?"

Margherita was not in the least perturbed. "How did you cope with them yourself?" she asked. "After all, you and I were brought up on fairy tales, weren't we?"

Signora Marcella said times had changed, but Margherita insisted the famous "facts of life" were just the same now as twenty years ago.

"I can't think of anything more criminal than taking away the illusions of a child," Margherita said. "Fairy tales, as you call them, are like the foundations of a house. You may not see them, but they hold it up through the years."

This was too much for Signora Marcella. "What's criminal is to foster these illusions. If a girl's brought up on milk and honey, just think what a shock she'll receive when she learns babies aren't brought by the stork."

"It wasn't too much of a shock to me," said Margherita.

Signora Marcella had a great many things to say, the usual theories put forth by "sexual planners" the world over.

"I intend to tell my children fairy tales until they're at least twenty years old," concluded Margherita. "I still remember the ones that were told to me, and even if I've learned that they aren't true, I continue to get pleasure and comfort from them."

Signora Marcella insinuated that Margherita wasn't very bright, and Margherita insinuated even more serious things in return, and there the discussion ended. The cat turned out to be a girl, and having attended no courses in eugenics, ignorantly laid a batch of eggs.

I may as well admit I don't like cats. Although I treat them civilly, I cordially detest them. Cats may have a right to live, but I'd never allow them to exercise their right in my house if it weren't that my opinion on this score is subordinate to the will of the Duchess. Anyhow, when I say our cat is a miserable creature, no personal feelings are involved; I am speaking the pure and unadulterated truth. Cats love to display their fertility, but ours was unusually restrained and brought forth no more than four kittens.

For the first three or four days, we admired her spirit of self-sacrifice, but because she hadn't taken a course on motherhood, her maternal instinct petered out very rapidly. First she brought the black kitten into the kitchen, where Margherita gave it an enthusiastic welcome.

"Look, Nino!" she exclaimed. "She wants to introduce her children. In just a minute, she'll carry it back to the basket."

Instead of which, she left the pitiful little thing under the table and went

off. I restored the kitten to its home, but a few minutes later, the cat deposited the gray one with the white spot at our feet. After I had brought this one back to her, she did the same thing twice over again.

"I think she wants to find out which one, if any, we intend to adopt," said Margherita. "She realizes the task of bringing up all four is too much for her, and since we're such a respectable family, she's willing, for its own good, to give up one of her children."

I said I wouldn't tolerate her shuffling off her responsibilities in this fashion. She had made her bed, and now she must lie in it. Since she had brought these kittens into the world, it was up to her to look after them.

But the cat didn't see eye to eye with me, and the next day, the whole process was repeated. We found one kitten on the sideboard, one on the bed, one under the stove, and one on my typewriter. Even after we had restored them to their rightful place and treated the unnatural mother severely, she did not give up hope of foisting them off on us and proceeded to hide them in more recondite places, such as my dressing-gown pocket, one of my shoes, a flower vase, and the underside of my pillow. In the final state of her ingenuity, we could hear the kittens meowing all over the house, but it was impossible to lay hands upon them. Only hunger brought them out of hiding.

Margherita has gone to visit friends in the country, and I am all alone, wondering where the devil that miserable cat will conceal her little time bombs next. I'm not the kind that drowns kittens. And the Duchess has dispatched very definite orders:

"I'm glad to hear there are four babies. Remember to call them Fluffy, Toto, Pecos Bill, and Anselmo. But if one of them lays eggs and you know it's a girl, call her Anita Garibaldi."

There's the Duchess for you! That patriotic touch is what lays me low. I'm positively inspired by the fact that the cat just dropped Anita Garibaldi down the back of my shirt. If my country calls, I'll answer, "Present!" and set out for the wars, doubtless with all four kittens in my knapsack.

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR AN OVERGROWN BOY

"Don't forget the Christmas presents, Nino," said Margherita, just as I was starting off to Milan. "And remember, I want them to make a big splash."

"I'll do my very best to please the children," I reassured her.

"Never mind about the children," Margherita explained. "It's *my* present that's on my mind."

I admitted to being quite in the dark, and Margherita had to explain further. "While you're at it, Nino, you may as well buy the present I want to give you. You can't say no to that. In the first place, you have more imagination than I do, and in the second, you know your own tastes much better."

I felt deeply humiliated.

"Look here, Margherita," I protested, "what meaning can there be in a present I give myself?"

"You're not giving it to yourself at all! It is my present, and you are simply

pinch-hitting for me in the choice."

It seemed to me that Margherita's laziness had gone entirely too far, and I cut her short with, "Very well, then. I'll do without a present from you, that's all."

"Whatever you say!" Margherita retorted. "If you don't like my present, you're free to refuse it."

There was no point in prolonging the argument, so I got into the car and drove away. And after I had attended to the regular business that had brought me to the city, I started looking for presents.

When you're up against the job of buying an assortment of presents for people of different age and sex, then to my mind, there's only one method of attack, and that is to go to a big store, where under one roof you can find anything from toys to overcoats, from Persian rugs to transparent, illuminated globe maps of the world, from shotguns to armchairs, from andirons to bicycles, each category displayed in its own department and under the care of competent clerks.

In the early afternoon, I went to such a store and followed the procedure I have always found most efficient. That is, I went calmly from one department to another, jotting down notes about everything that appealed to me. After I had passed all the principal departments in review, I looked over my notes and tried to assign these various objects to the people on my Christmas list. Only, when I got to this particular point, I found none of the objects that had caught my eye was suitable for any one of the beneficiaries.

So I resorted to a really foolproof system; that is, I went through every department with one particular person in mind. For instance, the Duchess, my daughter. And after I had covered the whole store in this fashion, I started out again, this time with my mind on Albertino, her slightly older brother.

By the end of the afternoon, I had got to the bottom of my list and found I had bought the following things: three door mats, two pairs of andirons, a set of kitchen knives, a small green rug, a dozen flowered-china soup bowls, a clothesbrush, an umbrella stand, and several ashtrays.

The next day I came back and adopted procedure number three, which consists of trusting God and following the crowd from one counter to the next. This leads to the discovery of all sorts of new and wonderful things and unexpected answers to the most difficult problems. So that, on the day after, I had only to repeat the process once more in order to make the number of presents tally with the number of names on my list. I heaved a sigh of relief. Thank heaven, that was over with! It wasn't, though, because all of a sudden I remembered Margherita.

I had presents for everybody, yes, everybody but myself. And if I wanted to receive a present from Margherita, it was up to me to do something about it. Did I really have to bother myself with such foolishness?

"Whatever you say," Margherita had told me. "If you don't like my present, you're free to refuse it."

And the sadness of her voice had made it seem as if my failure to buy a present for myself would be really tantamount to turning down a present she had bought for me. I was sitting meditatively over a cup of coffee and watching the crowd go by when a thought flashed across my mind. "What would Margherita have chosen if she had set out to buy something for me?"

I left the café and wandered along the street, looking into shopwindows. Very soon I had the answer. Margherita would have bought me a tie. Of course! Although she knows perfectly well that I never wear a tie, that is what she would have bought. Don't women always think of a present to a man in terms of ties? But Margherita is a woman of a very unusual sort. Her illogical logic is clear proof of that. No, she wouldn't have bought me a tie; she'd have bought me a barometer!

A barometer! That was a good joke! Why should she buy me a barometer? Except for one particular kind, where a girl with an umbrella pops out every time it's supposed to rain, barometers have never attracted me. But this one particular kind has its appeal, and I was forced to admit it. I'd wanted one for years, without a ghost of a chance of seeing it come my way.

What a lot of things I'd wanted when I was a child! But my family didn't give presents in those days. In fact, I never got a present at all unless I bought it for myself. My mother would have liked to give me one, I know that, but she simply couldn't. And when I finally got a bicycle, something that was just as necessary to me as my daily bread, I felt as if it had come to me from my mother.

Of course, this business with Margherita was a different story. Margherita wouldn't give me a gadget with a girl that pops out every time it's supposed to rain. Margherita is far more generous than that. I stared into one window after another, trying to figure out what in the world Margherita *would* give me. Then it came to me. That vest-pocket radio! There was the solution! I went into the shop to ask how much it cost, and then imagined the face Margherita would make when she heard the answer. The price was sky-high, and I could just hear Margherita conducting the transaction.

"Forty thousand, did you say?"

"Yes, forty thousand, plus the luxury tax."

"All right," Margherita would say calmly. "Let's make it thirty thousand, and that's all there is to it."

The shopkeeper would look at her with mirthful amazement.

"Forty thousand, and I'll absorb the tax," he would counter. "But that's as far as I can go."

"Then I'd better look just down the street where I saw the same thing for thirty-two thousand."

I could picture the whole scene, and hear every blow struck by either side. At a certain point, the shopkeeper would say in a very special tone of voice: "Thirty-five!"

From his tone of voice, Margherita would understand that thirty-five thousand was the rock-bottom price, and she would take the money out of her bag.

Now I went out of the shop, imagining how Margherita would walk home, mumbling to herself: "If the silly man doesn't like his present, then he's out of luck!"

I stopped to look at a window where there was a big box of tiny plastic blocks, enough of them to fit one on top of another and make a perfect little toy house. Margherita would look at it the same way and say to herself: "I'll get this for Nino, too. Just the sort of stupid thing he's sure to like."

Then, once she had bought the blocks, Margherita would write off the list of Christmas presents in her mind. Unless she were to catch sight of that miniature jet plane, which can be piloted by means of two slender twenty-five-foot cables from the ground below, and it occurred to her that this might very well be the object of my long suppressed desire. In which case, she would surely buy it.

That's Margherita's way, because she is so illogically logical. The fact that twenty-two years of life can be reckoned from one of my mustachios and twenty-two more from the other would never deter Margherita from buying me a toy jet plane.

Meanwhile, it had grown late, and I had to take myself and my mountain of parcels home.

I got home all right, and Christmas Eve went off as scheduled. Someday, when I write up "my tragic youth," I may elaborate on the fact that instead of the usual Christmas cards, I received an electric-light bill, a bill for bottled gas, a billet-doux from the carpenter, and other such sacrilegious nonsense. Thank heaven, everything turned out very well in the end; in fact, it was extremely touching. But I must return to the climactic moment, when the presents came into the story.

We went, in wedge formation, the Duchess at our head, to the room where the Christmas tree stood. Presents were laid out all around the tree, each marked with the recipient's

name. Margherita received a big box, whose contents seemed to delight her. Then she asked abruptly, "Nino, what about yours? Haven't you got one?"

"I don't know," I answered. "If you've given me what you promised, then it must be around here in one place or another."

Sure enough, the Duchess ferreted out a parcel bearing my name.

"It's a present from her," the Duchess explained.

Margherita was beside herself with curiosity.

"Well, what have I given you?" she whispered.

"How do I know?" I replied. "Let's open it and see."

We opened the box, and there were a wonderful vest-pocket radio, a set of building blocks, and a toy jet plane. I was overcome by such extravagance.

"How do you like them?" Margherita asked.

"Very much indeed!"

"Did I get what you like?"

"Absolutely! You hit the nail on the head!"

Our friends stepped up, and the blocks and the plane caused them to evidence some surprise. "Are those things for Nino?" they asked.

"Of course," said Margherita. "You can't understand," she added, "unless you know him the way I do."

The Duchess stretched out a tentative hand in the direction of the toy jet plane.

"No, it was given to me, and *me* is going to keep it." I said *me*, and I meant it.

Now I knew why I was so happy over my presents, and I felt as lighthearted as if I had shed the forty-four years to be reckoned from my mustachios and returned to the same age as that of Albertino. Then I thought of the Nino of days gone by, who had never received a Christmas present, and I was sorry for myself, yes, very sorry.

"Nino," I reflected, "you'll never get anything out of life except what you earn by the sweat of your brow. And that's the greatest present God could possibly give you. May God be praised!"

AGE FORTY

Margherita said we must take full advantage of the last days before the children came back from their holiday in the country.

"I intend to have a good time tonight, all on my own," she declared. "I'm going out dancing."

I caught her up on the inexactitude of her expression. You can't very well go dancing without a partner, that is, unless you intend to give a solo performance, and that isn't quite the thing for a wife and mother to do.

But Margherita explained that "all on her own" simply meant without me.

"The main thing is you shouldn't go along, Nino," she said. "I'm quite fed up with your face. Night and day, day and night. It's like the face of Damocles, hanging over me."

"Have a good time," I answered. "I think I'll go to the pictures."

"Whatever you say," said Margherita. "But first you must take me to my night club. I don't like to be out on the street alone at night. And you can call for me, later on. Of course, I could find someone to bring me home easily enough, but I couldn't entirely trust a stranger. You never can tell; he might be a gangster in disguise."

I took Margherita to the night club and then pretended to go away. Instead, I sat down at a table hidden by a potted palm, as far as possible from the table where I had left Margherita. I had only to push aside a branch to enjoy a perfect view of the dance floor, her table included. After a while, a talkative young man came and sat down beside me.

"Pretty poor pickings," he observed. "All the girls have somebody with them.

A free lance like myself is out of luck."

"Don't take it so hard," I told him. "I see several women who look as if they were at loose ends."

"Oh, good Lord!" he exclaimed. "A few overgrown babes that are fair, fat, and forty!"

I remarked that a forty-year-old woman may have more to offer than an insipid girl. He admitted the truth of this observation but maintained it wasn't easy to pick a winner.

"That's perfectly simple," I told him. "Just keep your eyes peeled. Remember that it's an acid test for any woman to sit alone in a public place. If she has someone with her, she can always make out; she can giggle, hum, smoke a cigarette, wriggle around in her chair, and pretend to be shocked if he tells her a funny story. Or else she can put on a tragic act. She can stare sadly into the distance until the man asks her why she is so unhappy, and that gives her a chance to tell him she's not like other women because of a secret sorrow in her past. But when a woman's all alone, the way we are, it's a different story. If she can seem to be nonchalant and in perfect command of the situation, then she must have real class."

So my companion looked around at the few lone women in the room. "There's a dumb Dora, all right!" he whispered into my ear. "A regular old maid, if ever I saw one! I doubt if she can lift one foot up after another. Straight from the sticks, don't you agree?"

"Do you mean that stout blonde in the green dress?" I asked, pushing aside a branch of the palm.

"No. The one on the left, in the flowered dress, with her handbag on her lap. Can you see her?"

I could see her perfectly. It was Margherita, of course, and she did look as if she had just arrived from the country.

"Look at those legs under the table," said the young man. "Mother's little darling must have corns, because she's slipped off one shoe."

"I don't think she's so bad," I told him. "Why not give her a try? Just ask her for one dance, and if that's all you can stand, take her back to her own table and leave her."

"I'm not in an experimental mood," he answered.

Finally, after we had discussed three or four other lone geese, he made up his mind.

"I'll try that old gal in yellow there in the corner," he said grimly. "If you see that I'm in trouble, call the police. Don't walk out on me."

My young friend never did come back. I saw him sitting at the table of the woman in the yellow dress, who was gesticulating at him, while he nodded silently in reply, managing every now and then to shoot me a look of utter anguish. It was a quarter to twelve, and my poor girl from the sticks was still sitting like a bump on a log, with one shoe off and one shoe on. All of a sudden I sank into one of my sporadic fits of depression.

I am in perpetual pursuit of my youth, and this is the source of all my sorrow. The harder I pursue it, the farther it retreats. There are nights I follow the street leading to my old school and peer through the familiar gate, but the wind of time has swept all my words away like so many dead leaves and the darkness is silent as a tomb.

Sometimes I lose my sense of proportion and see the world on a reduced scale, as if through a microscope, with all the infinite fractions between the numbers one and two, and the atoms of time between one second and another. Everything around me starts moving; I see my son growing, the apple tree in the garden sprouting, my fingernails lengthening, and the paper before me turning yellow. Nothing stands still. All things flow, as the old Greek philosopher had it, and while they evade containment, I am overcome by panic and struggle desperately to escape the cursed law of time. "Stop! Stay the way you are!" I call out to my sleeping daughter and to the chair upon which I am sitting, because I want to halt my youth and look at it again while I still have a chance. But time drags me farther and farther from my past, robbing me of the only wealth I once so fleetingly possessed.

It was a quarter to twelve, and my poor girl from the sticks was still sitting alone at her table. I was stricken with panic, because there, behind Margherita, was the elusive ghost of my youth.

While everyone else was dancing, I edged my way along the wall to the bar, from which I made a conspicuous entrance to the dance floor, directly back of Margherita.

"I've come just in time for the last dance," I said to her. "Or is it taken?"

Margherita stood up, without speaking, and casually slipped on her shoe.

"A flat tire, I see," I said breezily. "As usual, I suppose you danced every dance."

"Of course," she replied.

"Well, if your feet ache tomorrow, I'll have the last laugh," I said maliciously.

"We only live once," she said with a smile.

The last dance was a Strauss waltz, which gave satisfaction to everyone over forty. I whirled about like a Hollywood hussar, and Margherita was as light in my arms as the ghost of my youth.

A ROOM TO DIE IN

"Margherita," I said one day, not long after we had finally settled in a home of our own, "in which room do you advise me to die?"

She stared at me in perplexity.

"Margherita," I said, "when you live in a rented house, you move every so often, or at least there is always a possibility of moving. For many a year, we roamed the seven seas, until finally we came ashore, burned our oars, and turned the planks of our ship into a chicken coop."

"Nino, you're overworking your imagination," Margherita said severely. "We haven't a chicken coop. We have only two miserable pigeons that appear out of nowhere every so often, simply to provoke us."

"Of course, the chicken coop is strictly metaphorical," I told her. "We must have landed among these walls, and among these walls we must die. Just tell me which you think the most suitable room," I repeated.

Margherita put her sewing aside and got up from her chair.

"That's true," she said earnestly. "It's something to think over."

"Oh, it's not as urgent as all that, Margherita," I hastened to say. "God alone knows how many more hours we are to tread the mill."

"All the more reason why we should give it thought. In this life, one has to be ready for everything, including death. Think hard, Nino. If you were suddenly afflicted with a fatal disease, where would you go to die?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"The bedroom seems the logical choice," I replied. "For one thing, it's roomy. There's plenty of light and air."

Margherita shook her head sadly.

"And would you find it natural that after all my grief, I should go on sleeping in your deathbed? That I should brush my head against your pillow and see the last book you were reading on the bedside table?"

This was a reasonable enough remark. I have always been intolerant of egotists, and in my opinion we must die, as well as live, like ladies and gentlemen. Why should I impose such suffering upon Margherita?

"Because the room is so very roomy," I said, "we could always put a couch over by the radiator, and I could die there instead of in our bed."

She sighed. "It's a shame to go into such morbid details, but now that we've brought up the subject, we may as well see it through. You say yourself that the bedroom's the best room in the house, so why should I have to give it up after you're gone? Because the more I think about it, the more keenly I realize I could never sleep in the room where you had died. It's a matter of delicacy and good taste."

But the idea of the couch appealed to me, and I couldn't let it go. "As a matter of fact, the children's room is even more agreeable than ours, and you could perfectly well exchange with them."

At this moment, the Duchess, who had been listening from the side lines, actively entered the discussion. "I won't sleep in the room where you die," she stated categorically. "Dead people scare me."

"The first thing you've got to learn," I retorted, "is to respect your father's dead body!"

Margherita shared my indignation. "Yes, your parents' bodies should be sacred to you," she said to the Duchess and Albertino.

And then, turning to me, she added, "Nino, they don't know what they're talking about. But I'm amazed you should insist upon dying in the bedroom. Wouldn't your study be a much more suitable place? There's a couch in there already, and it's a room where you've spent so much time that you'd feel comfortable and cozy. There's something very heroic, too, about ending your days amid the surroundings where you've worked so hard. It would be like a captain going down with his sinking ship."

It wasn't a bad idea, and the comparison with a ship captain was highly flattering.

But at this point Albertino put in a word. "If *she* says she couldn't sleep in a room where you had died, how can you expect me to work in one? I'd be the head of the house, you know, and the study would be my headquarters. You

always say the place where a man works ought to be bright and cheerful, and if you die in the study, it will always have sad associations."

"That's logical enough," said Margherita. "The boy has both feet on the ground. Now that I think about it, perhaps the room next to the study is still more intimate and cozy."

"Nobody's going to die in my playroom!" the Duchess protested. "I've got my homework to do! And when I'm a little older, my friends will be coming to see me and we'll want to play the phonograph. Surely you wouldn't want me to play records in the room you died in!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" said Margherita. "Thinking of music and parties already! When I was your age, I didn't think of anything at all."

"You couldn't have been very bright, then," said the Duchess. "But how about the living room, where you entertain your friends when they come to call. After all, he's *your* husband."

Margherita branded this suggestion as sabotage, and I didn't like the idea of such a frivolous place, either. We were left with the dining room and the kitchen, which were excluded. Suddenly I had a new idea. "The garage!" I exclaimed.

We made an immediate inspection and decided this would be the perfect place.

"The wide door will facilitate the flow of visitors coming to pay their respects to the body, and also the passage of the coffin," Margherita said.

Margherita and I sat down on a packing case to smoke a cigarette.

"Well, we can put that problem behind us," she said with a sigh. "The idea of dying in a garage is slightly depressing, Nino, but let God's will be done!"

We were silent for a moment or two, and then I recovered my natural buoyancy.

"What can we know of fate's designs, Margherita?" I exclaimed. "Who knows if we shall really draw our last breath in this garage? We may die in a train wreck or an automobile accident, you know. Or perhaps we'll be laid low by a stroke while we're strolling through a flower garden overhanging the sea."

"A flower garden overhanging the sea!" said Margherita dreamily. "There's a picture for you! Imagine dying just as the setting sun plunges into the water!"

"I'd rather die at dawn," I protested, "when the world is fresh and new."

After some discussion, we compromised on half past two in the afternoon, an hour when everything is quiet and motionless under the midday sun. Now, as we came out of the dark garage, we were happy to find ourselves in all the glory of a May morning.

"Life goes on!" said Margherita.

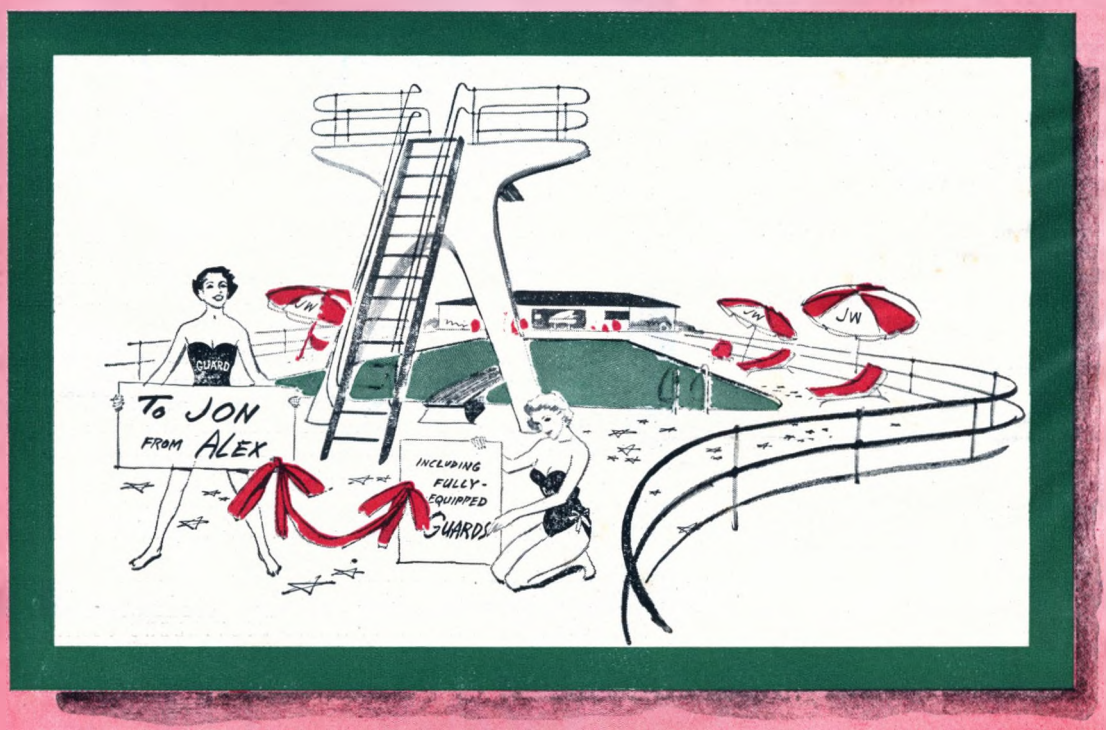
THE END

Merry Christmas, Jon

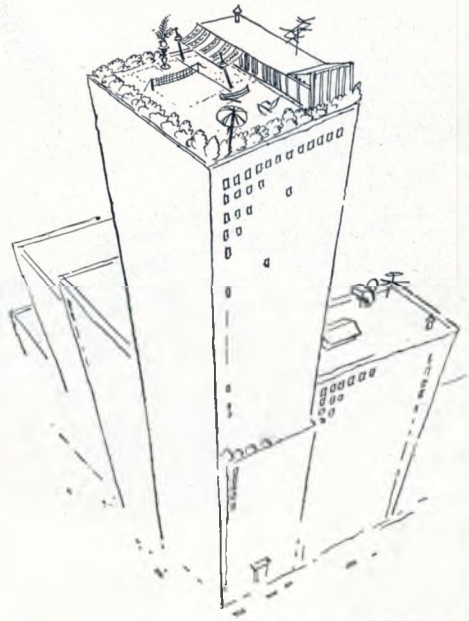
Five illustrators send Jon Whitcomb their Christmas greetings. Nothing big, you understand—just stupendous

With all the beautiful dames Jon has drawn and all the illustrations I have done for mystery stories, my Christmas wish is that we could get together one of these days on a real classy murder. I'd provide the dead body as usual, and a Whitcomb doll could make with the dirty work. A kissable killer at last. **AUSTIN BRIGGS**

Every man should have an ol' swimming hole to bring back scenes of his childhood. Here is one for Jon. But with this pool's luscious lifeguards, who'd really care about his childhood? **ALEX ROSS**



Jon is a real cool man on his Hammond organ, sending them in bunches at his Darien hacienda. This hepcat rates a leopardskin-covered musicmaker, and I'm the guy to give it to him. **AL DORNE**



What do you give a guy who has everything? A helicopter! So he can stop burning the parkway between Darien and his Manhattan penthouse in that old (1953) Cadillac.

COBY WHITMORE

I'm sending my Joe Robot. He makes great illustrations. Only trouble is—the girls are She-Robots, which figgers. Teach him to paint a *real* beauty, Jon, and we'll both retire. **AL PARKER**

Life in the wake of war can be heady and seductive, especially when a man is six thousand miles away from the only woman he ever really loved—his wife

BY WILLIAM D. MAGNES ILLUSTRATED BY ALEX ROSS

It was only yesterday Caroline Sinclair phoned me at the office, telling me she had decided to go to Japan. But the way it's started me thinking again about Woody, her husband, during these past twenty-four hours, it's as though I had known for a long time that this would happen.

I've never met Caroline. But because I was so intimately involved in the affair, though just as a bystander, I guess it was only natural she turned to me for advice. I'm afraid, considering the serious consequences of her decision, that when I spoke to her on the phone I didn't come through with any sharp, definitive package of wisdom. All I did was suggest that before she rashly took off for Japan, leaving her two children behind with her mother, she cable the Kennans


Alex Ross

in Yokohama. From what I know of Woody's background, I don't imagine that his wife has ever strayed far out of Oklahoma, that she is equipped to face any of the difficult problems that would confront an unsophisticated, Arcadian woman alone in Japan.

"I haven't had a letter from him in six months," Caroline told me over the phone. "But I haven't lost hope, and I feel that *my* letters are getting to him, because none of them have been returned." She went on to say she had sought the aid of the Army and the Red Cross, but they had been unable to help her; the Army no longer has jurisdiction over Woody. Finally, she had written to the State Department and had since been advised, succinctly, that a letter of inquiry to the United States Embassy in Tokyo has produced no information.

So when I told Caroline that Major Hank Kennan and his wife, Lucy, had been very close friends of Woody's and mine in Yokohama, she agreed it was a good idea to cable them at once. I asked her to send me a wire at my office as soon as she received a reply.

In advising Caroline to cable the Kennans for information on Woody's whereabouts, I may have given her reason to expect them to help her more than they are able to—or care to. If Hank Kennan replies that he knows where Woody is, that will be fine. But suppose he cables Caroline that he knows nothing, even if he does and, for some reason, is protecting Woody?

Perhaps *I* should have cabled Hank. After all, he's never had any contact with Caroline, and he knows that I—far more than he—was acutely concerned with what happened to Woody. I, the thirty-five-year-old sophisticate, the guy who always had been so sure he could call his shots on the enigmatic workings of human nature and—in the case of Woody Sinclair—had been so wrong, had actually been involved in the thing from the beginning.

It was in Seoul, Korea, I first met him, in the late fall of 1950. He was a lieutenant being assigned to my infantry company, and my battalion CO had instructed me to pick him up at the railroad station. I traveled south from battalion headquarters, and when my driver and I pulled into Seoul, the streets were clogged with Army vehicles and plodding natives. Everyone was obviously in high spirits. Our UN troops and the ROK forces had been pushing the enemy back into North Korea at such a furious rate that the general feeling was that the fighting would be over in weeks and we would be home by Christmas.

It was a cold, gray, raw day, and we had been compelled to drive with the top of the jeep down. I had been ruminating grimly that even if the Korean war did suddenly end, it would not mean I would be released from the Army. I had been involuntarily recalled to active duty from civilian life for a period of twenty-four months; and as of that day in Seoul, I still had twenty to go.

As my driver and I made our way slowly through the traffic, I realized with irritation that there was just enough time to get to the RTO. In fact, the trainload of new assignees had already arrived from Pusan. The station was crowded, seeming to be a mass of confusion. I wandered around, and over by a stall where a filthy native woman was overtly selling American candy bars —acquired by theft or through the black market—I noticed a tall, slim first lieutenant.

He looked lost and woebegone, and it was obvious he had just arrived from the States. His uniform was spotlessly clean and he was wearing a helmet (none of us wore helmets except when we were right on the line, and even then we soon discarded them). If he hadn't been a first john, I would have suspected he was fresh out of OCS. There certainly was nothing in his appearance that indicated he had, as I later learned, been an infantry platoon leader in World War II.

I went up to him. "Sinclair?" I asked.

"Yes, sir." He snapped to attention and gave me a smart salute.

"Relax." I said. "relax. My name's Baxter. Jeff Baxter." I offered him my hand. "Welcome to Chosen, land of the stinking honeybuckets. Pretty, isn't it?"

"Glad to know you, Captain Baxter," he said. "The trip up from Pusan wasn't bad at all, sir."

The look in his blue eyes was so ingenuous that I was convinced he wasn't being sarcastic. He wouldn't let me help him with his gear, and on the way out of Seoul, he asked me questions about the tactical situation up north, about the battalion's current mission.

"Of course, I don't mean to ask anything of a classified nature, sir," he said politely.

I didn't want to talk about the damn war. I wanted to chat pleasantly about the beautiful, smiling gals back in the States, to reminisce about all sorts of unimportant things. But I found myself speaking in a brusque, military fashion, though punctuated, for a change, with a minimum of profane expletives. I looked through the rearview mirror at him, sitting on the high back seat as erect as a West Point cadet at chow. A nice, clean-cut, wholesome young guy, I thought. He'll always be friendly and cheerful in a quiet sort of way. He'll get along with the GI's, though he'll never be the subject of hero worship. Maybe he'll develop into one of the best platoon leaders in my company. I concluded he definitely was not my cup of tea.

I was correct in my judgment of Sinclair. And though I was CO of Baker Company and he was one of my platoon leaders, I saw very little of him. When the company was committed to action or Sinclair's platoon alone was assigned patrol duty, I actually had less contact with him than with any of my other officers. For Sinclair carried out his orders so capably that barely any discussion was necessary between us. He had had a good record in World War II, having seen action on Kwajalein, Saipan, and Okinawa. After the war, he had returned to a small town in Oklahoma, to his wife and children and to his job as a teacher on an Indian reservation. And then, for some reason unknown to me, he had rejoined the Army for a three-year tour of duty. That had been prior to the Korean outbreak, before many of the Reserve officers, of which I was one, had been recalled—involuntarily.

When the company was in reserve, I rarely saw Sinclair. The rest of us had a running poker game, and if we were not bent over cards, we would lounge around in my tent or my exec's, drinking, chatting indolently. On several occasions, I invited Sinclair in for a drink, telling him he should feel free to drop in at any time. But I had the feeling he regarded that as perfunctory, and though he and the other officers got along easily with each other, Sinclair never seemed to be participating fully in the spirit of good-fellowship. I didn't try to force a breast-beating kind of camaraderie, but I did pride myself on the warm, friendly relationship among my officers and men. I was annoyed by Sinclair's apparent refusal to join in it.

One afternoon, when we had been bivouacked near Pyongyang for several days with nothing to do, four or five of us were sitting in my tent. We were feeling wonderfully high because we had been drinking Martinis. We opened up canned hors d'oeuvres, delicacies relatives had sent from the States, and were having a festive time when Sinclair poked his head into the tent. He was enthusiastically greeted, but he refused a proffered Martini.

"What's the matter, Sinclair?" I said, my irritation over his attitude spurred on by the effect of the liquor. "Don't you believe in drinking in the middle of the day?"

He smiled but didn't reply.

"Or don't you ever drink Martinis on

that Indian reservation you call home?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, Captain, we don't," he said quietly.

The others regarded this as a great joke. They began to kid him about having led a sheltered life. He took it very good-naturedly.

Then one of the officers said, "Boy, you must have left a lot of broken Indian hearts back in Oklahoma the way you write letters every single damn night. Have you missed a day since you've been in Korea?"

"Oh, those are letters to my wife," Sinclair said. "I haven't missed a day yet, not even when I've been out on patrol." He announced it with a kind of pride, but I thought I detected in his subdued manner a shade of embarrassment.

I jumped on that as my opportunity. I said, "Afraid if you don't write, your wife'll think you're carrying on with some beautiful Korean belle?" I could just picture him in his tent, night after night, writing long letters to his wife, pouring out sentimental drivel that would sicken me even to *think* about, let alone to put down on paper.

"No, Captain," he said. "It's because I *want* to write to Caroline every night. And to the kids." If there had been the bite of sarcasm in his voice, I wouldn't have minded so much. But, no. He was the honorable, honest young man, the good husband and father. He was the guy who had remained beautifully clean and wholesome. "You're not married, are you, Captain?" he said simply.

"No, I'm a divorced man," I said with heavy emphasis on each word. I grinned at the others in the tent. "I have no one but my poor old mother to write to. But what's the use? She couldn't read my letters, and if she could, she wouldn't bother to answer them. Dear old Mother is an alcoholic."

But my labored humor fell flat. No one laughed. I glanced around the silent tent, and I watched two of my guests get up.

One of them said. "I think I'll go over to my bunk and crowd in a little shut-eye before chow. Coming, Angie?"

Looking at Sinclair, who was smiling uncertainly, I was sure he was not so naïve as to take what I had just said as more than an attempted joke. At the same time, I had the feeling he didn't realize I had been taking a crack at him. I had been, of course, though not intending it to be as vicious as it had sounded. I walked over to the foot locker in which the liquor supply was stored.

"How about some whisky, Sinclair?" I said.

"Oh, I don't think so, Captain. Thanks, anyway."

"Come on, come on," I said in a light tone. "And the name's Jeff, you know."

"Okay." He smiled at me. "Thanks, Jeff. Thanks very much."

That winter of 1950, the UN army was hurled back by tremendous enemy onslaughts. Down the peninsula we were pushed, with huge losses of personnel and matériel, until the world thought this would be another Dunkerque. We spoke of it as the bug-out, the wild, hell-on-wheels retreat that in official communiqués was called a "tactical withdrawal." Finally, after days of retreat, we were able to entrench ourselves just north of Army Headquarters, outside the limits of Taegu.

Baker Company had many and varied missions during this time. Once we, with the other companies of the battalion, were formed into part of a task force—Task Force Kimchee—whose mission was to probe through the enemy lines and to relieve an isolated key communications center at Chipyong-ni. Committed to this action were tanks and artillery—and the infantry. For Baker Company, the first day passed without incident, but then

He answered our kidding with quiet pride. "I want to write her every night," he said.

before dawn of the third day, the company was suddenly overwhelmed by waves of screaming, bugle-blowing Red soldiers. We fought hand-to-hand combat for six hours until, at last, two other units of the task force came to our support. Baker Company was left reeling, and I was appalled at the number of casualties we had suffered in dead and wounded. One of them was Sinclair. Though his wounds were not severe, it meant my best platoon leader was out of action.

I made the rounds, with my first sergeant, of the groups of wounded and of the able-bodied soldiers who were just resting or working around their foxholes. I talked to them all and then walked up to a knoll where Sinclair was lying, propped up against a tree. He slowly raised his left arm in greeting and smiled.

"Hi, Jeff," he said.

"Hello." I knelt before him. "How you feeling?"

"Fine, fine." A first-aid man had given him morphine to relieve his pain. "How does it look?"

"Well, we're going to stay here the rest of the day. We'll push off after dark."

"We really got clobbered, didn't we?"

"Yes, but we held our ground."

"We have heavy losses?"

"Yes, pretty much so."

"What about Jacobs, Sergeant Jacobs?"

"I'm afraid he got his. Hand grenade."

"Oh."

"How about a cigarette?" I lighted one for him. "You'll be evacuated to Japan if you're lucky—clean white sheets, pretty nurses, good food."

"I don't think so. I'm not badly hurt. Besides"—he looked me straight in the eye—"I don't want to go to Japan."

"Well, I'm afraid you'd have to lose an eye or a leg before they'd think of shipping you back to the States."

"You don't get what I mean, Jeff. I want to stay right here in Korea. With the company." He stared down at the ground, concentrating on pulling a tuft of grass. "I'm not like you Reservists,

The good life had everything—
decent food, plenty of liquor,
magnificent clubs—and women.

just sweating it out here until your time is up." he said. There was no malice in his tone. He was merely stating a fact. "I've still got almost two more years to serve. And when that's up, I might even decide to sign up for another three-year hitch."

"I understand," I said. But I didn't. I had no idea why Sinclair would want to stay in the Army; in Korea, at that. He appeared to be a happily married man, to judge from his daily letter writing and the number of times he found an excuse to drag out pictures of his wife and two children.

But I wasn't going to question him, certainly not in his present condition. Besides, I had many duties to take care of and had to brief my platoon leaders, or their assistants. "Anything I can do for you?" I asked as I stood up.

"Not a thing, thanks. If they send me back to a base hospital, I hope they'll only keep me there for a couple of days."

I studied him. This smacked of a young kid's bravado. But no, that wasn't true. He'd shown himself to be one of the bravest, most cool-headed men in the company. Besides Sinclair had already been through a hell of a lot in the Pacific in World War II. He had earned the Purple Heart with one cluster and on Saipan had been awarded the Silver Star. I guess it was just that I didn't understand him at all. I wanted to ask him if he would like me to write to his wife, since he would be unable to use his right arm. Because he had been writing to her daily without fail, she surely would worry if his letters suddenly stopped. But I just couldn't bring myself to the point of mentioning that to him.

"Sure I can't do anything?" I repeated.

"Sure, Jeff." The open expression on his face was so disarming I suddenly had the feeling, though I know he didn't mean to imply it, that I had been directly responsible for his having been put out of action.

Just before H hour, our attack was called off. I drove a jeep back to the CP. There I learned that Chipyong-ni had been entered by a U.S. regimental combat team and ROK division and, therefore, that Task Force Kimchee had been dissolved. Our battalion would regroup as an integral unit, and probably within the next forty-eight hours we would receive new orders. Meanwhile, Baker Company was to dig in along the side of the ridge.

I had many things to do, and above all I should have welcomed the respite as a chance for rest. But somehow, and I was irritated that I couldn't get him out of my mind, I kept thinking more about Sinclair than anything else. Consequently, early the following morning, having turned the company over to my exec, I found myself driving to the rear, hoping Sinclair had not yet been shipped from the battalion aid station.

When I arrived there, Sinclair was lying on a cot. He was obviously in pain. But to my surprise, he seemed very pleased to see me.

He smiled and said, "I've been thinking, Jeff. Maybe you could write to my wife."

"Of course."

"My wounds aren't bad, but my right arm'll be bandaged, and they say I'll be in the base hospital for at least a week." Stretched out on the cot, his eyes closed, he said, "I guess I don't have to tell you what to write, Jeff. You'll probably do a better job of it than anyone could. But in a way, it's too bad I wasn't really knocked out seriously, 'cause Caroline'll worry her head off no matter what you say." His face contorted into a feeble smile, and then he told me something about his background.

Sitting there in the tent, realizing that I was not an intimate friend of Sinclair's, I felt somewhat like a chaplain, old and dispassionate.

When Sinclair had been released from the Army after World War II, he had returned home to his wife and two children. Because of all he had been through in the Pacific campaign, he had been perfectly content to go back to his former job, teaching elementary school on an Indian reservation in Oklahoma. Listening to him and knowing as much as I did about Sinclair, I thought he probably was about as well-fitted temperamentally for his work as anyone could be. Sinclair was a quiet, gentle guy, sympathetic and patient. I couldn't think of a better place for him than a schoolhouse.

Although his wife and he were happy with this life, the pressure of financial problems soon forced them to make a drastic decision. Sinclair's salary as a schoolteacher was paltry compared with what he had earned, and been able to save, in the Army. The Sinclairs decided, therefore, that the benefits of his going back into service far outweighed the disadvantages. As much as he had disliked Army life, Sinclair re-enlisted in 1949 as an officer for a three-year tour of active duty. His plan was to save as much money as he could during the three years, and then, at the end of that time, his wife and he would come to a decision about their future.

I wrote to Mrs. Sinclair, but before there was time for me to receive an answer, I, too, became a battle casualty. Baker Company was well forward in a narrow sector around an important Allied outpost on the slope of a snowy mountain, when in the dark of one night, the enemy suddenly and furiously overran our lines. There were screams and wild confusion as hordes of Red soldiers assailed us. I never did find out exactly what happened. All I know is that I was hit. I was evacuated to the rear and flown to the Army hospital in Tokyo. I had a head injury. It laid me up for a couple of weeks, but it wasn't serious enough to get me shipped back to the States.

While I was recuperating, I was told I would not be sent back to Korea. I was discharged from the hospital, and after a luxurious one-week rest at the beautiful Kanaya Hotel at Nikko, ninety miles north of Tokyo, I was assigned to the Japan Logistical Command in Yokohama. My job, in the Public Information Office, was a cinch, and after Korea, living in Japan was sheer paradise. The life was rich, plush. Liquor and good food were plentiful, and inexpensive, at the officers' clubs, magnificent hotels that had been commandeered by the U.S. Army. There were theatres and night clubs in cosmopolitan Tokyo, only forty-five minutes from Yokohama. And above all, there were women—lots of them—Japanese and American. It was heaven, particularly for an unmarried officer.

In this completely different mode of living, if Sinclair ever crossed my mind it was only long enough for me to think I probably would never see him again. So when, right out of the blue, he came into my life again, I was greatly surprised.

It was a Saturday afternoon, golden bright and clear, with a vibrato of promise in the air that seems to be almost tangible on spring days. Unfortunately, I was staff duty officer, but the demands of that duty were such that I was not confined to my post at headquarters; I had only to phone in every once in a while. I was at the Colonial Club with Marge Clary, an attractive gal working for the Navy's MSTS. We were drinking Cokes (while on duty I couldn't touch anything alcoholic) and playing gin rummy on the sun porch, when I was paged. It was the staff duty NCO on the phone. He told me an officer had just reported in from Korea on reassignment

Diane came in with smoldering confidence, her body moving with exquisite grace.

and wanted to speak to the staff DO. I said I'd be right over. It turned out, of course, that the officer was Sinclair.

"Jeff!" he exclaimed. "Jeff, it's wonderful to see you!"

I imagine he greeted me so enthusiastically because it was comforting for one just arrived from Korea to run into a friend, especially one already assigned to Headquarters. Coming out of the field to a spit-and-polish headquarters could be unnerving, and Sinclair certainly was not one able to put on a casual, jaunty front. I could brief him on protocol, help him get oriented. I did—and then some.

He would not have to report to the adjutant until Monday morning. "Only thing left for you to do now is get quarters, and then the rest of the weekend's yours." His enthusiasm had affected me (I watched him grinning at me), so that if I hadn't already had a roommate in my Quonset hut, I would have asked him to move in with me. As it was, driving him to the hut area, I felt I wanted to make his first weekend in Yokohama as pleasant as possible. There was nothing magnanimous about that. But he kept insisting he didn't want to interrupt any plans of mine.

"Don't be silly, Woody," I said. I told him that after he had washed and had straightened out his things, he should go over to my room. He could relax, make himself a drink, and then I would be finished duty in about two hours. In the meantime, I would phone Major Kennan and Lucy that I was bringing an extra man to their party. I paid no attention to his objections, never thinking he might prefer writing to his wife.

On his first night in Japan, I don't know how else I would have expected Sinclair to act. But I can remember being somewhat surprised—and pleased, too—at the way he threw himself into the spirit of things. He was lively and gay, laughing and drinking with the rest of the crowd.

It was a large, congenial party, like all the Kennan affairs. The Kennans lived high on a hill in a rehabilitated Japanese house that exquisitely combined the comforts of Occidental indulgence with the delicacy of Japanese décor. The living room and dining alcove were crowded, with the result that some guests overflowed into the garden. Far below and stretching out from the land was the massive sweep of Yokohama harbor. The night was dark, with no moon, and across the black expanse of water were hundreds of twinkling lights.

It was toward the end of the evening, about time for the party to break up, and I was gazing out at the lights, reflecting soberly that those might be the lights of ships carrying men and supplies to Korea. Marge was standing by my side. She said something to me, and for a moment, I was too absorbed in my own thoughts to understand what she was saying.

"What'd you say?" I asked.

"I just said that Diane McKettrick's arrived. I heard her."

"Oh."

One did not have to see Diane McKettrick to know she had entered a room. One could be in another part of the house, as Marge and I were, and just sense it. Sometimes it was a hush that came over a group of people, or it was a sudden change of tempo in their conversation. Or it was simply an inexplicable dynamic quality that suddenly seemed to rend the air. Even in New York, prodigal with stunning women, she had cut an impressive figure. I had known her slightly in New York, running into her occasionally at cocktail parties. That was before her marriage, and she had been a fashion co-ordinator or some such esoteric thing.

"Is she alone?" I said to Marge.

"I don't know. I guess so."

It was only on rare occasions, so I was led to believe, that Diane McKettrick went out, and then only alone and to private parties. Married to a Regular Army officer, whom I didn't know, she had been here in Japan with her husband at the time of the Korean outbreak. When he had been shipped to Korea, she had chosen to wait for him in Japan instead of returning to the States. She was a very sophisticated gal who was meant for festive doings, and she had many friends in the officers' set. But unlike other women in her situation, she dated no one, whether openly or on the sly. It was explained to me, when I arrived in Japan, that her husband was a very jealous guy. Whatever it was, I soon sensed that no one *dared* to date her. I know how it slapped down my ego when she politely refused me, New York tie or not.

It was late. I turned to Marge. "You want to leave?" I said.

"All right."

The living room still was fairly crowded, but I saw Diane at once. She was bent over a chair, talking, and then she stood up and I saw it was Sinclair sitting in the chair. I couldn't make out the expression on his face, for the room was filled with smoke and the lights were low. But there wasn't a thing about Diane that I missed as she walked across the room. She had red hair, shining in a mass around her shoulders, and she had a magnificent figure. She walked with a kind of smoldering confidence, her body moving with exquisite grace.

I smiled and said hello, and she smiled and said hello. Then I made my way over to Sinclair. I asked him if he was ready to leave.

"Sure, Jeff. Whenever you are."

"Had a nice time?"

"Yes," he said, and his face seemed to take on a flush, his eyes to glow. "Yes, Jeff, *very* nice."

During the next few weeks, I had little contact with Sinclair, but I heard that he was seen at all the parties and dances. There was no particular reason why Sinclair and I should have sought out one another's company, for our only bond was the old connection with the outfit in Korea. But then something was brought to my attention, something that hit me with a violent blow the Sunday I took Marge to the *kabuki* in Tokyo.

I'd always managed to have a lot of fun out of life, and I was a lot older than Sinclair. So when I noticed he was going to dances and parties night after night, I figured this was what to expect of a young Army officer just back from the front. I'll admit, though, that it struck me as unusual for him.

But I'd lost sight of the fact that in World War II, his first time away from home. Sinclair had spent his entire duty at the grisly business of island-hopping throughout the Pacific. He never had been stationed anywhere he could have fun. He had been only in his early twenties then, and I'm quite sure he hadn't sown his wild oats before he had left home. As a matter of fact, while in college he had married his childhood sweetheart. So I should have realized that this, in Japan was bound to develop—that although he was a married man with two children, he was engaged in the very first fling of his life.

Marge and I had been in the massive *kabuki* theatre since five in the afternoon, watching the stylized acting and dancing of this traditional form of Japanese drama. It was after seven o'clock when we left to go out onto the crowded street, lined with neon-lighted bars and cabarets.

"I need a drink. Want to go to the Maranouchi?"

"Good bet," Marge said.

The Maranouchi Hotel was the British officers' club, where the atmosphere was convivial, and yet pleasantly restrained, in contrast with the sometimes abandoned air in the American clubs. After dinner, as we were sipping liqueurs in the lounge, Marge said she wanted to dance.

"But they don't have dances here on Sunday night, do they?"

"No," I said. "How about going over to the GHQ Club?"

It was after ten when we arrived by taxi at the handsome clubhouse, which before the war had been the home of a

Japanese baron. It was a warm night, so the dance was being held out on the lawn. An excellent dance band was playing under a marquee. Most of the tables were filled, and the dance floor was packed. We sat down and ordered drinks, and then I saw Sinclair. Actually, I saw Diane McKettrick first. Even though people were crowded together on the dance floor, she stood out strikingly. She was wearing a skintight white evening dress, and the soft overhead lights shone on her red hair.

"Isn't that Diane McKettrick?" I said with some surprise. "Never would have expected to find her in a public place like this." And then I realized her dance partner was Woody Sinclair. "My Lord, that's Sinclair with her!"

"So?" Marge said.

"Well, I wonder—"

"You wonder what?"

"I wonder how he happens to be with her," I said, as I watched them leave the dance floor, hand-in-hand. "And, as a matter of fact, how she happens to be with *him*, of all people." I was completely nonplused. "I guess they must be with a large party of people," I continued, floundering for an explanation. I stared after them, but they were soon lost from sight in the confusion of milling people and in the shadows of great, overhanging trees.

"What do you mean, with a large party of people?" Marge said crisply. "They're probably alone, even—in a sense—as you and I."

"You think so?"

"Good grief, Jeff, how innocent can you be?"

"Innocent?"

"Don't tell me you're not *aware* of what's been going on!" She took her time, idly sipping from her glass and smiling over at me, before she went on. "Surely you realize that *every*one's talking about it, about Diane and your poor, dear Lieutenant Sinclair."

"I can't believe it," I said, screwing up my eyes in an attempt to make out Sinclair and Diane across the twilit expanse of lawn. I wanted to know the details of what everyone supposedly was talking about, and yet I hated to have it come from Marge, for it was apparent she regarded it merely as a hunk of juicy gossip.

"Well," I said. "Tell me, tell me all about it."

"But there's nothing *to* tell, darling. They're having an affair. Everyone knows about it. Even you, now." She smiled, but there was a Machiavellian expression in her eyes. "Oh, there've been lots of affairs over here, Jeff. There's bound to be with all the drinking and carousing that goes on in the officers' set and with so many wives thousands of miles away in the States. But *this* grand passion is so shocking because they've made no attempt to be discreet about it, not the slightest effort to shield it from anyone."

As I listened to Marge, I was thinking that Sinclair was far too naïve to know how to practice discretion. But Diane was a sophisticated gal, one who knew her way around. I should have thought she would have more sense. Besides, her husband was fighting over in Korea, and even if she didn't give a snap of her fingers for honor or appearance; he had lots of friends in the Army in Japan who certainly were bound to find out what was going on and were likely to tell him.

"Well, there you have it," Marge said. "I think that the very danger of the thing is the reason why Diane is acting so indiscreetly. Until your friend Sinclair came along, no one else had the *nerve* to consider dating the beautiful, untouchable Mrs. McKettrick, particularly because her husband's in the thick of things in Korea. He's a very jealous man I hear; believes his wife is just sitting in Japan patiently waiting for him."

I had heard enough. I was anxious to get away without running into them, and I felt that once I got back to the solitude of my room I could figure out some action to take. Maybe it was none of my damn business, and maybe the affair had progressed too far for anything to be done about it. I didn't know, but I leaned over to Marge and said abruptly, "Let's go."

"What do you mean, 'Let's go'? We haven't even danced yet!"

"I know. I'm a cruel character. But I bought you a steak dinner and held your hand at the *kabuki*."

"Oh, what a stinker you are! You and your precious little Lieutenant Sinclair! You're old enough to be his father, but you don't have to act it, too!"

She was annoyed with me, and told me it was absurd for me to be concerned over the activities of a mature, married man. She was right, and I decided to dismiss Sinclair from my mind. Let the fool hang himself, let him get court-martialed and disgraced. Why should *I* be his counselor, his wet nurse?

It was after midnight when I arrived at my own hut area. After paying the peddy-cab driver, I began to walk down the concrete path to my quarters. But then I thought I would go the

long way around, to stroll past Sinclair's room. I had no intention of stopping. I was just curious to find out if his light would be on, wondering, if it weren't, whether that would signify he wasn't in his room.

But when I got to his hut and saw the light shining through the window of his corner room, I still wasn't satisfied. It could be Sinclair's roommate who was in the room. So I moved closer and peered through the window. Sinclair was in the room, alone. I decided to go in, though I didn't have the slightest idea of what I was going to say. I knocked on the door to his room.

"Hello, Woody," I said.

"Well, hi, Jeff." He smiled broadly, surprised to see me, yet not indicating it was unusual for me to barge in on him. "Sit down. Can I fix you a drink?" he asked.

"No, thanks. I just happened to be passing by, on my way home, and I saw the light—"

"Aw, come on, let me fix you a drink. There's no point in my going to bed yet. Schuyler'll probably come stumbling in here any minute, drunk as a skunk." He fussed around the room, dragging out a bottle and glasses, obviously enjoying this chance to play host. "I'll go down the hall for some ice."

"No, no ice. I'll have one straight and then leave." I watched him, and because it was impossible for me to associate him with a woman of Diane's type—in fact, with any woman at all—I decided to get right to the point. Sitting on the edge of the bed opposite him, I said, "I was at the GHQ Club tonight, with Marge Clary. We saw you. You were there with Diane McKettrick."

He looked stunned, and I thought I had been too direct. But a slow smile spread over his face. "Nice guy you are," he said, "not even bothering to say hello. But I guess you and Marge wanted to be alone, you two."

To my amazement, I found myself taking the defensive. "Are you kidding? You think that's why I didn't say hello?"

He looked down at his bare toes, rubbing them against the floor. "I'm sorry, Jeff," he said quietly. He looked genuinely embarrassed.

I tried once more. "That McKettrick gal," I declared, "she's really something, isn't she?"

He smiled up at me, visibly relieved that I no longer seemed to be annoyed with him. "She sure is a good-looker, Jeff."

I had finished my drink. I stood up. There was nothing more I could say if Sinclair didn't want to volunteer any information. I chatted with him a few minutes longer, asking him how he liked his assignment and listening to him say, "Let's have a bull session about old Baker Company some night, just you and I, Jeff. Okay?" Then I left him. I felt foolish, but I was thankful I hadn't completely made a meddlesome jackass of myself. I was furious with Marge for having so easily led me to believe the ridiculous story about him and Diane. Whatever their relationship, I was convinced Sinclair was not seriously involved with her.

Three days later, I met Hank Kennan in the PX. He asked me to join him for coffee in the snack bar, and when we were seated, he lost no time in blurting out, "I don't know how close you are to Sinclair, but you were his CO in Korea. Maybe *you* can do something with him. It has to be done fast—before his section chief, Colonel Crimmins, cracks down. Or before the general himself gets wind of the damn thing."

"You mean this rumor about him and Diane McKettrick?" I waited for Hank to throw his head back and laugh heartily, to tell me that this was a joke that had already worn thin.

"Rumor, hell," Hank said, his voice heavy with disgust. "I don't suppose you've heard the latest."

"The latest?"

"He's planning to move in with her, into her house."

Dazed, my hands feeling like hot, wet clods in my lap, I said, "I'll see what I can do."

After I left Hank, I went directly to my office. I got Sinclair on the phone. I was determined to take some decisive action, but by now what impelled me was not the thread of our Korean association but disgust that anyone who had been an officer as long as Sinclair could be so stupid, so unmindful of the consequences of his behavior.

Dispensing with the usual social amenities, I said into the phone, the captain giving an order to a junior officer, "I want to see you right after work. Meet me in my room at five-thirty." I relaxed my tone slightly. "We'll have cocktails in the room."

"I'd love to, Jeff. But I'm afraid I can't make it."

"The hell you can't!" I blasted at him, and I was conscious of my WAC assistant looking up from her typewriter. "You be in my room at five-thirty or I'll come after you. And I think I'd know where to find you." I slammed down the phone.

At first, I weakened, content only to engage Sinclair in chitchat as we sat in the room, for he was so pleasant and casual. But then, thinking it strange he didn't refer to the brusque manner in which I had directed him to come to the room, I said, "Woody, you know why I insisted you see me?"

He looked down into his glass. Quietly, he said he did.

In addition to serving Martinis and cheese and crackers, I had put some Cole Porter records on my LP machine. As much as possible, I wanted to help dispel any tension. Then leaning back on my bed, I told Sinclair all I had heard about his affair with Diane McKettrick. He remained silent and immobile. I told him he was jeopardizing his position as an officer and was in danger of being involved in a scandal that could wreck his Army career and cost him his family, too. Still he sat motionless.

"Well, Woody?" I sighed. "Don't you have anything to say?"

He raised his eyes, and the wretchedness in them was almost enough to unnerve me. I walked over to the makeshift bar.

"There *isn't* anything for me to say, Jeff. I know I've made a fool of myself. I know my conduct's been shameful. But what can I do now? It's too late."

I wheeled about. "What do you mean, it's too late?" I lowered my voice. "You don't actually think you're in love with her, do you?"

"Oh, no, Jeff, oh, no. I've just been carried away. I know it's not love. Diane even told me one night, just when I thought I *might* be falling in love, that we could never let that happen."

"Well, then, Woody, it's even simpler than I thought. All you have to do is break off with her."

He put his head in his hands, and he mumbled, more to himself than to me, "I've tried to break off. I've tried. I love my wife, I'm so ashamed, and I keep thinking of poor Charlie McKettrick in Korea."

I went over to him, putting my hand on his shoulder. I thought he was going to go completely to pieces. He lurched away from me and threw himself on the bed, moaning to himself. Maybe the Martinis were responsible for the maudlin spell, for later, over dinner in the mess hall, Sinclair calmly promised he definitely would sever his relationship with Diane. For good. Perhaps this moral support I had tendered him was all he had needed.

During the next few days, I kept close tab on Sinclair, by phone. He assured me he had broken off with Diane. But I recalled his having said he had attempted to break off with Diane before. Maybe this would be only temporary. Maybe, I thought, I should have a talk with Diane. That, of course, could spell danger, so I decided that, for the

time being, I would play a wait-and-see game.

But then the climax struck. Diane was responsible for it, but not in a way I would have expected. The news came from Sinclair the morning he stumbled into my office. He looked as though he hadn't had five minutes' sleep the whole night long.

"Jeff!" he cried out. "Diane's written to Charlie, her husband!"

Quickly, I took him by the arm and swung him around. On the way out of the office, I called over my shoulder to my WAC assistant that I was going down to the snack bar for coffee. But I didn't dare risk our being overheard by the coffee crowd. So I walked Sinclair past the hospital grounds to the other side of the muddy canal. We found a stone bench to sit on.

Sinclair said he had felt an urge to see Diane just once more. After a sleepless night, he had driven to her home this morning. Her greeting was to tell him she had spent the night writing a long, detailed letter to her husband. She had written everything about her affair with Sinclair.

Listening in amazement, I watched him as he talked. When he had finished, I realized he was on the verge of an emotional collapse. I managed to get him to his room and into bed. I took a long shot and phoned his section chief, Colonel Crimmins. Some explanation had to be made for Sinclair's absence from his desk, but fortunately I didn't have to do much talking. Colonel Crimmins was wonderfully decent. Of course, he knew about the affair. He told me he wanted Sinclair to leave Yokohama at once for three days—alone. He needed a change of scenery, new people. The colonel would make arrangements at the Fujiya Hotel. Would I see that Sinclair got on the train?

Sinclair was submissive. He went to the Fujiya. I wished he hadn't. He could have, as I later discussed it with the Kennans, spent the three days out at their place. They would have been delighted to have him, and Lucy could have watched over him during the day. But he went to the Fujiya all by himself, and naturally he brooded. An innocent kind of guy who wanted to do the noble thing, he didn't know which way to turn.

He returned three days later, and that evening he searched for me. He found me in the patio of the New Grand. I was with some friends, but I excused myself for a few minutes. Then Sinclair and I went into the small barroom off the lobby. I could detect, somehow, that he hadn't enjoyed his three-day leave, and I waited for him to begin to tell me about it.

"I wrote two letters, Jeff." He sounded as though he were solemnly reciting a catechism. "One to Charlie McKettrick, apologizing for everything and telling him I will do anything he wants me to do."

I said nothing, but I had to admire his forthrightness.

"The other letter was to Caroline. It was a long letter, Jeff. I explained that I had been unfaithful, that I was unworthy of her and the children, and I asked her to divorce me."

That was it, and though I knew he expected me to come up with some kind of reply, I was tongue-tied. I wasn't at all sure what my reaction was. Sinclair had done an honorable thing, and he had done it with complete sincerity. But I couldn't help wondering whether it had been necessary for him to write to his wife as he had done, whether there might not have been another way, one just as honorable.

"Well, Jeff, you'd better get back to your friends." He stood up.

"Will you join us?"

"No, thanks."

"Well, is there anything I can do?"

He smiled down at me. "You've been wonderful, Jeff. You really saved me, you know."

Had I? Had I helped him, or had I been too late? I said feebly, "I'll give you a buzz tomorrow. We'll make plans to have dinner together." I watched him walk out of the barroom, a tall, slim, broad-shouldered young man. *Such* a sweet, good guy, I thought. Then I went out into the patio.

I don't recall exactly whether it was two or three days later that Colonel Crimmins called me to come over to his office. But I do remember that it was a little past three in the afternoon and that the heat was fierce. As I stood at attention in front of Colonel Crimmins' desk, I thought that in my damp, mussed tropical uniform I must look a sorry mess.

I suspected the colonel wanted to see me about Sinclair, but I wasn't prepared for the jolting news he had to impart. From the few times I had spoken to Sinclair after the brief session with him the night he had returned from the Fujiya, I had believed all was working out well. He had sounded cheerful and in a good frame of mind, though he had turned down my suggestion that we have dinner

together, or at least a drink. He had preferred to remain alone in his room.

"Sinclair's gone back to Korea," the colonel said, his face expressionless beneath a thatch of white hair. "Why don't you sit over here, Captain? You look uncomfortable."

"Korea, sir?"

"I promised not to tell you till after he had left." The colonel, idly drawing on a cigar, told me Sinclair had learned this: Diane had not written to her husband about the affair. It had been something she had told Sinclair quickly in irritation, something she had never believed Sinclair would take seriously. Now, even though the whole situation could be ironed out, Sinclair had wanted to return to Korea at once. The colonel had effected a transfer in two days.

Incredulous, I sat and listened to the colonel. He, at last, finished talking, but I didn't move. Finally, he turned a gimlet eye on me and said, "That will be all, Captain. Thank you for stopping by," and he saluted me out of his office.

Several months passed, during which I heard nothing about Sinclair. I didn't even know if he was still alive. I wrote to him but got no reply. The only further development was that Charlie McKettrick returned to Japan, and subsequently, accompanied by his wife, he went back to the States on rotation reassignment. Whether McKettrick confronted Diane with questions about what he might have heard of the affair (there had been, after all, the letter from Sinclair to McKettrick) or whether she volunteered to tell him, I didn't know. But the word around Yokohama was that he was so happy to be with her again that he had immediately forgiven her. And it probably wasn't too difficult for her to convince him that, although she had been unfaithful, it had been only a flirtation and Sinclair had acted the adolescent fool. Soon after the McKettricks reached New York, Charlie died of an ailment contracted in Korea.

Then one day someone I knew in the G-1 section phoned me to tell me Sinclair was on his way back to Japan for return to the States. His three-year tour of Army duty was almost completed. Now he could return to civilian life.

It was a little after dusk when I drove out to meet his plane at Haneda, and as I waited on the wide, windy airfield, I wondered why I had even bothered to come out here. Sinclair hadn't answered any of my letters and now perhaps I would serve only as a reminder of the bitterness he had been trying to forget. But I waited.

The plane taxied in, and the grimy, weary-looking men filed out of it slowly, as though uncertain whether they really had left Korea behind them. I spotted Sinclair. When he saw me, he gave me his old, beautiful smile, and he said he was very glad to see me. But he had changed. I thought at first it was just that he was his former self again, gentle, reserved, perhaps a bit remorseful. But it was more than that. He told me, as we drove out to Camp Drake where he was to be processed for air transportation to the States, that his wife had written that she wanted him to return, that she had forgiven him. But he was confused. Sometimes he would talk at a furious rate, repeating over and over that he had made such a mess of so many lives that he *couldn't* return home until he had regained his self-respect, until he could look upon the whole thing objectively. Then he would retreat into utter silence, apparently not hearing a word I said.

When we arrived at Drake, he asked me to drop him off. He said that after reporting in he was going directly to a bunk to get some sleep.

"I'm sorry, Jeff," he said apologetically. "I'd *like* to talk with you and have a drink, but—" He said he would get in touch with me.

But he didn't. The next thing I learned, soon afterward, he had asked to be released from the Army in Japan. His tour of duty was up, so he was released, after certifying he would be self-supporting. I didn't see him, but I found out he had got a job as an English instructor in a Japanese primary school in a country district about ten miles out of Yokohama. I tracked him down, and one afternoon I waited for him outside the bleak stone building where he was teaching.

A stream of children, all carrying brief cases, came pouring out of the building. And then I saw Sinclair. He was dressed in civilian clothes, an ill-fitting brown tweed suit, and he looked haggard. But he smiled when he saw me.

"Well, Jeff Baxter! What're you doing up here?"

I didn't berate him for not having got in touch with me, and I wouldn't have embarrassed him by suggesting he drive into Yokohama with me to one of the officers' clubs. We walked down a muddy lane, past the ubiquitous stretches of rice paddies and into a tiny village. There were no other Occidentals in sight. We went into a small café and sipped sake.

He told me he worked for the Japanese government. His salary could not have amounted to more than 5,400 yen (about fifteen dollars) a month. The only American on the school staff, he lived like the natives. He lived *with* them, too, in a boxlike, unheated room in the back of a shopkeeper's house. And he was happy because it was a peaceful existence; no one bothered him, no one asked any questions.

"But how long are you going to go on like this?" I said.

"I don't know, Jeff."

"And what about your wife?"

"Caroline?" He smiled, and then he stared out the paper-paneled window. His voice was hushed, and I had the feeling he hardly knew I was sitting opposite him. "That's the one thing that keeps me going, the hope of returning to Caroline and the children." With his terrible sense of guilt and responsibility, his love for them apparently had grown stronger than ever. But he had written Caroline only once since he had taken the teaching job.

Suddenly he pushed back his chair. "Sorry, Jeff," he said. "I've got to go. I'm doing a little private tutoring and I'm late."

I suppose there wasn't much more for us to say, but I was disappointed that after traveling all the way out to see him, I was being dismissed so peremptorily. I had hoped we would have several hours together, that I could buy him a fairly decent meal someplace. His skin was so unhealthy looking that I was sure his diet consisted mainly of rice and raw fish. But I made no strenuous objection to the abrupt leave-taking. It would have been different, of course, if I had known then that this was the last time I would see him.

On my last night in Japan, before I returned to the States for release from duty, the Kennans gave a party in my honor. Toward midnight, after the guests had departed the three of us stood at the top of the long, winding slate steps that tumbled down from their garden to the road. We looked out across the harbor, and it was then, at last, that we had an opportunity to talk about Sinclair. Lucy and Hank had had news about him, but it was sad news, completely suffocating the enjoyment of what had been a festive night.

By an amazing piece of good luck, Sinclair had managed to arrange through the Tokyo office of one of the American newspaper syndicates to write a series of articles on present-day Japan—about the change since Japan had been restored to full sovereignty, the threat of communism, and so on.

"He expected," Hank said, "to net a sizable sum of money. Then he planned to go back to his family and teaching on the reservation."

But his plans had not fully materialized. He had received fifteen hundred dollars for two or three articles and sent the

money home, and had then cabled his wife that. after he had completed a month's further research, he would be returning. Caroline had replied by letter. She wondered if they shouldn't wait a while longer, until he was certain that that was what he wanted. After all, he must have changed, even as she and the children had changed during his long absence. As for the children's support, she was earning money; it was the first job she had ever had and she rather liked it. It wasn't that she was considering a divorce and that she didn't want to see him, but didn't he think it better that he wait until he was sure of what he wanted?

"What a rotten way to treat him," I said.

"I don't know," Lucy said softly. "Think of the way that Woody's made *her* suffer. It's obvious to me that she still loves him. But she wants to make sure that he really still loves *her*."

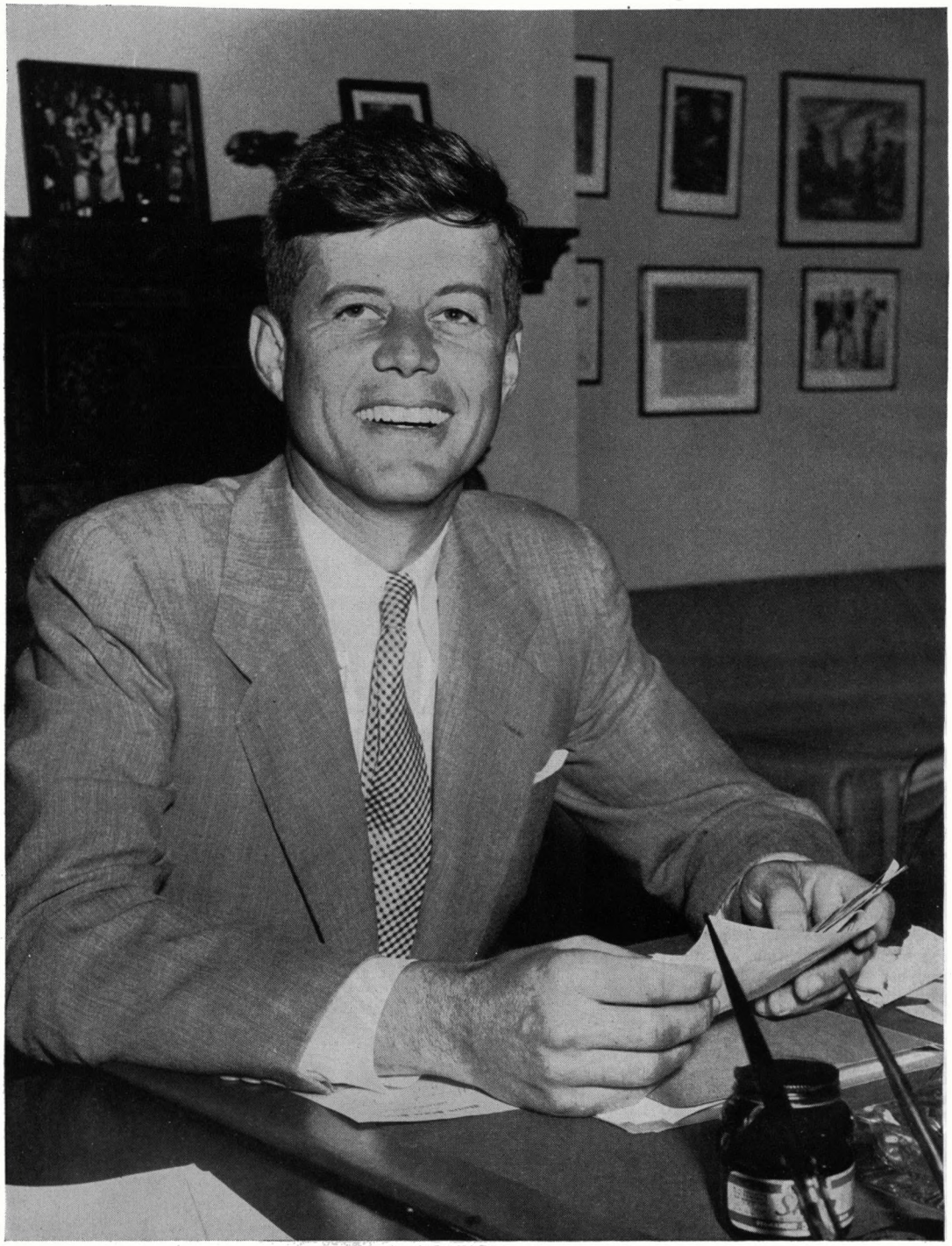
"Well, he does, doesn't he?" I said impatiently.

"We don't know," Hank said, and he paused for such a long, painful spell that I was almost afraid to hear more. Then he continued. Whether Sinclair was writing the remainder of the articles, Hank didn't know, or whether Sinclair hoped ever to return to the States. For Sinclair had suddenly disappeared from Yokohama. The Kennans learned he had gone, presumably on a teaching assignment, to Hokkaido—Japan's northernmost island, mountainous, cold, and sparsely populated. That was the last they had heard.

And now, in the luxury of my New York office, I am waiting for the wire from Caroline. I've decided that when it arrives I'll phone her at once. No matter what the Kennans divulge in their cable—or even if they don't send one at all—I know what I am going to tell Caroline. I am going to tell her to go to Japan as soon as possible. There's been too much time lost already. I suppose some people will think I'm being absurdly sentimental, even irrational. But I'm determined that Caroline's going to Japan, if I have to pay her passage and foot all expenses—unless, of course, word reaches her that Woody will soon be on his way home. It's something I'll keep from my wife. Oh, I think she'd understand, all right. But why should she be dragged into it? She's suffered enough, and during the past year it's taken a lot of persuasion on my part to convince her at long last that she must shed her guilt complex.

I've been married less than a year now. Before our marriage, my wife was a widow. She was married to a guy I never met, a guy named Charlie McKettrick. My wife's name is Diane. THE END

Photos by I.N.P.



WHEN THIRTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD KENNEDY ran against Lodge for his Senate seat, he took on a formidable foe, for Lodge was famous as the man who persuaded Eisenhower to run. But Kennedy, a Democrat, completely charmed the state's females and won, despite a Republican landslide.

The Senator Women Elected

Few experts gave Jack Kennedy much of a chance to unseat Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., as Massachusetts senator last year—but ladies are often more impressed by what they see than what they read

BY IRWIN ROSS

Firm statistics are lacking on the point, but there is little doubt that few senators in U.S. history have been kissed, hugged, and generally mauled by their female constituents to the extent sustained by John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts. His devastating impact on women was one of the major factors, in the view of veteran political observers, in electing him to the Senate. When he took his seat last January, Kennedy had an equally shattering effect on Washington's eager young things. He soon found himself elevated to the post of Most Eligible Bachelor on the Hill—an eminence from which he was snatched only last September, when the beauteous Jacqueline Lee Bouvier finally led him to the altar.

Few more glamorous figures have ever trod the Senate floor. Kennedy is not only young (thirty-six) but very handsome, very wealthy, and very successful in a variety of callings. He was the author of a book at twenty-three, a war hero at twenty-six, and a congressman at twenty-nine. An intense young man, he combines the somewhat disparate appeals of Walter Lippmann and Frank Sinatra. For he can talk like a pundit, while wearing a boyish grin and an air of wistful entreaty that enchants women of all ages.

Yet Kennedy is far more than the Senate's most formidable matinee idol. His triumph in 1952 over the veteran Republican Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., marked Kennedy's emergence as one of the most engaging political personalities of our time. He charmed male voters quite as readily as the ladies, he beguiled businessmen as readily as the CIO. Lifelong Republicans, mugwumps, and New Dealers all flocked to his banner.

A Bright Hope for Democrats

Today Kennedy is one of the few new figures on whom the Democratic Party is pinning its hopes for resurgence. Like Governor G. Mennen ("Soapy") Williams of Michigan and Representative Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., of New York, Kennedy is an example of a relatively new breed of Democratic Party leaders—the bright, young, socially conscious scions of the very rich. With his incandescent personality, his forceful platform manner, and his own peculiar brand of undoctrinaire liberalism, Kennedy is expected to be a star performer when the Democrats launch their 1954 Congressional campaign. Already he has received scores of invitations to speak around the country.

Kennedy's vote-getting talents were dramatically illustrated when he beat Lodge fourteen months ago. At the outset of the campaign, Kennedy was given hardly a chance of winning. Lodge was able, highly popular, and had been a senator since 1937, with all the advantages a politician gains from long incumbency. In past campaigns, he had defeated some of the state's most effective Democratic vote getters. And in the summer of 1952, he basked in the reflected glory of Eisenhower's convention triumph, which he had had a large part in engineering. In comparison, Jack Kennedy seemed a virtual unknown. And yet when the returns were in, Kennedy had won by more than 69,000 votes, even though Eisenhower had taken the state by over 208,000 and the Republicans had captured the governorship. It was a remarkable personal triumph.

Once the dust of the campaign had settled, Jack Kennedy's achievement in corralling the female vote was seen as one of the legendary exploits of Massachusetts politics. It was an inspired stroke, for example, to hold teas at which thousands of women could meet him. This not only exploited Kennedy's remarkable appeal, but showed his glamorous family off to good advantage. In Massachusetts, the Kennedys hold a unique position: they are the first truly aristocratic Irish family in a state that still harbors bitter memories of the discrimination suffered by the immigrant Irish a few generations back. The head of the family, Joseph P. Kennedy, is the multimillionaire ex-banker, ex-stockbroker, and ex-movie mogul who played a leading role in the early New Deal and later became Roosevelt's ambassador to

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FOR HEROISM IN BATTLE during the last war, Kennedy, a PT-boat skipper, won the Navy and Marine Corps Medal.

Great Britain. His wife and daughters are markedly attractive and cultivated ladies, who can interlard a political talk with informed comment about Paris fashions and life at the Court of St. James.

"It Was an Unbeatable Appeal"

Some thirty-five teas and receptions were held in every part of the state, with Jack's appearance always preceded by short talks by his mother and one of his sisters. Afterward, each lady had an opportunity to meet all three Kennedys. Over a six-month period, Congressman Jack shook the hands of some 70,000 women. The girls would patiently queue up for three or four hours for the privilege of a few moments' communion with their candidate. The more enterprising matrons would propel their daughters down the line, hoping their young charms would linger in his memory. "It was an unbeatable appeal," one reporter noted. "All the young women wanted to marry him and all the old ones to mother him."

Kennedy was in occasional danger of being mobbed. At the New Ocean House in Swampscott, hordes of women started pouring through the windows to beat out the queue. So irresistible was his appeal that members of the enemy camp were often in attendance. Kennedy's entourage spied a secretary from Lodge's office at the Swampscott debacle and tried to get a photographer to snap her picture. She escaped that embarrassment in the nick of time.

Kennedy's campaign was the most energetic in the memory of Massachusetts' oldest living ward heeler. Although not officially opened until the spring of 1952, it actually got underway a good two years before polling day. Kennedy's initial problem was his relative obscurity: he was a popular figure in the Boston area, whose Eleventh Congressional District he had represented since 1947, but elsewhere in the state he was thought of, if at all, as merely the handsome son of the fabulously wealthy Joe Kennedy, who was as well known for his aggressively isolationist statements as for his wealth. Jack Kennedy had to achieve a statewide reputation in his own right, and also get out from under the shadow of his father's unpopular views. This involved no deception on his part: he had long been a militant internationalist.

Staggering Round of Speeches

He set about winning friends with a fierce energy that staggered his associates. He would fly in from Washington for the weekend and start out Saturday morning on a round of speechmaking and handshaking that generally began with a Communion breakfast at eight A.M. and ended with a lodge dance at midnight. Ten speeches a day were par for the course. On an average weekend, he crisscrossed the state two or three times, covering five or six hundred miles. He kept a blanket and pillow in the back seat of his car, slept fitfully while his drivers stormed over the roads on the way to the next morning's engagement. In two years, Frank Morrissey, who was then his secretary, calculated that he shook the hands of 500,000 people.

The campaign proper, which his brother Robert managed, involved a staggering feat of organization. In previous years, the state-wide Democratic candidates concentrated on Boston and the other large cities, feeling that if they piled up big enough leads there, they could overwhelm the Republican majorities in the smaller towns. Kennedy took no chances. By polling day, he had his own committees in 215 communities, covering ninety-nine per cent of the voting population. A grand total of 21,000 volunteers was enrolled. And when the returns were in, it was apparent that in many small-town Republican strongholds he had cut Lodge's normal four-to-one lead to two-to-one. There lay the margin of victory.

Kennedy's popularity with the ladies never embarrassed him with male audiences. The teas were paralleled by junkets through 175 Massachusetts factories. The ostensible purpose was to enable the candidate to learn more about Massachusetts' industry (reviving it was one of the main issues of the campaign), but Kennedy was never loath to shake hands and exchange quips as he moved through shoe factories, textile plants, tanneries, metalworks, and Boston's vast fish pier. Never before in Massachusetts politics had a candidate carried his campaign right down to the factory bench. Fraternizing with workingmen lent some reality to his AF of L and CIO endorsements, and it rubbed away the normal popular disdain for any well-heeled young man who suffered from a Harvard accent.

One of Kennedy's major assets was the fact that he does not look or act like a politician. He is no glad-hander; he seldom slaps a back and never kisses a baby. Furthermore, he doesn't drink with the boys, a flighty stomach prevents this indulgence.

With his youth and earnestness, he is the very image of the dedicated amateur. The illusion is furthered by a disarming

frankness that makes the old politicos shudder. If he is uninformed on an issue, he will publicly plead ignorance. Asked why he first got into politics, back in 1946, he replies, "I was at loose ends at the time. It seemed the logical thing to do." Such ingenuousness is political heresy. He compounds the sin by being candid about his errors. A few years ago, as a congressman, he voted for a substantial cut in Point Four funds for the Middle East. Then he made a trip there and was persuaded that the technical-assistance effort was a vital necessity. Today he says, "So I made a mistake. I've since changed my mind." The politicos may shake their heads, but the voters are likely to forgive him.

In many ways, Kennedy is a press agent's dream. His personal habits add up to a public image of an engagingly informal, pleasantly iconoclastic young man whom no one could accuse of aristocratic pretense. Constituents who miss him at the office can often find him, if they are well-informed, at a playground at Thirty-fourth Street and Bolta Place. There, in faded sweater and dungarees, is the junior senator from Massachusetts, spurring on a motley crew of adults and small fry in a game of touch football.

His casual attitude toward clothes also shows him in a flatteringly plebeian light. His administrative assistant, T. J. Reardon, Jr., remembers one occasion when Kennedy dressed for a dinner party in a spotless blue serge jacket—and then drew on an old pair of Navy suntans. Reardon expressed dismay at the combination, but Kennedy couldn't understand his objections. The next day he appeared at his office in the same uniform, but this time Reardon insisted the congressman change his trousers before appearing on the House floor. Kennedy meekly complied.

He Owns Four Winter Suits

For a man of wealth, he has a surprisingly meager wardrobe. He owns four winter suits plus two that do not fit. Once, when he was invited to a formal party, he had to rent a full-dress suit and borrow a vest from a friend. His wardrobe might be more extensive were it not for his distressing habit of checking out of a hotel and leaving a suit behind in a closet.

Such absent-mindedness probably derives from the furious concentration with which he attacks the day's work. Kennedy in action is like a man running on a constantly accelerating treadmill. He loads himself with work until he is often trying to do three things at once—quite literally. One day I attempted to interview him while he beat his way through the downtown Washington traffic to a studio where he was to make a TV film. He drove the car with an animation that can only be described as manic, meanwhile answering my questions and trying to read some scrawled notes clutched in one hand, in order to prepare himself for his talk. Only the benevolence of the gods saved us from disaster.

His friends find his absent-mindedness alternately appalling and entertaining, depending on their mood. When he was single, he was apt to go out on a date without a dime in his pocket; if he ended up in a bistro where he was unknown, the girl paid—or else Kennedy took to the phone with a frantic SOS.

Not infrequently, as a bachelor, he invited people to dinner—and then remembered the engagement well after the appointed hour. A fellow senator recalls coming to Kennedy's home one evening

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KENNEDY MET JACQUELINE BOUVIER when she was inquiring photographer for a Washington paper. Their secret romance was first revealed when they went on sailing parties at the Kennedy family home on Cape Cod.

with his wife, finding several other people assembled—but no host. The guests introduced themselves to each other, poured drinks, and lacking any alternative, finally went in to dinner. Fifteen minutes later, Kennedy arrived, greeted everybody cordially, and slid into his place. He seemed completely unconcerned.

A Highly Uncertain Escort

A certain hardiness of spirit used to be demanded of his girlfriends. On one occasion, he made a date with a young lady who highly prized his attentions. At the last minute, Kennedy discovered the press of work made it impossible to keep the engagement. Instead of phoning an apology or explanation, he dispatched his administrative assistant, Reardon, to entertain the lady in his place. To nobody's surprise but Kennedy's, she was highly indignant and quickly showed Reardon the door.

These peccadilloes, of course, are all a matter of the past, now that the young senator has finally submitted to the marital yoke. Jacqueline Lee Bouvier, the young lady who succeeded where so many had failed, is a charming brunette of tender years (twenty-four) and impeccable pedigree. They met first socially, in May, 1951, at the home of a distinguished Washington correspondent. Then Jacqueline, the inquiring photographer of the Washington *Times-Herald*, was sent in February, 1952, to get the then congressman's views on some portentous subject. A romance swiftly flowered, though it was pursued with a remarkable lack of publicity—possibly not to undercut Kennedy's appeal to his female admirers. The wedding, Newport's most spectacular in three decades, took place last September twelfth.

Kennedy has always been a young man in a hurry, trying desperately to make his way to the top in a world where the pursuit of money was meaningless—for his father had amassed far more than nine children could ever spend—and where Joe Kennedy's awesome reputation as wit, moneyman, and statesman could well have stultified a young man of less hardy character. Only a fierce competitiveness allowed him to overcome the psychological handicap of his father's vast success. This competitiveness showed itself at college, in his wartime exertions, and in so passionate a dedication to the political game that it excludes most of the normal interests of a rich young man. But he succeeded in an area where his father never tried his luck.

Politics, however, is in the main stream of the Kennedy family tradition. When Jack was born, in Brookline, Massachusetts, on May 29, 1917, his maternal grandfather, John F. Fitzgerald, was one of Boston's leading political ornaments, having served as mayor and as congressman from the district his grandson later represented. And Patrick Kennedy, Jack's paternal grandfather, had sat in the state senate.

Young Kennedy got his early education in the public schools of Brookline, later went to private school in Riverdale, New York, and prepped at Choate. He was an indifferent student, but he got himself voted "Most Likely to Succeed." After graduation, his father packed him off to England to study at the London School of Economics under the famed Socialist teacher, Harold Laski. Joe Kennedy, of course, was no Socialist, but he thought it a healthy thing to expose young minds to diverse stimuli.

In the fall of 1936, Jack was back in the States and enrolled as a freshman at Harvard. His older brother, Joseph, Jr., was also at Harvard. Brother Joe, who died in a hazardous aerial mission during the war, was an accomplished athlete and scholar and a great charmer. He was the first and the favored son, and it was he the father had scheduled for a political career—a decision in accord with his own inclinations. At this stage, Jack, the second son, had no career marked out for him; family friends sometimes thought he suffered because of the preferred status accorded his brother. The rivalry between them was keen, although they were always good friends.

At Harvard, Jack did well in his studies and graduated with honors. It was in sports, however, that his competitive passions were fully released. He made the golf and swimming teams as well as the junior-varsity football squad. He particularly excelled at swimming, by dint of unremitting application.

Always a Dogged Competitor

His dedication often went to absurd lengths. On one occasion, he was bedded down with grippe in Stillman Infirmary shortly before he was to compete against Richard Tregaskis, later famous as the author of *Guadalcanal Diary*, in time trials to determine who would have the honor of swimming against Yale. Jack fretted that the hospital's modest diet would leave him in so debilitated a state that he would lose the contest. To keep up his strength, he had his roommate, Torbert MacDonald, smuggle in malted milks and small steaks. On the day the time trials were scheduled, he went AWOL from the infirmary and plunged into the chill waters of a pool in the Indoor Athletic Building. He swam with furious determination; but lost to Tregaskis—and was in an ailing state the rest of the school year.

The second half of his junior year he went to Europe and worked for his father at the Embassy in London and then did chores for Ambassador William

KENNEDY MARRIED JACQUELINE this fall in one of the year's most fashionable social events. Enthusiastic crowds nearly crushed the newlyweds.

THE ATTRACTIVE KENNEDY CLAN, at baptism of Jack's nephew, included ex-ambassador and Mrs. Kennedy, his parents; Jack; sister Eunice; and the Robert Kennedys. Archbishop Cushing officiated.

Bullitt in Paris. He traveled around Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East and was in Berlin shortly before the outbreak of war. In one dramatic interview, Chargé d'Affaires Alexander Kirk gave him an oral message for his father: war would break out shortly. Jack hastened back to London with the dread news. A few days later his father dispatched him to Glasgow to care for the survivors of the *Athenia* an American boat torpedoed by the Germans. It was an apprenticeship it might take most young men half a decade to complete.

His Book Analyzed Munich

Back at Harvard for his senior year, Kennedy wrote an honors thesis on the reasons for British appeasement at Munich, which he located in the myopic inability of all classes of Britishers to see the need for rearmament. Arthur Krock read the manuscript and thought he saw the makings of a book. Kennedy straightway sat down and expanded it into *Why England Slept*. It came out after the fall of France and at a moment when Americans were for the first time dismayed at their own lack of preparedness. Henry R. Luce wrote the foreword ("I hope 1,000,000 Americans will read this book"), and the reviews were flattering. At twenty-three, Jack Kennedy was already beginning to achieve a reputation in his own right.

He tried to enlist in the Army, but was rejected because of an old back injury suffered in college football. He did not have a particularly military spirit, but being rejected spurred him to a furious effort to get into the service. He spent months doing corrective exercises and finally managed to get a Navy commission in September, 1941. He was an intelligence officer, assigned to desk duty in Washington. As soon as he could, he got himself transferred to deck-officer training, and finally ended up commanding a PT boat. His reason, friends say, was very clear: this was the most rugged type of service a man with a bad back could sustain, because of the continuous jouncing the boat took from the waves.

On a routine mission in the Solomon Islands area, Kennedy's PT boat was rammed by a Japanese destroyer. His senatorial-campaign handout understates what later ensued: "Thrown into the water, there seemed little chance that the crew could survive. But the PT skipper refused to give up. After clinging to the wreckage all night, he led his crew to an island three miles way, towing one man by a belt gripped in his teeth. . . . For six days he was in and out of the water, swimming from island to island in search of help. He became half-conscious from the pain of coral lacerations, salt-water sickness, and exhaustion. Finally, a week later, he reached friendly natives and a rescue party arrived." Kennedy later got the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for "heroism in the rescue of three men."

He was out of the Navy in March, 1945, having spent many months in a hospital with a tropical fever and other ailments. He was a frail skeleton and could barely eat. His energy, however, did not desert him for long. He took a brief flier in newspaper work, covering the founding meeting of the UN in San Francisco for the Chicago *Herald-American* and later the Potsdam Conference for International News Service.

Then he went back to Boston and started to meet people. He decided to go into politics when a vacancy occurred in the Eleventh Congressional District, caused by the retirement of the fabulous James M. Curley who had once again gotten himself elected mayor of Boston. At the outset, there was no wild clamor to send Kennedy to Congress. In three months, however, he built an organization from scratch and ran off with the Democratic nomination, tantamount to election in that district.

In the House he had his troubles: he looked so young that he was occasionally mistaken for a page. But gradually he built a reputation. He was a diligent advocate of veterans' housing, he won the fervent admiration of the local trade-unions for his informed philippics against the Taft-Hartley bill, he spoke up long and hard for a strong FEPC. All this, of course, was the path of political wisdom for a man representing a polyglot urban constituency where the unions wielded great power.

But some of Kennedy's actions had no self-interest to recommend them: he led a successful fight against a sales tax in the District of Columbia, after both the Republican and Democratic leadership in the House decided to support the measure. He voted against "veterans' grab" legislation and delivered himself of some unflattering remarks about the leadership of the American Legion on the floor of the House. He was Massachusetts' only Democratic representative to refuse to sign a petition asking President Truman to pardon James Curley after he was convicted of a felony. He knew Curley's friends would never forgive him but stubbornly insisted an issue of principle was involved.

Beginning to Slow Up?

After his first month in the Senate, Kennedy complained to a friend that he hadn't yet been able to accomplish anything. But in that august assembly, as Kennedy knows full well, a freshman member must bide his time. "Sometimes, though, I think Jack's slowing up," a friend said recently. "He's taken to smoking cigars after dinner. That means the boy is relaxing." THE END

Chiropractic—Science or Quackery?

A calm analysis of a white-hot controversy that has raged in the healing professions for a half century

BY JAMES PHELAN

Fifty-eight years ago in Davenport, Iowa, an ex-grocer named D. D. Palmer bent over the prone figure of a janitor named Harvey Lillard. For seventeen years Lillard had had a bump on his spine, and for seventeen years Lillard had been deaf.

With a few quick manipulations of Lillard's spine, Palmer straightened out the bump and Lillard regained his hearing. And thus, according to the story told by Palmer's son, was born the healing method known as chiropractic.

Palmer reasoned that there was a logical connection between Lillard's bump and his deafness. Undeterred by his scanty education, he plunged into the study of anatomy and came up with the theory that human ailments are caused by out-of-line vertebrae that pinch the nerves. Shove the errant vertebrae back where they belong, he argued, and the natural healing processes of the body will effect a drugless cure.

Today, next to medicine, chiropractic is the nation's most popular healing art. More than 20,000 practitioners draw $30,000,000 a year in fees from it. A thousand graduates enter it each year.

Licensed in Forty-four States

Chiropractors are recognized and licensed in forty-four states. Their certification of claims is honored by more than five hundred United States insurance companies. Their theories have spread to Switzerland, Germany, England, Australia, and a dozen other countries.

Yet throughout its rapid growth, a never-ending controversy has raged about chiropractic. It has been a constant target for medical organizations, which have cited case after case in which chiropractors wrongly diagnosed ailments and wreaked disaster upon the patient.

In a chiropractic hospital, a young New Hampshire mother tells the other side of the story. "I was stricken with polio and underwent treatment by a recognized orthopedist. After months of treatment, he told me I would have to wear a leg brace forever and resign myself to being a cripple. Now, after nine weeks here, I can walk without a brace and I'm getting better all the time. When I'm completely well, I'm going to go back to that M.D. and kick him—with the leg he said would always need a brace."

A revolutionary healing art or ignorant quackery? The friends and enemies of

chiropractic shout their claims and damnations across the widest gulf that has ever split the healing profession.

Chiropractic Versus Osteopathy

The history of chiropractic parallels the history of osteopathy down to a significant point. Only two hundred miles from Davenport, in Kirksville, Missouri, and three years before Palmer adjusted the janitor's spine, Andrew Taylor Still launched osteopathy. Dr. Still preached, as Palmer soon was to echo, the engineering approach to health—that normal function requires a normal structure and that faults in the structure would bring disease. Dr. Still preached manipulation; so did Palmer. Their basic difference was that Still maintained that interference with circulation of the blood caused mankind's troubles, while Palmer held that interference with the nerve flow was the villain.

Osteopathy was greeted with the same medical disdain that chiropractic encountered. Over the years, however, osteopathy has edged closer and closer to orthodox medicine. Osteopaths recognize the efficacy of vaccines, and, in most states, perform surgery and administer drugs. Now medical committees frequently confer with committees of osteopaths.

The parallel between chiropractic and osteopathy stops well short of this point. Today chiropractic is in chaotic confusion. It is split into two rival national bodies, the International Chiropractic Association and the National Chiropractic Association. The International group is dominated by "straights," chiropractors who practice manipulation of the spine alone. The National group is larger and is sympathetic toward both "straights" and "mixers," chiropractors who also employ hydrotherapy, electrotherapy, diet, and other treatments.

An intransigent orthodox minority among the "straights" still cling to old Dr. Palmer's dictum that just about all illness can be cured by manipulating the spine. They deny the role of germs as a cause of disease, insist that germs appear merely as scavengers when the nerve flow is disrupted because of misaligned vertebrae.

Among both "mixers" and "straights," there are a sizable number of chiropractors who concede that many illnesses are outside their province. No reputable chiropractor would attempt to massage cancers or to stop hemorrhaging ulcers by spinal manipulation. They feel, however, that they can cure, more efficiently than doctors, many diseases of physicogenic origin.

Criticism of chiropractic begins with the ineffectual hodgepodge of laws, varying widely from state to state, that are supposed to govern it. Chiropractors can call themselves "doctor" in some states; in others this is against the law. Some states restrict them to spinal adjustments. In others, they can do anything except administer drugs or perform surgery.

Many chiropractors are graduates of quick courses of less than a year, or even correspondence schools. Although most states now require a four-year course, it is the custom to grant licenses to chiropractors who were practicing before the standards were stiffened. As a result, many practitioners have only the crudest education. The peril is that with their limited understanding of anatomy, these chiropractors will not recognize the patient's condition and will manipulate his body with tragic, even fatal, results.

Chiropractic is almost devoid of any controlled scientific data to bolster its claims. It rests heavily on individual testimonials, which medical science maintains are of little value.

Many chiropractic cures, critics say, are simply the result of a kind of crude hypnosis. Since an estimated forty per cent of all patients are actually suffering from psychosomatic ailments—physical symptoms caused by emotional stresses—the patient's faith in the chiropractor can itself often effect a "cure."

Other chiropractic "cures," medical men insist, are achieved on self-limiting diseases—the scores of ailments that would eventually vanish by themselves.

The field of chiropractic is contaminated with both outright quacks and undereducated enthusiasts. The profession has no method of controlling such irresponsibility. An M.D. who resorts to unethical practices can be ousted from his medical association and deprived of the use of hospital facilities. This can ruin him. But if one chiropractic association ousts a renegade, he may join the rival association or simply remain outside both of them. Chiropractors, of course, are excluded from nearly all medical hospitals and have only a handful of hospitals of their own.

The busiest and most controversial chiropractor in the country today is Leo L. Spears of Denver, Colorado. Spears is a bustling, sixty-year-old one-time Florida farmer who has parlayed a nineteen-month Palmer course and a flair for advertising into an astounding practice. He has personally treated more than 100,000 patients.

He presides over his own $8,500,000 institution, which he is now expanding into a mammoth chiropractic center. When finished, it will have more beds than all of Denver's other private hospitals combined.

Spears graduated from the Palmer School in 1921, and then began practicing in Denver. In 1924, his Colorado license was revoked for "immoral, unprofessional, and dishonorable conduct," arising out of an advertisement bitterly attacking the medical profession. He fought the revocation to the Supreme Court, lost, and retired from practice for one year.

In 1929, he got his license back. He took to the radio with "health talks" and resumed his newspaper ads and patients flocked to him by the thousands.

Spears publishes a tabloid that boasts through patients' testimonials of an astounding variety of cures.

Under such headlines as SNATCHED FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH and DYING CHILD SAVED BY WILD DASH TO DENVER, it relates cures or relief of cancer, paralysis, tuberculosis, epilepsy, alcoholism, infantile paralysis, multiple sclerosis, locked bowels, goiter, "crooked legs," dope addiction, migraine headaches, Mongoloid cretinism, and diabetes.

Not satisfied with this remarkable cataloguing of cures, Spears's tabloid sweeps the board with, "If you do not find in this paper specific mention of the particular trouble from which you are suffering, just remember that it is because of lack of space."

Spears's cancer claims have aroused a storm across the nation. By his own count, he has treated 2,000 cancer patients in the course of the last three and a half years.

How Spears Treats Cancer

Spears says his treatments include "nerve and cell goading," which consists of rubbing hard across certain areas with the hands; colonic irrigations, "to eliminate poisons"; controlled fasting; chiropractic adjustments; dieting, "to eliminate foods that feed the cancer."

One of Spears's most advertised cancer "recoveries" was that of three-year-old Paul Sunberg, of Audubon, Iowa. For several years, Spears circulated testimonials of a "miraculous cure" of the boy, whom he treated for cancer of the left leg.

The boy was treated at the Spears institution in 1949 and 1950. He died in 1952. The death certificate tersely noted that cancer had spread from his left leg to his lungs.

In 1949, Spears filed a $300,000 libel suit against Dr. F. Julian Maier, a Denver physician. The suit centered around a Spears patient, Mrs. Susia A. Bowers, who died in St. Luke's Hospital after being removed from Spears's hospital by ambulance at the insistence of a relative. She was operated on at St. Luke's shortly after arrival, and was found to have

(continued)

Medical doctors point accusingly to the malpractices of some chiropractors and demand an end to such abuses

peritonitis from a perforated duodenal ulcer. In signing the death certificate, Dr. Maier wrote across the bottom: "This patient died from criminal neglect at Spears Sanitarium."

In the trial, Spears admitted he had manipulated her abdomen on the day she was taken out of his care. "We never learned exactly what was wrong with her," he said, although she was in his hospital seven days.

The jury found for Dr. Maier. Spears appealed to the Colorado Supreme Court, but lost. Meanwhile, the planes, trains, and autos bring a steady stream of patients to the world's busiest chiropractor.

A Colonic-Irrigation Mill

California, long the mecca of cure-all artists, licenses 5,300 chiropractors, about one-fourth of the nation's total. The most energetic of these is L. A. Brinkley, a former fire-truck driver, who maintains a suite of forty-three treatment rooms in the heart of downtown Los Angeles, administers to several hundred patients a day. The "clinic" gives few spinal adjustments. Brinkley concentrates on the intestines. For $95, Brinkley's "clinic" will give a patient a series of six colonic irrigations for everything from heart "derangements" to arthritis.

Brinkley, like Spears, is an advertising expert. In a recent year, he spent more than $300,000 on advertising.

Brinkley's institution has a curious history. He took it over from an ex-convict named John Osborne, who founded the place in 1945 and operated it for three years without a California license. In 1948, California medical examiners arrested him and he pleaded guilty to practicing without a license. He promptly turned his business over to Brinkley, but stayed on as advertising manager.

This writer submitted himself to Brinkley's institution as a patient, after first undergoing an intensive examination in a reputable medical clinic. One of Brinkley's chiropractors, diagnosing him solely on the basis of a pulse chart and a hasty fluoroscope examination, found that his heart was being "squashed out of its normal position" by swollen intestines and was "rapidly wearing itself out." (The medical examination, which had included an electrocardiogram, had found no heart irregularities.) The cure: a series of colonic irrigations.

Medical authorities say that a colonic irrigation can be dangerous to a patient with any one of many ailments. The writer was not examined for any of them.

Investigators have looked into Brinkley's flourishing business. But he is safe. For under the California chiropractic law, a practitioner cannot be penalized for faking a diagnosis or selling unnecessary or worthless treatments.

A few miles from Brinkley's busy colonics mill is an even more bizarre institution operated by another chiropractor, Dr. Ruth Drown. Dr. Drown, with a few drops of blood and some mysterious black boxes, diagnoses and treats patients who are hundreds or even thousands of miles away. She performs this astonishing feat by "tuning in" on a person's vibrations.

In 1951, Federal authorities cracked down on Dr. Drown, and she was convicted of peddling a mislabeled device in interstate commerce and fined $1,000.

Some Perfectly Legal Flummery

But Dr. Drown is still twiddling the dials of her fantastic machines in her lush Hollywood offices. In California, such flummery is perfectly legal.

Though she is a graduate of a chiropractic institute and refers to herself as a chiropractor, Dr. Drown utilizes few, if any, chiropractic techniques. But there is nothing in the law to prevent her from calling herself a chiropractor. There are, in fact, no national standards agreed upon by chiropractors. So trying to determine what, exactly, is the chiropractor's rightful role in the healing of the sick becomes an almost impossible task.

Here and there, amid the propaganda hurled by medicine and chiropractic, one finds a meaningful clue. Many reputable medical men are beginning to concede—usually off the record—that *responsible* chiropractic has a worthwhile function to perform.

"It hurts me to say it," says a noted M.D., "but the truth is that chiropractors are filling in a gap that medicine has overlooked. We've got so angry over their irresponsible claims, their manhandling of scientific fact, their cultism, that we've been blind to the good they are able to do. But for heaven's sake, don't quote me. . . ."

A few years ago, the Baruch Committee on Physical Medicine issued a report on the therapeutic use of heat, water, electricity, massage, and manipulation. Their conclusion was significant. "Physical agents," they asserted, "produce striking biologic responses, including effects on psychic reactions more potent than the effects of many of the drugs gathered through many centuries by trial and error."

The committee also appealed for more courses in physical medicine in the curriculum of medical schools. Their reason: "Physical therapy has been generally neglected, to the great detriment of the medical profession."

Nerve Irritations and Pain

A distinguished physician, Dr. James Mennell, has made some amazing discoveries about what can be done with spinal manipulation.

Mennell reports that nerve irritations arising in the spine can cause "referred pain" that is felt elsewhere in the body. If they are "referred" to the region around the heart, the patient may believe he has angina pectoris. If "referred" lower in the body, they may give rise to symptoms of gallstones, gastric ulcers, or even cancer.

Mennell cites one instance of a patient who suffered severe abdominal pains for twenty years, underwent surgery four times, and was on the verge of suicide. Spinal manipulation brought complete relief.

"There is no justification for looking askance at this form of treatment because of fantastic claims made for it," Dr. Mennell says. His conclusions: put spinal manipulation on a scientific basis and stop running it down simply because the chiropractors discovered it.

Some of the better-educated chiropractors take an attitude similar to Mennell's. They view their function as that of a limited specialist, and freely refer patients to medical men when they feel they cannot help them.

They point to the campaign over the past ten or fifteen years by the National Chiropractic Association to raise requirements in chiropractic colleges and in the state licensing laws. Largely due to its efforts, forty-two states now

require a four-year college course of those applying for a chiropractor's license.

The NCA also is trying to merge and strengthen chiropractic colleges, to put them on a nonprofit basis, and to establish a standard curriculum. It has succeeded in only nine of the twenty-two U.S. colleges. The stiffening of requirements, however, has ended the scandalous situation that prevailed in the early days of chiropractic, when correspondence schools and quick courses of a few months' duration flourished. The average chiropractic graduate of today undergoes a 4,000-hour course, as compared with 6,000 for a medical course. With slight variations, all the schools teach basic chiropractics; namely that the condition of the spinal column can govern the health of a patient. Each curriculum of study includes basic courses such as anatomy, physiology, diagnosis and analysis (the chiropractor's way of locating the source of pain). Only one school teaches colonic irrigation and the like as a part of chiropractic. All of the chiropractic schools emphasize the mechanical techniques in healing, i.e., manipulation of the spine. Surgery is completely excluded as is anything to do with chemical medicine. In some cases, where hospital facilities exist, chiropractic students serve out something resembling internships.

Chiropractic's War of Survival

Chiropractors blame much of the chaotic state of chiropractic on medical opposition. "We've been engaged in a war of survival," says an Eastern chiropractor who studied at Columbia University and at Heidelberg before entering chiropractic. "Medicine is trying to stamp us out, and we've had to stick together. It's hard to clean up your profession when you're fighting for your life."

Such responsible chiropractors express the wish that the half century of warfare between chiropractic and medicine could be ended.

"Modern chiropractors do not hold that they can treat all diseases, the way old D. D. Palmer preached," says a practitioner in New York's swank Westchester County. "They are well aware of the limits of their therapy. Within its limits, we accomplish some wonderful results."

So far, such expressions are rare among the followers of the one-time Davenport grocer who maintained that germs were just scavengers and that the secret to all disease was locked in the vertebrae of the spine. They are even more rare in the medical profession, which turns its back on such findings as Mennell's and continues to cry "Quackery!"

Yet 30,000,000 Americans testify that old D. D. Palmer really had something. The question is, What is it? After fifty-eight years, it is high time this "something" received serious scientific scrutiny to draw the line between legitimate healing and outright quackery. THE END

The HARE, the TORTOISE and HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

NEARLY everyone knows the famous Aesop fable about the hare and the tortoise. There is a good lesson in it for all of us, but for people who have high blood pressure this ancient fable can have a special meaning.

You may remember that the tortoise "pursued a slow but steady pace straight to the end of the course." Yet he won the race simply by taking it in his stride. Indeed, he took life much, much easier than the hare.

This is exactly what doctors wish that all patients who have high blood pressure, or hypertension, would do. In fact, people who have moderate, uncomplicated high blood pressure are often helped simply by learning to adjust their lives to a slower pace.

A relaxed attitude toward life is important in the treatment of this disorder because rush, "drive" and emotional tension can cause an already elevated blood pressure to rise to even higher levels. This is why doctors advise a steady, easy pace during the day and eight or more hours of sleep every night.

In addition, patients should carefully follow their doctor's advice about diet and eating habits. Above all, weight should be constantly kept at the proper level, because high blood pressure and overweight often go hand in hand.

People who learn to take these precautions may live happily, usefully and actively with hypertension even to old age.

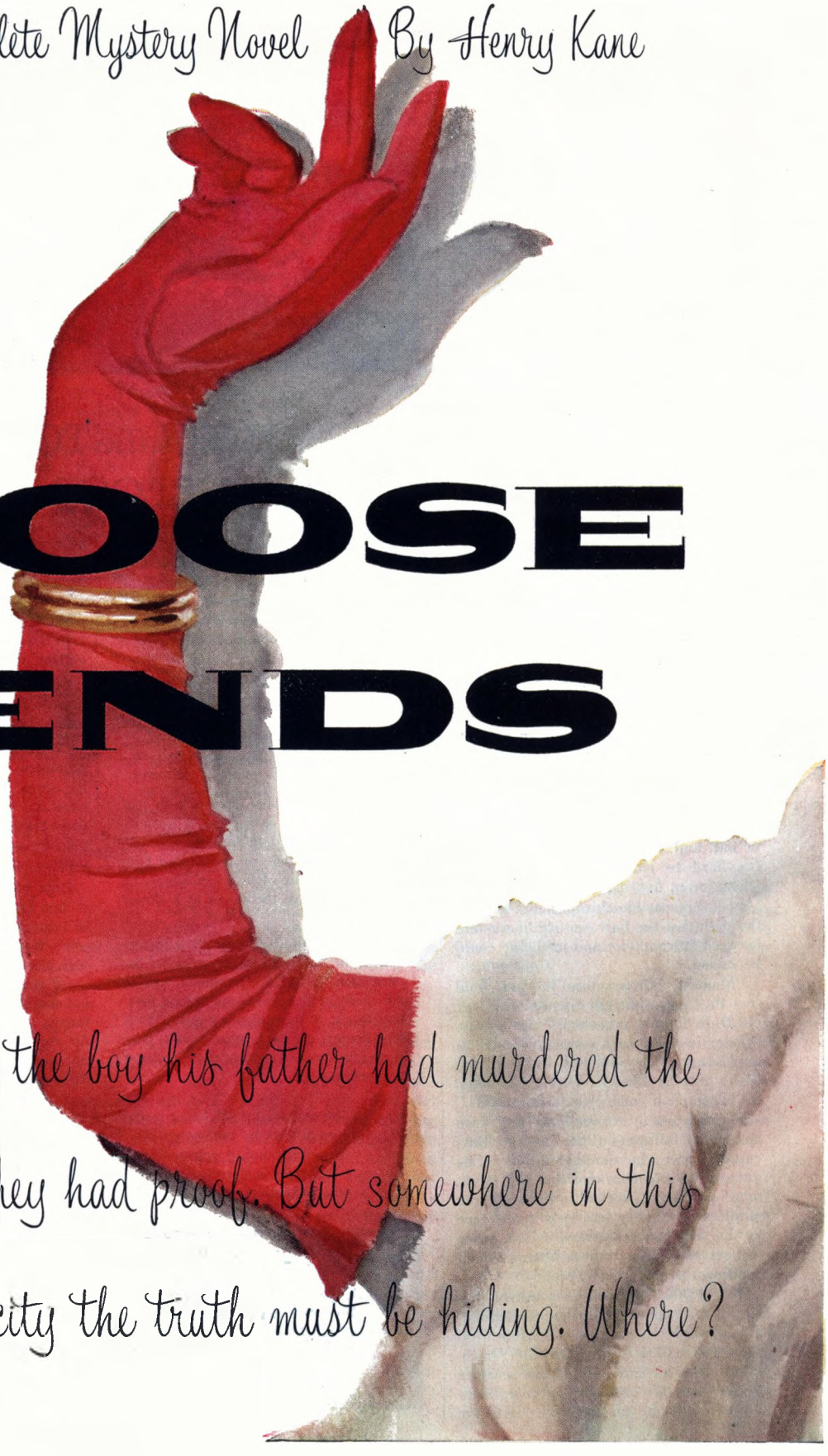
Of course, if blood pressure reaches and stays at an excessively high level . . . or if it is caused by an underlying disease . . . the situation becomes more serious. Even in these cases, there are often ways to lower pressure and relieve symptoms—such as drugs, surgery and special diets.

High blood pressure affects at least 4 million Americans . . . and is a major cause of heart disease in middle age and later years. If you have reached the years when high blood pressure is most likely to occur . . . if you are overweight . . . and if there has ever been high blood pressure in your family, do not neglect to see your doctor for regular medical examinations. When discovered early, hypertension is usually easier to control.

The outlook for still better methods of treating hypertension is promising—as studies by many agencies, including the Life Insurance Medical Research Fund, progress. The Fund, supported by 146 Life Insurance Companies, is devoting much of its research to hypertension and blood vessel disorders.

A Complete Mystery Novel By Henry Kane

LOOSE ENDS



They told the boy his father had murdered the woman. They had proof. But somewhere in this rich, lush city the truth must be hiding. Where?

The young man's face had a look of wax. He was tall and thin, and he kept filling my ashtray with cigarette butts. His face was old for a young man; there were anguish lines, and the eyes were tired and careless. He paced in front of my desk, ground out the cigarette, and lit a new one. He used the same hand for lighting the cigarette as he did for placing it between his lips. He had no other hand. The sleeve of his blue suit was in the pocket of his jacket, and it was empty all the way down from the shoulder. We had talked in generalities, but suddenly my visitor got down to brass tacks. He said, "I came to you because I had heard about you. Been

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM ROSE

hearing about you for a long time."

I said, "Thanks."

He said, "I got no dough."

I said, "Let's not talk about dough. Yet."

He sat down in the chair facing me, and he grinned. He said, "I've been here fifteen minutes, maybe twenty, and we haven't said a thing to each other, I mean anything real, have we?"

"Smoked a lot of cigarettes for fifteen minutes. I'd say it's nearer an hour you've been here."

"Maybe you're good company, Mr. Chambers. Maybe I am. But you don't know yet why I'm here."

"I'm in no hurry. I know things about you. I know your name is Casey Moore."

"And that I'm holed up at the Montero on upper Broadway."

"And that you were in a prison camp for two years and were returned as one of the exchange boys. I know that you were here in a hospital in the States for four months."

"Yeah," he said. "But you don't know what brings me to a private detective, do you, sir?"

"Not yet I don't."

"I repeat, I've got no dough."

"Let's worry about dough when we get up to that. Let's get the story first."

"There ain't much, really."

"Okay. Let's have what you've got."

He sighed. Then he said, "There was me, and there was my old man, and there was nobody else. My mother died when I was a baby. The old man brought me up."

"Your father's name?"

"Henry. Henry Moore. We lived out in Queens, out by the edge of Flushing. That's where I was raised." The lids came down on his eyes, and he looked past me in reminiscence. "Great guy, the old man. Dreamer-type guy. Used to paint pictures. Everybody thought they stank. Except me. And him. I thought they were beautiful."

"What'd your dad do for a living?"

"Bank guard. Directed ladies to the right window, helped old guys make out withdrawal slips, changed the pen points in the pens. Worked that bank twenty years. All that time he never had one minute of excitement."

"He still there?"

His face clouded. "No."

"Retired?"

"Let me tell you."

"Sorry."

"He never saved a sou, spent it on me, mostly. He insisted I get an education. I was always a bug on flying. I got my degree out of Columbia, and I learned all they could teach me about aeronautics. Went to flying school, too. Then I got a job as pilot on one of the air lines, pushed one of the big ones, transcontinental."

"And your dad?"

"Arthritis was plaguing him. He wasn't an old man, just fifty. But I was earning enough for the two of us, so I

talked him into retiring." He paused.

I reached across for one of his cigarettes.

"Then what?"

"Then I got drafted. Went over to Korea as a bomber pilot."

"Your father stay retired?"

"No. He took a part-time job as a night watchman. Worked three days a week." He got up and started pacing again. "The Korean thing went quick for me. We got shot down early, right after the Chinese moved in. Two of us were flung clear, and then the thing blasted like a fire rocket. I learned later the whole crew was listed as dead, including me."

"How about the guy that was flung clear with you?"

"We were picked up by an enemy patrol. He died on the march back. I don't know how I made it, but seems I did. They took off what was left of my arm, pushed my belly together and sewed it up, but I made it. And I made it through the years at the prisoner-of-war camp."

"Yeah," I said. "Then the exchange of wounded prisoners, and then the four months here in the hospital. I bet the happiest man in the world was your dad."

He said, "I didn't hear from him. Not a word. I was told he couldn't be found." He leaned his one hand on the desk and bent toward me. "Four months of rehabilitation, and then two days ago, the day of my discharge, one of the top medics told me."

"Told you what?"

"*That my father was dead. That he had been killed during the commission of a burglary.*"

He slumped into the chair facing me. He said, "They gave me an old newspaper clipping." He brought out the clipping and handed it across.

It was dated a year ago, May eleventh. It told of an attempted burglary at the Westchester home of one Edward Adams. The attempt had been made at two o'clock in the morning. The intruder, one Henry Moore, had entered by the front door. The lady of the house, Dorothy Adams, had heard a noise, had called to her husband, and then, without waiting, had gone to investigate. The intruder, in panic, had emptied a gun at her. Edward Adams, who had stopped to get his own gun, for which he had a proper license, had quickly followed his wife and had, in turn, emptied his gun at the intruder, killing him. A person by the name of Matt Bennett, a house guest, had awakened, and had been a witness to the latter part of the proceedings. Henry Moore had once been a bank guard, and the gun he had used belonged to him. Mrs. Adams had been critically wounded. A doctor had been called, but she had expired before she could be taken to a hospital. Henry Moore resided at 116 Whitehall Place, Flushing, Queens.

There was a curious last paragraph to the clipping. Earlier that evening, at eleven o'clock, Henry Moore's home in Queens had been burned to the ground. The fire had broken out in four of the seven rooms of the frame house and was "undoubtedly of incendiary origin."

Casey Moore said, "Nice, huh?"

I didn't say anything. I returned the clipping.

Casey Moore said, "Impossible. It couldn't happen. I knew my old man. I loved the guy. It . . . it must have been somebody else."

"Was it?"

He shook his head slowly. "No."

"How do you know?"

"I've been to the police. No question. It was my father."

"Whom did you speak to?"

"A Captain Weaver. At Police Headquarters. He showed me photographs the Westchester police had taken. It was my father. I told him that it couldn't happen, not my father, something was wrong, something was crazy." His voice dribbled out. Then he said: "Captain Weaver was kind and sympathetic. But he said it *did* happen, that the proof was all in, that the case was closed, that there was nothing he could do."

I went to the window and looked out on the people scurrying along the New York street that spring day. I said, "What do you want from me, Casey?"

He stood up and came near me at the window. "My father is dead. But he's dead as a thief. Not my father. My father couldn't steal. And he's dead as a murderer. That's wrong, and it's important to me to prove that it's wrong. Can you understand that, Mr. Chambers?"

"Yes."

"That's what I want you to do for me. The police won't because for them it's over. The proof is perfect, and the case is closed. All they've got now is me ranting that it couldn't happen. I suppose every son thinks it can't happen to his father."

"What makes you think I won't agree with the police?"

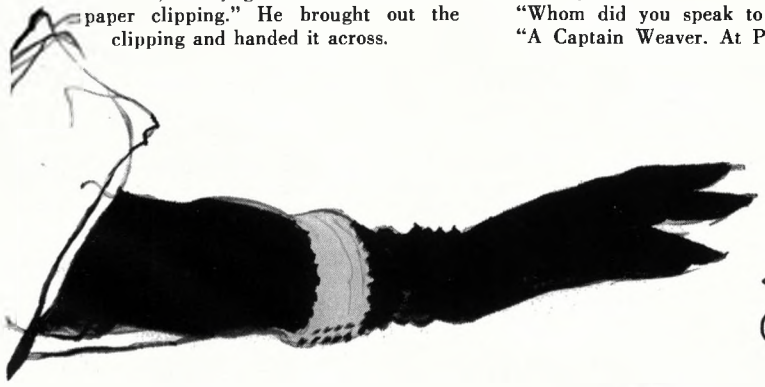
"I tell you my father was not a thief, he was not a murderer, and you must believe me. I want you to prove that."

"And if I can't?"

"Then at least I'll know I've tried. Or you tried. And I don't want you to work for nothing. I have no money now, but after you're through, you'll send me your bill, and I'll pay it, if it takes me a couple of years to do it."

"Forget about that bill stuff, will you, Casey?"

I reached for a cigarette on the desk. I said, "Henry Moore. You say he



There was no trick to falling in love with her -- I fall in love easy. What came after might be more difficult.

The kid had fought for his life and won. Now he was fighting for something that meant even more

couldn't steal." I waited for his answer.

"That's right. It wasn't in him."

"Could he kill?"

He was quiet a moment, thinking. He said, "My father would be capable of killing . . . in self-defense." Silence again, then: "And in one other case. Euthanasia."

"Youth and *what?*"

"Mercy killing. He was crazy on the subject. Talked about it often. For instance, if I, his son, were incurably ill, and in pain, and the doctors said there was absolutely no hope, my father believed that a person like that, even if it were his own son, should be put out of his misery."

"I'm not talking about that. I mean killing, putting a gun to a human being and pumping bullets. Like what happened to Mrs. Adams."

"He couldn't do it. He couldn't have broken into a house, and murdered a strange woman."

"But he did, didn't he? The police aren't crazy. According to you, they had it four-square, and it's stacked away as closed."

"Sure. That's the way it looked, and maybe . . . maybe that's the way it was. But I won't believe it. I want it checked again. Will you give it a try, Mr. Chambers? Please?"

"Yes I will."

"Thank you. And now . . . is there anything *I* can do? To help?"

"Not at the moment. Go on about your business, and don't broadcast that you're around the town. And don't talk about this to anyone. I know where I can reach you, and I'll report to you. Fair enough?"

"The best."

I took him to the door. I said, "G'by, lad. I'll be in touch."

How do you start working on a case like this? Where do you begin on a case that already involves arson, burglary, and two violent deaths?

You walk your office carpet and you scratch your head. You think of a kid who comes back out of the dead to find his father branded a thief and a murderer. You hope with all the hope that's in you that you can do something for him. You march through to the outer office, slam on a hat, wave to your secretary and go to the source. You go to Police Headquarters.

Captain Edgar Weaver was all cop and no tricks, out of Homicide, practiced in his profession for thirty years. Captain Weaver gave a man his due—plain citizen, suspected murderer, or private detective. He said, "What do you figure to do that cops can't do?"

"I don't know." I said. "I'd like to give that kid a break."

"Excellent notion. But the case was open and shut. You've got the file right there in front of you."

I looked at it a bit. Then I said, "How come you people have a file on it? It happened up in Mamaroneck. That's Westchester. That's not New York City business."

"No, but Henry Moore was a Queens resident. That's New York City business. We were called in. We got duplicates of everything in the Westchester file."

"The cops up there satisfied?"

"Perfectly. Plus."

"Plus what?"

"Plus the Crown Insurance Company paid out two hundred thousand dollars. The woman was insured for a hundred, with double indemnity for accidental death. They paid the double indemnity in full. So you've really got it stacked against you. You've got cops satisfied, *and* an insurance company satisfied. You think you can break that down?"

"Tell you the truth, I don't. But I'd like to give it a whirl. Anything you can tell me on it, sir? Any angles?"

His gray eyes shot up at me. "One. The guy didn't have to break in. The front door was open."

"Any explanation?"

"Well, Mr. Edward Adams got home about an hour before the attempted burglary. Maybe he was a little tanked up. Maybe he left it open. He had no recollection on it."

"Happens. But how'd the cops know that door was open?"

"Because there was no forced entry, and the dead man had no key to the premises on his person."

I glanced down at the file again. I said, "Two hundred thousand dollars. That's a lot of potatoes. Who's this Mr. Edward Adams?"

"You ought to know him. Owns the Stardust Room over in Jersey."

"Oh, Eddie Adams. I don't know him, but I've heard about him, and I know that Stardust Room. Beautiful place. Completed about six months ago."

"That's right. Took them six months to build the place. Eddie Adams and a partner, Jack Rawlings."

"Don't know him, either. But I know the manager of the joint. Matt—" I grabbed at the file again, read one of the sheets, and put it down. "Anything smell, Captain?"

"Like what?"

"Like Matt Bennett being the witness?"

"Might, except for Mrs. Adams' statement. She gave the Westchester police a full statement before she died. It coincided exactly with the facts as given by both Adams and Bennett."

"Yeah." I said. "How old is this Eddie Adams now?"

"Sixty-three. Playboy type."

"And the wife, Dorothy Adams?"

"She was sixty when she died."

"Any of them know this Henry Moore?"

"Not a one. Complete stranger. You got the statements right there. And you got a statement there from a Robert Crawford that sort of fixes the whereabouts of Henry Moore that day. Fixes it right up there in Mamaroneck. Actual date is May tenth. Happened at two o'clock that night, which makes it May eleventh. Take a look at that statement."

I did.

Robert Crawford owned a roadside motel and tavern in Mamaroneck near the Adams home. A man, since identified as Henry Moore, had checked into the motel at six o'clock the evening of May tenth. He had retired to his room, with no baggage. He came out again at about midnight, had a few drinks and a meal, lingered over another few drinks until about one forty-five, and then left. He never returned. Next day, after the burglary and the shootings, Robert Crawford

noticed a picture of him in the local newspaper and identified the body in the morgue as the person who had been his recent lodger.

"Satisfied?" Captain Weaver said.

"Certainly puts him at the scene of the crime, with hours to spare. What about his house that burned down? That happened at eleven in the evening of the same May tenth."

"Burned," Captain Weaver said. "A wooden firetrap. Burned all the way down, and everything in it that was burnable."

"Any dope on that?"

"Somebody put the torch to it, no question. Maybe an enemy, maybe vandals, maybe crazy kids. Not much to go on, is there?"

"No, sir, there ain't."

"It's open and shut, Chambers."

"Seems so, all right. You don't mind if I nose around on it, do you, Captain?"

"Not at all. Call on me if anything pops."

I went to the door. "Eddie Adams. He's a guy with a lot of loot."

"They all have their ups and downs."

"He used to own the Diamond Circle, didn't he, the joint that folded?"

"That's the guy. The Circle folded, but the Stardust Room is a real bang-up success. Couldn't last a day in New York."

"I know."

"The Stardust is in the municipality of Lake Manor. Local government covers it. And those boys cover local government. That's how they get away with it."

"This Eddie Adams, does he still live up in Mamaroneck?"

"No. He's nearer our bailiwick now. Moved to an estate out at Lido." He pulled the file to him, closed it. He said, "That's it. It's my hunch you're banging your head against a wall. But maybe I'm wrong. Have fun."

I called the office for messages, but there were no messages because the office was closed. I checked the time: it was six o'clock. I had nothing to do until at least eleven o'clock. I took a cab up to Forty-sixth Street and had a meal of Mexican food. I practiced my Spanish with the waiter, paid, went out, and walked home. Home is Fifty-ninth Street off Sixth Avenue which is Central Park South when you wish to be impressive.

I went home and I showered and shaved. I tried to nap but I couldn't sleep. I watched a night baseball game on television and sipped beer from the cans. Then I dressed, carefully, in a blue suit, black shoes, white shirt, and dark tie. I thought about wearing a holster and gun, but rejected that. I locked up and walked across to Eighth Avenue, where my garage was located. I was going to Jersey, to the town of Lake Manor, to the Stardust Room.

The Stardust Room was only six months old, but already it was the most notorious trap on the East Coast. The entertainment was the best, the food superb, the service obsequious, the music distinguished—all the qualifications necessary for a successful night club. But it had one more. Within two months of its opening, word wafted over to the big town that if you had a taste for gambling you didn't have to journey to Las Vegas: the basement rooms of the Stardust were wide open. There had been a change in the political administration of the town of Lake Manor, and the wise boys had moved in. It was a half-hour ride from mid-town, through the Lincoln Tunnel. I had been there several times before, but this was the first time I was going on business.

The parking attendant took over my car, and I walked up six marble steps into the wide anteroom that housed the bar. I ordered Scotch and water and looked across the bar, into the room proper. It was going full blast, crowded with dancing couples in evening clothes.

"Busy," I said to the bartender.

"You ain't kidding. No reservations, you stay here at the bar."

"Yeah. Matt Bennett around?"

"Who's asking?"

"Peter Chambers."

His smile was a sneer. "Who's Peter Chambers?"

"Friend of Matt's."

Tiredly he said, "Don't mind if I call him, do you?"

"I wish you would."

He lifted a phone from a hook attached to the inner part of the bar. He murmured into it, then hooked the phone back. His smile had more respect. "He's in his office, Mr. Chambers. You know where it is?"

"Yes." I paid my bar tab and left no tip. That, finally, killed his smile.

To the left of the long bar was a carpeted stairway. At the foot of the stairs was the office of the manager. I knocked on the door, and a slender man with a broken nose opened it. He had a white scar over one eyebrow and squinting eyes like blue agates. He took one look at me, put a fist against my chest, and shoved.

"Out," he said.

I knocked the fist off my chest and closed the door behind me. "Remember me, Frankie?"

"I remember you. Too good."

Frankie Gold was a brainless hoodlum, quick with a gun. It had been my pleasure, at one time, to be instrumental in removing Frankie Gold from his usual haunts for a period of two years, time off for good behavior. Now Frankie Gold put his hand within the jacket of his tuxedo and he showed me his gun.

"Out. You ain't going to see nobody."

"Matt's expecting me."

The agate eyes took on an uncomprehending look. "You talking straight?"

"I always talk straight," I said sweetly.

His eyes shifted from me to a black polished door at the far end of the room, then back to me. I said, "Put away the heater and go knock on the door."

He hesitated a moment, then, sullenly, he put his gun back, and went to the polished door. He knocked, and Matt's deep voice came: "What is it?"

"Guy out here to see you. A fink by name Chambers."

"Okay."

Matt Bennett opened the door. I bowed to Frankie and followed Matt into the office. Matt Bennett was another type of hoodlum. He had brains, polish, culture, and the conscience of a curled-up snail. He pushed the door shut and stuck out his hand.

"Hi," he said. "How's business?"

We shook hands, and he went to the chair behind his desk and sat heavily. Matt Bennett was a big man. I'm six-feet-two, but Matt was inches taller, with shoulders to match. He had a square face and black hair and wide black innocent eyes. Matt had been a lawyer once, but he had been disbarred early in his career. Thereafter it was the chase for the easy buck, and Matt had made it big. He had been connected with Eddie Adams at the Diamond Circle, and now he was manager of the Stardust Room.

"If you want to cash a check," he said, "the sky's the limit for you."

"No check, Matt. Business."

"What's the business, pal?" He smiled with good teeth.

"I'd like to talk with Eddie Adams."

"Can't do. He's away on his yacht. Little vacation, with a couple of close friends."

"When's he due back?"

He shrugged. "Anything I can do?"

"Maybe."

"Shoot, pal. I got a lot of respect for you. You know that, pal."

I slid into an easy chair, lit a cigarette. "I'm working on a thing, Matt, ties up with another thing. A thing you were in on once."

"Me?"

"Yeah. The night Mrs. Dorothy Adams was killed."

I watched him. Nothing happened. He merely looked quizzical. He said, "What do you mean *I* was in on that?"

"You were there, weren't you?"

"Yeah, sure I was. But I wasn't *in* on

anything. The old dame got it, and got it bad. But that's old stuff, fella. What's the production on it now?"

"Mind if we talk about it?"

"Not at all."

"Can I ask about the facts?"

"Sure. Nothing I can tell you that I didn't tell the cops."

"Okay, Matt. First off, what were you doing up there?"

"House guest."

"How come?"

"Eddie Adams' wife was sick. Lung trouble, asthma, something. I don't know. That was about the time the Diamond Circle folded. Eddie had to be in town late, working over books. He called me, told me his wife wasn't feeling too hot and would I go up there and spend the day, since he figured to come home pretty late."

"That's all?"

"That's all, so help me."

"Would you tell me the rest of it?"

"Sure, pal. He had his place in Mamaroneck at that time. I spent the day up there, turned in early, about ten o'clock. Then about two o'clock, that shooting started. It woke me up, and I ran out."

"Would you give me the setup of the house?"

"Living rooms, kitchen, den, and stuff, downstairs. Bedrooms upstairs. Eddie and his wife were in one bedroom. My bedroom was opposite theirs, on the other side of the stairway. The shooting woke me. Mrs. Adams was at the top of the stairs, and this guy was pouring it on from the foot of the stairs. Then Eddie came tearing out, and shot up the bum downstairs. That's it, period."

"Thanks."

"What are you working on, pal?"

"I wish I could tell you, Matt." I stood up and stubbed out my cigarette. "Thanks, Matt. Will you do me a favor? Don't mention to Mr. Adams that I inquired about this."

He said. "Why not?"

"I wouldn't like him to think I'm prying into his affairs. With others, that is. I'll be talking to him when he gets back, asking him practically the same things I was asking you. Will you keep it under your hat, Matt?"

He smiled. "Promise," he said, and he made an exaggerated cross over his heart.

"Fine. And now I'll take you up on that check-cashing deal."

"Going to give the basement a whirl?"

"I'm going to try."

I wrote a check and he went to a large safe, opened it, and counted out the money. "If you're going to play the dice, play them wrong. They've been cold all night."

"Thanks, Matt. By the way, Adams had a partner here, didn't he?" I asked.

"Yeah. When they opened. Jack Rawlings. But they split up. Adams is sole owner now. Here's your dough, pal. And play them wrong."

When I got back to town at four-thirty that morning, I was a hundred and twelve dollars richer but I hadn't learned a thing that would help Casey Moore. I parked my car alongside the curb on the south end of Central Park, and went across to my apartment house. The doorman was more solicitous than he had ever been. He opened the door for me, smiled, bowed, and walked all the way back to the elevators with me. I said. "What's the matter, Louie?"

He said. "Mr. Chambers, sir . . ."

I said. "Louie, if you're looking for a touch, you got me at the right moment. How much, and when do I get it back?"

"No, sir," he said, "it ain't that. It's I can pick up twenty bucks."

"Pick away, Louie."

"You see, there's a party outside in a Caddy convertible. Party got here about a half hour ago, asked for you. I said you were out. Party said would I point you out when you got back. Worth a twenty to me."

"So?"

"I don't point out nobody till I ask. So I'm asking. If you tell me no, there goes the twenty, but I don't point. If you give me the okay, I point. That's the way I work, Mr. Chambers."

I grinned and said, "You just earned an extra ten." I dug in for the bill. "Point away, fella. But give me a chance to get up to my apartment."

"Leave it to Louie."

Upstairs, I put on the lights and opened the windows. Within five minutes the buzzer rasped, and I opened the door.

I didn't expect what I got.

I got pulchritude, all dressed up.

The lady was tall, and cool, with thick blonde hair, braided and worn like a crown over her head. Her face was smooth and round, her nose thin and tiny, her eyes blue and clear—and impertinent. She wore a white mink stole over her shoulders, white gloves, and there was a gold mesh evening bag in her hand. She said. "May I come in?"

I stopped staring and rediscovered my voice. I said. "Please do."

She swept into the apartment, and I followed her. She removed the stole and placed it over the back of an easy chair. She was wearing a black evening gown and little gold high-heeled shoes. She had a proud, statuesque figure, and she was about thirty years old, though with a lady like that you never can tell: she could be twenty-one, she could be forty.

"I'm a messenger," she said. "May I sit down?"

"You may do anything your little heart desires."

"Very gallant." She sat, perfectly at ease, and crossed her legs. "I came as a messenger. I'm to ask a few questions and, perhaps, to answer a few. May I?"

"Of course."

"What's your interest in Eddie Adams, the late Mrs. Dorothy Adams, and the events surrounding an attempted burglary that took place a year ago?"

Just like that.

"What's it to you?" I said.

"It's nothing to me. I'm merely a messenger." She shrugged her white shoulders. "You needn't talk to me if you don't want to. That's up to you."

"I'm a private detective," I said. "My name's Peter Chambers."

"I know that."

I waited but nothing came, so I said. "What's yours?"

"My name? Just Olga, for the time being." Again a small shrug of the expressive shoulders. "Let's get back to business, shall we, Mr. Chambers?"

"As I said, I'm a private detective. When business is lousy, you look to stir it up. I'd been going over some old newspaper clips, and I came across that Mamaroneck deal. I figured it might be productive."

"Productive? Of what?"

"Money, naturally."

She was silent for a moment. Then she said. "You have a client?"

"No client."

"You're on your own?"

"That's right."

Her head cocked, and her eyebrows moved up. Then she stood up, her dress rustling. She opened the gold bag and laid five thousand-dollar bills on the coffee table.

I said. "What's that?"

"That's to let sleeping dogs lie."

"Why? What's the pitch, lady?"

She came near me, near enough so I could smell the light perfume she wore. "No pitch, Mr. Chambers."

"But—"

"As I told you, I'm a messenger. With certain delegated powers."

"Yeah, but why try to pay me off? There must be something."

"It's simple. Mr. Edward Adams runs a shindig out in Jersey that's a very delicate proposition. Mr. Adams can't use adverse publicity. That thing is running great guns out there. But a delicate proposition like that—it can go boom at any time. Bad publicity mushrooms up. Bluenoses move in. We want to prevent that." She pointed to the money on the table. "Let's call that . . . part of the operating expenses."

I shook my head. "No good," I told her.

"More?" She asked, incredulous.

"Maybe."

"It's blackmail."

"Is it? If there was nothing wrong on that Mamaroneck deal, where's the blackmail?"

"It's blackmail of another sort. Mr. Adams is running wide open in Jersey. His name starts poking up in the newspapers, crusades can start. Like that, I mean, it's blackmail. And I think you know it, Mr. Chambers. I think that's why you started prying. You're using that Mamaroneck business, perfectly proper as it may have been, as a lever."

"You're beginning to insult me, Miss . . . Olga."

"Am I? Would an additional five thousand dollars assuage the insult?"

I didn't answer.

She said, "I'll be frank with you. I've been authorized to go as high as ten thousand. After that, you're on your own. It's take it or leave it. If I were you, I'd take it. Mr. Adams is a kindly man. But even a kindly man, pushed into a corner, has violent reactions. What do you say, Mr. Chambers?"

"I'm leaving it."

She looked at me for a long moment. Then she picked up the money and put it back into her bag. She slung the stole over one shoulder, crossed to the door and went out.

I shot the bolt after her.

Early-morning sun tinctured my bedroom a pale yellow as I climbed under the covers. Sleep was quick and comfortable, but I remember one last mutter: "Casey Moore, I love you."

I awoke at noon, refreshed. I showered, shaved, and breakfasted. The phone kept ringing all the time, but I didn't answer it. I checked the Hotel Montero in the phone book, and, in between rings, called Casey. I told him I'd be with him shortly.

There was a ticket on my car when I went out, but even that didn't disturb me. I drove up to the Montero, got his room number from the clerk, and went up to Casey.

"Hi," he said. "Anything happen?"

"I think so."

I brought him up to date.

He said, "How do you make it, Mr. Chambers?"

"You may as well start calling me Pete."

"Okay."

"Like this, I make it. She was either telling the truth about the adverse publicity, or it's a ruse, ten thousand dollars worth of ruse, to keep me off it."

"Ten thousand dollars," he said softly.

"Don't make a martyr out of me, pal. I don't take that kind of money, never

I was in a huge, dimly lit subcellar. Under the swaying light, shadows moved.

have, never will. It's either you've got larceny, or you haven't. I haven't. I like to earn my dough."

He didn't say anything. He smoked his cigarettes.

I said, "I'd like to get a look at your father's house, or what's left of it. I'd like to sort of mosey around the neighborhood. How's about it?"

"Fine with me."

Flushing, Queens, is remote for me. It took us thirty minutes, over the Queensboro Bridge, Casey directing me. The area around Whitehall Place was small, almost rural. The community was a square block of old houses, a tiny shopping center, and nothing else.

I parked, and Casey talked to me. He pointed out where 116 had been. It was leveled now, a square expanse of nothing, black char of the fire still showing on the ground. Opposite was a small grocery store. A bent old man came out, carrying a large shopping bag.

"That's Simon," Casey said. "He's been the delivery boy as far back as I can remember. I ought to go out and say hello."

"No you don't."

His head shot around toward me, and his face was questioning.

I said, "There's a lot of people around here you'd like to say hello to. I'm sure of that. You haven't yet, have you?"

"No," he said slowly. "I just haven't had the time yet."

"I'm not going to let you, Casey. Not while our thing's cooking."

"But why?"

"Because so far, there's only me. No client, remember? I don't want it spread around that you're back. If there's going to be a fall guy, let it be me. It's my business. Get it, pal?"

"Yeah," he said. "I understand. But why should you stick your neck out?"

"One neck is easier than two, that's all. Mine's already out. Let's keep it as uncomplicated as possible."

Simon was ambling back from his delivery. I got out of the car and hurried across. I called to him. "Simon, can I see you a minute?"

"Sure." He ambled close, grinned at me with yellow teeth. "What's botherin' you, young fella?"

I pointed at where 116 Whitehall Place had been. "I'm checking on the fire there."

"Ain't ya a little late, young fella?" His voice was a cackle.

"I'm from the insurance company. We're doing a recheck."

"Didn't know old Henry had any insurance."

"A small policy. We've been holding the proceeds for his estate."

"Estate? Ain't no estate. Ain't no family left. Heard the son got killed in Korea, the poor kid." His eyes were sad.

"You can't tell, Simon. They turn up sometimes."

"Yeah. Sometimes they do."

"What's your full name, Simon?"

"Gordon. Simon Gordon. You makin' me feel right real important, young fella. Ain't nobody been asking old Simon any questions for years and years now."

"Did you see the fire, Simon?"

"Nope. Happened around eleven o'clock at night. I hits the hay come nine, never later. Even them old fire engines didn't wake me up."

"I see. What about Henry Moore. When'd you see him last?"

"Know about old Henry?"

"I heard."

"Turned out to be a crook, old Henry. You wouldn't believe it. Nobody'd believe it. Got caught up with that same night, upstate somewheres. Got all shot up. Henry. Nobody talks about it around here."

"When'd you see him last, Simon?"

"Saw him that selfsame day, day of the fire. He was sitting out on the steps of his house, all dressed up, till that car come and picked him up. It was nigh onto five o'clock when the car pulls up, real fancy car, too."

"You see who was driving?"

"Sure, I see. Man gets out, that's who was driving, and he talks to Henry, and Henry ups and goes into the car, and off they go."

"Can you describe that man?"

"Nope. I ain't the least good in describin' nobody, couldn't even describe you to you, right now. But I'll never forget your face. I got what they call a photographic memory. I can give you back a face that come up against me thirty years ago, that I can."

"The face of the man that came out of the car, would you remember it?"

His eyes became crafty. "You figure maybe he was a accomplice of old Henry's up there upstate?"

"Maybe."

"I saw him, and I saw him good." He was proud as he said. "You put me in front of a hundred people, and have that guy be one of them, and I'll point him out, and no mistake. But never ask me for no descriptions." He tapped my shoulder. "Look, I got to get back to the store. I hope I helped you, young fella."

"Thank you, Simon."

"Don't mention it."

He winked with both eyes as his grin widened. I returned to Casey in the car. I started the motor, and we shoved off. I said, "Queens is Long Island, isn't it?"

"That's right."

"How long will it take us to get to the shore? Cool breezes at the shore."

I could feel his eyes on me. But as long as I wasn't talking, he wasn't asking questions.

"Yeah," he said. "Cool breezes by the shore. You make a right turn two blocks from here, then we hit the parkway, and then it's about a half hour."

When we arrived at Long Beach, there were cool breezes. And there was the tonic smell of salt in the air. I said, "I wish we had time for a dip."

"Haven't we?"

"No. We're going to pay a visit. Lido. Maybe Mr. Adams is back from his yachting trip. Which way?"

"Turn left."

We inquired at a drugstore about the Adams estate. We got directions and drove to a large pink-roofed house near the sea. Tall, iron gates were open. We drove through, and up a pebbled roadway, and we stopped at a wide stairway leading up to two massive doors with brass adornments. I said, "Stick around, Case."

"Why?"

"Don't want people knowing you're around."

I ran up the stairs and banged at a brass knocker. A butler opened the door.

I said, "I'd like to talk with Mr. Adams."

"He's not at home, sir."

"It's important."

"Please come in, sir."

It was like a cool tomb, the floor of highly polished stone, the ceiling domed and far away, two stairways in the rear curling upward, and on each side, five heavy carved oak doors.

The butler said, "Just one moment, sir."

He went to one of the oak doors, opened it, and passed through. I waited, literally cooling my heels. Then the door opened again and another man emerged. He was thick-shouldered and squat and he approached me with more bounce than a hansom over cobblestones. His ears didn't match. One was pulpy. Aside from that his face had the blue sheen of a tough-to-shave beard, but it was pleasant, and he was neatly dressed in a white linen suit, white shoes, and a dark-blue sport shirt. He smiled and said, "How do you do?"

I said, "I'd like to talk with Mr. Adams."

"I know. The monkey told me. He said you said it is important. How important?"

"Matt Bennett sent me."

He pondered a moment, then he said, "You would wish to talk to the Missus?"

"I would, if Mr. Adams isn't home."

"He ain't. Kindly follow along."

We went to the rear, between the two curling stairways. He slid apart glass-brick doors, and we were on a wide,

railed terrace fronting on landscaped gardens. Off to the left, some distance, was a swimming pool, surrounded by long comfortable padded beach chairs. One of the beach chairs contained a lady in a black bathing suit and large-lensed sunglasses. The lady had blonde hair braided over her head like a crown, and her name was Olga. Her figure, curve upon curve and long-legged smoothness, could bring the blood to a boil in your head. If you were a man.

She was using a pen on a writing tablet in her lap. As we approached, she glanced up, and she turned on a small smile for me. My guide said, "Guy wishes to see Mr. Adams. Wishes also to see you. Says Matt Bennett sent him."

"Thank you, Mike."

She looked at him and waved a finger. Mike bowed a clumsy bow, went back into the house. Olga laid the pen and tablet on a nearby table, reached for a frosted drink, sipped, and set that back on the table. The diamond marriage ring on her finger was very obvious. She said, "Change your mind, Mr. Chambers?"

"No."

"Then why are you here?"

"I hoped I'd find Mr. Adams here."

"You think you could make a better deal with him?"

"I might. It's worth a try."

"Anything's worth a try, I suppose." She took off her glasses and laid them aside. "Surprised to find that I am Mrs. Adams?"

"Yes," I said.

She smiled like she meant it. "Simple and to the point. You could be nice, if you tried."

"I have been trying, Olga."

"Well, don't try too hard. I'm a newlywed."

"How long, Mrs. Adams?"

"Four months."

"And already Eddie Adams is out on his yacht—without you?"

She said, "Mr. Adams is past sixty. I'm twenty-four. Mr. Adams is entitled to enjoy his recreations without me."

"Smart," I said.

"Mr. Adams wouldn't have married me unless I was smart. Mr. Adams has a great contempt for fools."

"You're no fool," I said.

"Aren't I?" Her look wasn't the look of a newlywed.

I shifted my ground. "When's he due back?"

"Don't know. Mr. Adams is unpredictable. There's a letter from him." She pointed at the table. "You can read it. No billing and cooing. Not Mr. Adams."

I lifted the letter. There was no envelope and no date mark. It was short and to the point. It said the fishing was good and the weather was good and he was relaxing. He expected to be home soon.

"Soon?" I queried. "When is soon?"

"With Eddie Adams, you don't know."

Suddenly there were hands on my shoulders, and I was whirled around. I shoved the letter in my pocket, and I was ready to swing when other hands caught mine and pinned them behind me. Mike, smiling in front of me, said, "Paul tells me there is a monkey with one arm sitting outside on your running board taking the sun."

"Who's Paul?" I said.

"Me," said the voice behind me, and the grip on my hands tightened.

Mike said, "Who's the monkey?"

"My assistant."

"And who the hell are you what needs assistants? I thought you said Matt Bennett sent you."

Olga's grin was pure joy. Olga was having a good time. "All right," she said. "Let him alone."

My hands were freed, and the man behind me came into view. He was young, tall, dark, and beefy with nasty eyes and thick, red, powerful hands.

I said. "You jump a guy behind like that, Paul, you can get into trouble."

"I like trouble, mister."

Olga said, "Okay, boys, skip it."

Mike was insistent. "But he told me Bennett sent him."

"Bennett didn't send him. It was his way of getting in here."

"Oh, a wise guy," Mike said.

"Maybe too wise for his own good." She looked up at me. "Is there anything else, Mr. Chambers?"

"No. Not for the time being."

"Then do you mind if the gentlemen show you out?"

"No. Not at all."

"G'by, Mr. Chambers. And be kind to him, boys."

They marched me into the tomblike stone lobby, and they held the door open for me and slammed it behind me. Casey stood up from the running board, grinning. "Saw a couple of real hood types around the premises. I was wondering whether you needed me. They give you a hard time?"

"Nothing special."

"Get any dope?"

"Adams is still at sea."

We drove back and stopped at the same drugstore that had given us directions. It was ten minutes to five. I said, "I want to make a call into New York. Wanna come?"

"I've got a yen for an ice-cream soda."

"Good idea. So've I."

Casey was lustily sipping through a straw while I made my call. Information gave me the phone number of the Crown Life Insurance Company, 10 Wall Street, and the operator put me through after I inserted hollow-sounding coins. I asked

the switchboard girl for Herb Wiley and I quickly got him. "Hello?" he said.

"Herb? Pete Chambers."

"Hi, Pete."

"Herb, can I see you tonight?"

"Dinner?"

"Love it."

"It's okay, if you can make it late."

"Eight-thirty?"

"Fine. Where?"

"Casa O'Brien. And Herb, dig up a file for me and bring it with you."

"File?"

"Beneficiary, Edward Adams. Deceased, wife, Dorothy Adams."

"What's the date of death?"

"May eleventh. Last year."

"Hold it a minute, Pete." I waited a while, then his voice came back. "Okay. What's up, Pete?"

"Tell you when I see you."

The Casa O'Brien was a delightful restaurant on East Sixty-fourth Street. It was quiet and dimly lit, soundproofed, the walls covered with murals by Ichabod Rally, one of our brilliant young American geniuses.

I was alone at a corner table, sipping a stinger when Herb showed up.

Herb Wiley was one of the vice-presidents of Crown. Herb had been a football player at Princeton, and he had served in the Army with me. He was a bright, alert executive who earned his keep down at Crown.

We did small talk all through the meal, but when the liqueur showed up, I said, "Where's the file?"

Herb said, "I don't need a file."

"You know the case?"

"I know it now. I reviewed the file."

"Good. What do you think of it?"

"Cut and dried."

I smiled. "Seems I haven't got a chance."

"Chance?"

"To upset it."

"I wish you had. They'd run me a testimonial, with speeches, if I could haul back that two hundred thousand."

"That ten-per-cent deal still go?"

"It's a standing rule, Pete. Any investigator who can show us where a fraud was pulled gets ten per cent of the money recovered as his fee."

"Brother, I'm working for you."

"Glad to have you. But if you're talking about the Adams case, there just isn't a loophole. Matter of fact, our own investigators reviewed it only a month ago. Routine. We do a checkup about a year later."

"How's Adams fixed right now?"

He grinned. "You mean could we recover our two hundred thousand?"

"I mean something like that."

"You show me fraud and we pay you at once, that's how good Adams is."

"Really?"

"He owns that place out in Jersey outright; he owns a place out at Lido; he's got property here in the city; and he's got a load of stock. And he made practically all of it during this past year. Quite a man."

"No loopholes?"

"Not a one."

"What about the gun that killed Mrs. Adams."

"No question. It was Henry Moore's gun, registered in his name, and the bullets that killed her came from that gun. Paraffin test showed the nitrate particles in his palm. Mrs. Adams, before she died, told her story clearly, and identified the corpse of Henry Moore. There's just no out there, Pete."

"And Matt Bennett was a witness."

"No witness was needed, really. Mrs. Adams' story would have been enough. Bennett was merely corroboration, as was Adams himself. Adams was guilty of no crime. He shot a burglar, a man who had critically wounded Mrs. Adams."

"But what about the open door downstairs?"

"That can happen. People leave doors open."

"But Adams himself left that door open."

"So what? The thing happened at two in the morning. Adams came home at one. The police think he may have been a little tight, but they can't prove it."

"Anybody fix his whereabouts for that evening?"

"Of course. About that time, his Diamond Circle was going out of business. He was at the club, in his office, up until midnight, working on his books."

"Any corroboration of that?"

"None necessary. Anyhow, it couldn't possibly be disproved."

"Why not? Figures to be an elevator man, maybe a secretary, something."

"Uh uh. The office was over the club, one flight up. A walk-up. Adams had keys to the outside door, downstairs, and to the actual office door, upstairs. And he worked alone that evening, no secretary. If ever there was a cut-and-dried case, it's this one."

"Maybe. Maybe so."

The waiter came with the check, and I grabbed it. Outside, I said, "Can I drop you somewhere, Herb?"

"You can drop me at home." Then his forehead creased. "You driving? I thought you didn't drive in town."

"I'm going across to Jersey."

"Jersey?"

"A little unfinished business."

Unfinished business got me to the Stardust Room at ten-thirty. I left my car in the roadway with the lights on, and walked through the dimness to the stairway and up the stairway into the bar. It was seething with more customers than the lobby of the Garden on fight night. I moved to the carpeted stairs and ran down. I knocked on the door of "Office of the Manager." It was opened by Frankie Gold. I caught him on the chin, and he fell, face forward, like he'd been hit with an elephant gun.

The door had a barrel bolt. I shot it.

I worked fast and silently. I removed his tuxedo jacket, his tie, his suspenders, the gun from his holster, and a silk handkerchief from his jacket pocket. I used the tie to knot his wrists together behind him. I used the suspenders to bind his ankles. The handkerchief became a silken gag across his mouth. I lifted him, laid him out behind a long leather couch, and tossed his jacket over him. Then I picked up the gun, crossed to the polished black door, and reached for the knob—but it had no knob. It was the type of door with one knob, and that one on the inside. Smart man, Matt Bennett. I used my own handkerchief now. I put it across my mouth, held it with my left hand, and rapped on the door with the gun muzzle.

Matt Bennett called, "Yeah?"

My voice came from deep in my throat, choked against the pad of the handkerchief. "Open up, boss. It's Frankie."

"What's the matter?"

"I got somethin' stuck in my t'roat. Open up."

The door opened, and I jammed the gun in his stomach. "What . . .?" he said. "What . . .?"

"Nothing," I said. I kicked the door shut with my foot.

"Where's Frankie?"

"Sleeping. I borrowed his gun."

"Sleeping?" Then it came to him. His face lost a little color, and he backed away. "What do you want?"

"You didn't keep your promise, Matt." I put my handkerchief away.

"What promise?"

"About my being here. About our chat."

"How do you know?"

"Never mind how I know," I said. "You're going to talk, Matt." I waved the gun.

He said, "You wouldn't dare."

I said, "Matt, you know me. I'd dare. It's Frankie's gun. I plug you, wipe it off, stick it in his hand, and blow. Nobody knows I'm here. Let Frankie talk his way out of it. You couldn't help him. You'd be dead."

The bit of color left in his face went away. He said, "What do you want?"

"Where's Eddie Adams?"

"On his yacht."

"Did you tell him?"

"Yeah."

"How?"

"He's got one of those gimcracks. Ship-to-shore phone."

"What'd you tell him?"

"Told him you were here. Told him what you told me, and what I told you. I work for the guy, Pete. I wouldn't hold out information on him. But what's the excitement? I don't get it."

"Doesn't he trust you to negotiate for him, Matt?"

"Negotiate? What are you talking about?"

"Olga."

"You know her?"

"Met her recently. Eddie must have used that ship-to-shore phone again. She offered me ten thousand dollars to lay off. Why?"

There was sweat on his face now. Earnestly he said, "I don't know why, Pete. I swear to you."

"She told me the publicity wouldn't do this joint any good. You think that reason holds?"

"Sure, it holds. You know how we operate here. It's like living on the side of a volcano."

"Very poetic. But I want to know what happened up there in Mamaroneck?"

"You know what happened up there. You've got it straight, I tell you."

"Maybe I have, but if I haven't, you're it, Matt. I know a couple of things about you that stink to high heaven. If you're handing me stuff on the bias, I wouldn't want to be you for nothing. Last call, Matt."

There was fear in his eyes, but he said, "You've got it straight, Pete. Believe me."

I believed him.

I said, "You got a gun, Matt?"

"Yes."

"Don't use it. I'm leaving. If you're not mixed up in anything, don't start mixing now. Check?"

"Check."

"Go back to your desk and sit down. If you want to make a ship-to-shore phone call, make it. But don't start buzzing any of those tough boys outside. Double-check?"

His smile was a sad show of teeth. "Good-by, Mr. Chambers. And don't you worry about my tough boys."

I went out and let the door slam behind me. I wondered for a moment how they got in without a knob, decided it must work on an electric apparatus with a button on the outside, moved to Frankie Gold stiffly slumbering behind the leather couch, dropped his gun beside him, and went out and up the carpeted stairs.

The throng at the bar had not diminished. I pushed through, squeezing against people, and then a warm hand spread over my hand and tugged gently. I turned to face Olga Adams, smiling sweetly. She wore a red dress that began deep beneath her shoulders and ended in a wide swirl on the floor. She said, "Can I buy you a drink?"

"No, thanks."

"You just beg for trouble, don't you?"

"Do I?"

"I saw you come in. I figured you'd be going out with your face a little marked up."

I touched a hand to my face. "How's it look?"

"Just fine. Let's just sit and chat a couple of minutes, eh?"

"Not here."

"Where?"

"Outside. In my car. With the motor running."

Her blue eyes looked up to mine, and then one eye closed in a flat wink. "Can I trust you?"

"Try me, Mrs. Adams."

Outside, she waited on the marble steps, while I got the car. The sky was thick with clouds of rain, and thunder talked in the distance. I drew up by the stairs, and opened the door of the car. She ran down and got in beside me. I pulled the door shut, rolled a short distance, stopped, and kept the motor running. I fixed the rearview so I could see who was coming out of the Stardust. I said, "All right. What's it all about, Mrs. Adams?"

She huddled in the opposite corner, but her voice was soft. "You can call me Olga."

"What's it all about?"

"I saw you come in. I could have called down to Matt."

"So?"

"I didn't."

"Why?"

"Why?" She seemed to be thinking. I grabbed a quick glance and saw a frown between her eyes. Then she said, "It's a good question." She was silent another moment. Then, "I don't know," she said. "I wish I did know. If I'd have called down, they'd have been waiting for you. Anything could have happened."

She was closer to me now. I could feel the warmth of her thigh. Her voice was almost a whisper now. "I've got a small hunch it's not just money you're after. It's a pleasant hunch. Also, I think you're cute. Maybe that adds up. Maybe it doesn't. I'm a woman."

"That's why you didn't call down to Matt?"

"That's why."

"Could it be you don't believe in violence?"

"Not yet, I don't. Not with you." Her hand was on my knee. "You'll know about it when I come around to that. I rattle before I strike, I rattle good and loud. You figure to catch up with a lot of grief, but right now that's the men's department. I've been doing some thinking about you. I think you're stupid but cute."

"What happened that night up there

in Mamaroneck?" I asked Olga Adams.

"You know what happened there. You know it just as I know—from the newspapers. But you're trying to make a big thing out of it. You've rolled it up to ten thousand bucks so far." She was very near to me now, her lips at my ear. "What are you *really* trying to roll it up to?"

The rearview mirror gave me Frankie Gold coming down the marble steps, coming in my direction. I said, "That's all, sister." I opened the door on her side. "I gotta go now."

"Yeah. Gotta go."

"'By, Mrs. Adams."

"'By, stupid."

The minute she was out, I shoved into gear and rolled. Thunder was sharp, and there was lightning to the east. By the time I got to town, I was fighting a storm. New York, I love it, but the climate can drive you crazy.

When you can't sleep, you can't sleep, and fighting it does not help. I listened to disc jockeys during the night, and to chamber music, and symphonies, and jazz. I listened to rain in the streets and looked out on the bleary yellow lights of the town. I thought about Olga Adams and her smooth shoulders and her blue eyes and the look in her blue eyes. I thought about her promise to rattle before she struck, and I believed that promise. Olga Adams had an ego all her own, and Olga Adams didn't think I was using blackmail solely as a prod for money. No, Olga Adams believed my motives were more devious. As long as Olga Adams thought along these lines, I was safe—from Olga Adams, from violence directed by Olga Adams. Olga Adams would be disenchanted soon enough, but in the meantime there was Matt Bennett and Frankie Gold and the remote Eddie Adams.

I pushed thinking out of my mind. But sleep would not come. I climbed out of bed and brought back magazines, and thick books, and paperbacks, and I read until at long last it was morning.

I bathed and shaved and breakfasted. I wrapped a raincoat around me, and went out into the morning. My car was parked tight to the curb near the house, but I whistled down a cab.

My secretary's eyes popped at my matutinal invasion of the office, but I pretended not to notice. Routine had piled up, and we went to work on it. At two o'clock, fatigue mixed with boredom and I quit. I had lunch in a nearby beanery. When I came out, the rain had turned to fog, and the steam was coming up off the streets. I took a cab home. I paid and he rolled off and I stood under the canopy of my apartment house and breathed deep of the thick air. Central Park South was deserted. A car started up from the curb, picking up speed, and before I dropped. I saw the huddled man behind the black prong extending out of the window. Bullets from a carbine splattered above me, and then the car roared off.

I got up and dusted wetness from my raincoat.

I had a hunch Eddie Adams was home.

I parked the car outside the Montero. A creaky elevator took me up, and when Casey opened the door for me, I said, "Pal, I'm moving in."

"Why you moving in?"

"Because I can't go home. When I told you to keep your neck in, it was a general precaution. Now it's special."

"What happened?"

"Bullets. Out of a rolling car. They figure they get rid of me, they get rid of trouble. They don't know I have a client."

We went downstairs together, and Casey's friend, Joe Vincent, took a room, payment in advance since he had no baggage. Up in Joe Vincent's room, I got out of my clothes and stretched out in bed and Casey lit my cigarette and he lit his own.

I blew smoke toward the ceiling. I said, "Think, boy. Is there something? Anything?"

He didn't think. He said, "There's nothing. I was away. For a long time. Remember?"

"Any relatives, Case? Your father have brothers and sisters? Your mother?"

"Nothing," he said. "My mother was an orphan, an only child. My father has an older brother in Ireland, but I wouldn't know how to get in touch with him if I wanted to."

"Did your father have friends?"

He hesitated a moment. Then he said, "I suppose he did, but nobody he'd really confide in . . ." His voice trailed off. He looked uncomfortable.

I said, "You holding out on me, Case?"

"Yes." His eyes avoided mine.

"But why?"

He prowled the room, then sat down at the foot of the bed. "It's something I—I thought I shouldn't talk about, because, well, people wouldn't understand. Which is why I didn't mention it. Which is why I'm reluctant right now."

"Let's try, Casey."

"It's a lady. Her name is Mary Davis. I used to call her 'Auntie.' Dad and she were friends, real friends, for eighteen years."

"They ever think of getting married?"

"She had a husband."

"I see."

"No, you don't. That's the point. That's why it's so hard to talk about. Auntie—Mary Davis—had a husband, Fred, Fred Davis, who was an invalid, paralyzed. He had suffered a spine injury, on his job as a milkman, many years ago." His eyes closed, and suddenly, for the first time, his face had the look of a boy. "As far back as I can remember, old Fred sat in a wheel chair, motionless, and he couldn't talk." Now his eyes opened. "They had a tiny little income, some sort of compensation from the milk company, and the two of them lived in a spotless little apartment in the Bronx."

"How'd your father meet her?"

"Years ago, he was a bank guard in a Bronx branch. He met her up there, in the Bronx, in the bank where she had one of those thrift accounts. She was the sweetest, finest person I've ever known."

I said, "What's so tough about that? I don't get it."

"For eighteen years, my father and this lady were close, intimate friends. But friends, nothing more. People don't understand that sort of thing. People read into these things, and there was gossip about my father and Auntie."

"But why?"

Casey smiled, but there was little mirth in the smile. "Dad was a lonely man, and Auntie was a lonely woman. They saw a great deal of each other. As a child, I used to spend weekends up there, with my father. As I grew up, and broke away, Dad would spend weekends up there himself. But there was nothing wrong, please believe me. Fred Davis loved it. He couldn't talk, but there was a manner of communication—he could sort of talk to them with his eyes."

"I take it your father would have married her, had she not been married or had she become widowed."

"No question about that. But she was married, and she did not become widowed. When I grew up, Dad and I talked about it often. Dad worried about the gossip, the possibility of hurting her. As a matter of fact, as the years passed, they built up a little fib between them—for the neighbors, for people, they were supposed to be brother and sister, and my calling her Auntie became practically proper. Can you understand this? It's important to me that you do."

"Of course, I can, Casey."

"As time passed, it was as if they believed it themselves; in time, they practically became brother and sister: Auntie, tiny, wispy, sweet, timid; and Dad, big and hearty, sort of the big brother, helping whenever he could, carrying Fred around, bringing presents, like a television set; you know, things like that."

I lay back on the bed. "I assume you've seen her since you're back."

"She's the only one I tried to see. She's gone to Miami, Florida. So I was told by the people who took over the apartment in New York."

"Did you get the Florida address?"

"Nobody had it. All they knew was that she moved down to Miami, to a married sister."

"Know anything about this sister?"

"I had heard about her. She'd lived in Miami most of her life, and had married there."

"And you don't know her name?"

"Only a first name, Alice, that's all."

"What about Auntie's maiden name? Do you know that?"

He thought for a moment. "Maxwell. That's it. Mary Maxwell."

I said, "Do you have a gun, Casey?"

"Luger," he said. "Souvenir."

"Bullets?"

"Plenty."

"Get it in shape, pal." I looked at my wrist watch. "I'm going to catch some shut-eye. Wake me at about seven."

"Why the questions about the gun?"

"We may have to use it. I think another visit to Lido is in order this evening. And you're coming along as bodyguard."

He grinned. "It's about time I got into some action."

"I hope there won't be any action, but you never can tell." I yawned, wide. "G'by, Case. Go play with your Luger." He was at the door when I called to him. "By the way, what was the name of the milk company old Fred worked for?"

"Certified Special."

"G'night."

He closed the door softly behind him. I got up, turned the key in the lock, stumbled to bed, and went to sleep.

Shrill sounded the phone. I rolled over in bed and reached out a hand and lifted the receiver and said, "Go away."

"Pete? It's Casey."

I woke up. "What time is it?"

"Seven. I'm calling you from my room. I told the switchboard girl to keep ringing till you woke up."

"All right, kid. I'll pick you up in fifteen minutes."

I hung up, then called Information. I got Edward Adams' number in Lido, called, and asked for Eddie Adams. A voice said, "Who?" and I said, "Peter Chambers." and the voice said, "Hold the wire, please," and then there was a pause, and then a voice, slow and cool.

"Yes? This is Mr. Adams."

"Pete Chambers."

"Yes, Mr. Chambers?"

"All right if I drop in on you, sir, within the next couple of hours?"

"I'll be here."

"Swell. And Mr. Adams . . ."

"Yes."

"There are people know I'm coming out to see you."

"I beg your pardon."

"This afternoon I almost got in the way of the well-known hail of bullets."

"I don't understand."

"Just mentioning it. Just mentioning that if it happens on my way to you, or coming from your place, there might be others who won't understand, especially if they know I'm contemplating a visit to you."

"Now, look, Mr. Chambers—"

"Let's skip it, Mr. Adams. I'll see you later."

The trip took us one hour and fifteen minutes. Casey Moore was silent most of the way. He had no holster, and the big Luger was a thick bulge in his jacket pocket. Once he said, "Do you think there might be trouble?"

"I doubt it. Eddie Adams is a smart operator. He won't pull anything where he can be tied in to it. I may be wrong, of course. Which is why I've got you around, with that thing in your pocket."

That was the extent of the conversation until I braked in the roadway outside the pink-roofed house. I said, "Keep the thing in your lap, and don't hesitate to use it in case of action."

"Don't you want me to come in?"

"No. They'll know you're out here. But that's all they'll know. They won't know if I've got anybody else staked out, somewhere along the premises."

I ran up the stairs and worked out on the brass knocker. This time the door was opened by Paul, and Mike was right beside him.

"How do you do?" Mike rasped. "You wish to see Mr. Adams?"

"I wish."

"You do not object, I hope, to a gentle frisk by Paul?"

"I do not object."

Paul passed expert fingers over my person. "He's clean," Paul said.

"Smart fella. And now, if you will come along this way . . ."

He led me to one of the oak doors, opened it, nodded, and swept his hand in front of him, bidding me enter. I went in, and he closed the door behind me.

It was a large room with plum-colored walls and a coral carpet and heavy, carved mahogany furniture. Set between the windows was a massive desk. Behind the desk was a high-backed chair cushioned in brocade. Olga Adams arose from this chair and came toward me. Olga Adams, in gauzy white lounging pajamas, a soft gold belt around her middle, and gold sandals on her feet.

I said, "Eddie Adams. I called him. I want to talk with him."

"You'll talk with me first."

"But he knows I'm here."

"Not yet he doesn't."

"But Mike, and that other hood—"

"They're devoted to me."

"But—"

She was close to me now. "Look. You

and I, we're going to talk first. We began something, out in the dark by the Stardust. Now we're going to finish it."

"We've got nothing to talk about."

"Haven't we?" She turned and went away from me, slowly. There was a cocktail glass on the desk, half empty. She lifted it, drained it, set it down, and returned to me. She was close again, one finger touching my chin. She said, "Did you know about me? Did you know I was the girl Eddie ran around with? Did you know I was his wife?"

"No."

She smiled at me, a small, crooked, wistful smile. "I don't believe you."

"Look, lady—"

"Don't look-lady me."

Her hands came up around my neck, and her lips opened on mine, and she kissed me, softly at first, a caress, and then harder, her body pressed to mine; and then her hands dropped from around my neck, and her blue eyes were narrow, and her mouth was tight.

"So that's not it," she said.

"No, Mrs. Adams. That's not it."

"Well, what is it?"

"I don't understand."

"Look, you. It's not money. Ten G's would have been beautiful for a guy on a small heist. Ten G's and you'd have been out clean. It's more than dough. I'm good at things like that. I'm a high-class chiseler. I thought . . ." Her eyes traveled over me. "But I was wrong."

"You're right about that."

"Am I?" She backed away and regarded me. She hooked her thumbs in the gold belt. "All right. What is it, if it's not dough?"

"I've got an answer, lady. But it's not gentlemanlike."

"Let's hear."

"Mind your business."

The thumbs came out of the belt, and she came near again. "I'm minding my business, fella. That's exactly what I'm doing. What do you take me for?"

"I'm not taking you for anything, Mrs. Adams. I came here to speak with your husband."

"You'll speak with him after I've finished my say. I saved you from a beating, maybe worse, at the Stardust. When you came here the first time, the boys were going to work you over, but I talked them out of that. Reason—I thought you had ideas. Okay, I was wrong. Maybe I had ideas. Well, I don't have them anymore."

"Fine. Now can I talk with Mr. Adams?"

Her finger was on my chin again, insisting on my attention. "I'm declaring myself in. Against you. I promised I'd rattle. I'm rattling, right now."

"Why?"

"Figure it for yourself. I married a guy named Eddie Adams. I'm not in love with him. Guess why I married him?"

I took the finger off my chin and held it a moment. I said, "I can't imagine."

"Eddie Adams is rich, and he's going to be richer, and he's not going to live forever. I don't know what you're up to, but whatever it is, in the long run, it's going to hurt me. So I'm on the other side. I've rattled. Now I'm finished."

"What about your theme song?"

"What theme song?"

"Publicity. You get jammed up, it's as bad as Eddie getting jammed up. Like that, nobody gets richer."

"Leave it to me, mister. You'll get caught up with, and caught up with bad —and there won't be any publicity, there'll be nothing, except you, maybe, dead."

"Now can I speak with Mr. Adams?"

"But of course." She went to the door, opened it, smiled sweetly, waved, and closed the door behind her. I wiped my face with a handkerchief, wiped my lips, and looked at the handkerchief. There was a faint smudge of lipstick on it. Then the door opened and closed softly, and a man came toward me, a tall, slender man, his silver hair neatly combed.

"Mr. Chambers?"

"Mr. Adams?"

"I'm Eddie Adams."

"How do you do?"

I put the handkerchief away, and we shook hands.

He said, "May I offer you a drink? Brandy?"

"Scotch, if you will. One cube. And water."

"Certainly."

He had a soft, mellow voice. His face was smooth and pink from the sun. He had a pointed, high, finely boned nose. He had a cleft in his chin, and he had thin lips. His eyebrows were dark and smooth and long, his eyes narrow, of a greenish color with brown-gold flecks. He wore a dark-gray perfectly fitting suit, narrow black pointed shoes, a white shirt, and a gray tie with small maroon figures. He went to a liquor cabinet in a corner and prepared my drink. He poured brandy for himself in a small snifter glass. He came back and handed me my drink.

I said, "Thank you."

"Not at all." He lifted his glass and smiled without meaning. "Good luck."

I sipped and set my drink down on a round table. He looked me over carefully, then said, "I'm an old man, Mr. Chambers. I'm sixty-three. My time for excitement is over." He sipped, looking at me. "I leave excitement to younger men, men like you." Suddenly his eyes grabbed at mine, and held them. "What have you come here for, Mr. Chambers?"

"Talk," I said. "But face to face."

He sank into a soft chair. "What have we to talk about, sir?"

"Mamaroneck. Henry Moore."

"And what, precisely, is there to discuss? About Mamaroneck? *Or* about Henry Moore?"

I couldn't say: *Mr. Adams, you've got me there.* I couldn't say: *Tell you the truth, Mr. Adams, honest I don't know.* This was Eddie Adams, a wise old bird who knew every bluff in the book. So I looked wise. And I waited.

Eddie Adams said, "I'm a businessman. I came up the hard way. I was a waiter in a class joint, a bartender in a Third Avenue saloon, a maître d' in a tony bistro, an owner of a small restaurant, an owner of a small night club, an owner of a highly successful operation, the Diamond Circle, that suddenly went sour. Now I'm the owner of another highly successful venture, the Stardust Room. I've been up, and I've been way down, and now I'm up again. There's no more time left for struggle."

"By struggle, sir, do you mean me?"

"I mean you're a young man, punching to get ahead. More power to you. But I'm a businessman, remember. I admire a *good* businessman. I abhor a fumbler."

"Fumbler? Again, do you mean me?"

"You've been offered ten thousand dollars—only because, in my old age, I don't choose to fight. You've turned that down. You are not a good businessman, sir. That's all you're worth. If you press, you get nothing. Then it would be good business to fight. The only possible reason you're here is to attempt to increase your price. You're wasting your time."

I played with that. I said, "If it's worth ten thousand, why isn't it worth more?"

"Because, in actuality, it is worthless. You've dug around, and you've come up with a bit of worthless tripe. But this very same tripe may, under certain circumstances, be exaggerated by, let us say, enemies of mine. At my age, I don't want to fight it. So I offer a good price. But I won't be made a sucker of."

"I repeat, sir. If it's worth ten thousand, why isn't it worth more?"

"Because I'm a businessman. I know prices. Even if I paid you, I would still have the worry about whether you'd start it up again."

"True, sir. That, of course, is always the risk in paying—"

"Blackmail?" His eyes squinted.

"So it's called, I hear."

"There are two answers to that question. One is violence. When this kind of dirty money is paid, the payee, assuming he has intelligence, realizes that it is a

one-shot deal. If, thereafter, he presses, well, he's asking for it. And he may get what he's asking for."

"What's the other answer, Mr. Adams?"

"I don't propose to stay at the Stardust too long. Perhaps another year. I'm husbanding my money, for a change. One more year, and I can get out. As I said, I'm an old man. I want to take it easy the rest of the way, but I want to live right. I'm being absolutely honest with you. Perhaps, at the close of the year, I would be willing to pay again." He wiggled a finger at me. "Just to keep you honest."

"How much?"

"An additional ten thousand. After that, I wouldn't care. I'd be out of it."

"Pretty good for one visit."

"I beg your pardon?"

"One visit, and I've doubled the ante."

He stood up, and his voice was very soft. "We can set up a legal contract, for services rendered. The lawyers can work it out. Ten thousand now. Ten thousand a year from now. That's it, Mr. Chambers. How's it sound?"

"Stinks."

The blood went out of his lips.

"Get out of here," he said. "At once."

"Easy, Mr. Adams. Let's not lose our heads."

A slender hand reached out and seized my lapel. His breath came in spurts as he talked. "You've got more to lose than I have, Mr. Chambers. You've got a long life ahead of you. I have just a little time left. I can be careless, but you can't be. Think about that, sir." His hand opened on my lapel and then fell to his side. "It's an uneven contest, Mr. Chambers. Think about that. And if you change your mind, call me. And now . . ."

He walked to the door and opened it.

Mike was grinning in the doorway.

Eddie Adams said, "Mr. Chambers is leaving."

"Yes, sir. And now if you will kindly follow along with me . . ."

New York provides everything for everyone, including an all-night haberdashery, where I was able to purchase underwear, shirts, socks, and ties. A drugstore furnished shaving equipment. I loaded my bundles into the car, drove to the Montero, deposited Casey and his Luger, went to Joe Vincent's room, and picked up my sleep where I had left it at seven o'clock.

Sunshine woke me early. I attended to my ablutions in a strange bathroom with temperamental faucets, and at ten o'clock I was in the offices of a milk company, Certified Special, and I was being directed to the head of compensation, who turned out to be a large man with a pink tie in a small office with peeling walls. His name appeared on a bronze name plate on his desk. It stated, in raised letters: MR. BLATHINGSWYTZE.

I said, "I should like to inquire about a Fred Davis whom you have had on your compensation lists for a good many years."

"Yes?"

"Mr. Davis used to live in the Bronx. About six months ago, he removed to Miami, Florida."

"Yes?"

"I am a private investigator in the employ of a firm of attorneys. Mr. Davis has come into a small inheritance. I've been retained to ascertain his present address."

"Yes?"

"I'm certain the change of address has been put through to you folks. For the purpose of forwarding his checks."

"Yes?"

"Could you inform me of this new address?"

"Sorry, confidential."

"But, look, Mr. . . . uh . . . uh . . . This is such a small matter. Just a change of address."

"Sorry, confidential."

"What's the difficulty?"

"Any information of this nature may be procured by the presentation of a court order, duly signed by a justice of a court record, and duly certified."

"Now, look, pal." I sighed and dug out my wallet and reached in for a twenty-dollar bill and waved it like a flag of truce.

He looked as though he were going to faint. "Sorry," he said. "Confidential." And then, almost in a whisper, he added, "Oh, my."

I stood up, glared at his name plate, turned on my heel, and departed from Certified Special.

I walked to the subway and took the train to Wall Street. Number Ten was imposing, and the offices of the Crown Insurance Company covered all of the eleventh floor, with a receptionist facing the elevators. Her smile added gleam to the sunny morning. I said, "Mr. Wiley."

"Who may I say is calling?"

"You may say Peter Chambers."

"Thank you. Will you have a seat, please?"

She picked up the phone, murmured a few words, then looked up and turned on the smile again.

She pointed. "Through those doors, Mr. Chambers. Third room to the left."

Third room to the left was a frosted glass door that swung open on Herb Wiley surrounded by wood-paneled walls. He said, "Hi, sleuth. How goes it?"

"Nothing yet. I'd like to get straightened away on a couple of items. That file still clear in your mind?"

"No." He grinned. "That's the kind

of mind I have. Just a minute." He lifted the phone, talked into it and dropped it. He said, "Make yourself comfortable."

Door knock and Herb called, "Come in."

A young lady in a tight skirt brought a file and laid it on his desk. He opened the file and said. "What's your problem, Mr. Chambers?"

"Bennett was a witness. Right?"

"Right."

"Nobody else?"

"Except Adams himself."

"What about servants? House in Mamaroneck. Should be servants."

He examined the contents of the file. "There was a butler and his wife. But they occupied a small house about five hundred yards to the rear. They came out after a while, but they weren't witnesses. The thing was over and done with by then. What's the next item?"

"Jack Rawlings?"

"Who's he?"

"Look in your file."

He looked. He said. "Oh, Mr. Adams' partner. It's right here. We got that stuff on the recheck."

"I hear tell he's not Adams' partner anymore."

"You hear aright, my lad." He tapped his finger on a typewritten sheet. "They chipped in on the venture, took them about six months to build it. Then Adams bought him out practically as soon as they went into active business."

"Why? They have a falling out?"

"I don't know. My investigators didn't get this information directly from Mr. Rawlings. Mr. Rawlings doesn't live here anymore."

"Any idea where he does live?"

"Let me look." He shifted his papers. "He's got a daughter, name of Jane."

"Real romantic."

"Lives at 666 Park Avenue. Only child."

"Where does *he* live?"

He found it. He looked up. "Lives at the Hotel Empress, Miami Beach."

"Miami Beach? May I use your phone?"

I called the Montero and got Casey Moore. I said. "You ought to have drag with the air lines."

Casey said, "You want to borrow a plane?"

"Not that drastic. I want passage for two to Miami. You and me. Think you can arrange reservations?"

"I'll try. Just between you and me, if you want fast action, it's easier to borrow a plane."

"Let's do it the hard way. Get them for as soon as you can. Don't lay out any dough. Just get the reservations."

"Okay. How do I get in touch with you?"

"I'll see you at the hotel." I hung up.

Herb said. "All the way to Miami, with a friend, just to talk with Mr. Rawlings? You sound like one of *my* investigators. *With* an expense account."

"Expense account?" I looked at him hopefully.

He shook his head. "You're what is known in the law as an independent contractor. You're working on your own. You might earn a fee, and you might not. But your expenses are your own."

"Any idea of the fare?"

"De luxe round trip?"

"Uh huh."

"About a hundred and sixty-seven dollars. Each."

"Any cash around here?"

"Of course. This is an insurance company. We're loaded with cash. How much?"

"Just a minute."

I consulted my wallet. I had two hundred and thirty dollars. I did some quick calculations and said, "Five hundred ought to cover me." I took out a wrinkled blank check and made it out for five hundred dollars to cash. I gave it to Herb. Herb said, "Come with me."

He led me through many corridors to a cashier's cage, okayed my check, and I obtained my cash. Somebody buttonholed him, and he said. "All right, Pete. Keep me informed, eh?"

I said, "How do I find my way out of here?"

He grinned. "You're the detective."

Casey wasn't home, but there was a message for me in Joe Vincent's box. Casey had written: "Tough as all blazes. I'm going down to attend to it personally."

Upstairs, I kicked off my shoes and hit the bed and dozed. By the time Casey returned, it was late afternoon. He knocked, and I called, "Who?" and he said, "Casey." and I opened the door. He grinned. "How's tomorrow morning?"

"Fine. What time?"

"We leave La Guardia at ten."

"Wow." I said. "I'm a reformed guy. I'm an early-morning prowler."

"How's about some chow?"

"What else we got to do?"

We ate, and we walked across to the park, and we loafed and chatted. I learned more about his father and about his early life and about Auntie. He was free with his talk until we came back to the present and the problem that confused him. We picked up the evening papers on the way back, and it was seven-thirty in Joe Vincent's room when I went to shave.

"Going out?" Casey said.

"I don't know. Just force of habit, I suppose."

"You've got to be up early tomorrow."

"Are you planning on doing anything special tonight? Maybe a movie, or something?"

"Nope. I'm going to hit the sack early."

I shaved and bathed and dressed to the teeth: navy-blue suit, sparkling white shirt, shiny black shoes, navy socks, and righteous deep-maroon tie. Casey said, "Where you going?"

"Honest. I haven't the faintest notion."

He grinned. "You look downright handsome."

"Now I know where I'm going."

"Where?"

"To interview a lady, I hope."

The elevator took me down, and I walked out into the night. I had time to kill, and I might just as well kill it trying to pick up information. Rawlings was in Miami, but the daughter was here. What could I lose? I waved at a cab, and said. "Take me to 666 Park Avenue." It turned out to be a tall, slender building patrolled by a doorman with enough braid to have you salute him. I entered a plush lobby in the charge of another uniformed gentleman.

I said. "Jane Rawlings?"

He smiled and said. "7A."

A silent elevator took me up, and I dabbed at the button of 7A and a voice called, "Come in." I twisted the knob and pushed into a lavish apartment.

I was in a square foyer. Three steps down was an expansive living room. French doors opening on a terrace, skyline of New York, like a picture, framed in the background.

I saw the lady in profile. She wore a shimmering rose-red cocktail gown, and she had her foot up on a high hassock adjusting the strap of a rose-red shoe and, incidentally, affording me a view of as shapely a limb as ever it has been my pleasure to observe. She didn't look toward me. Almost impatiently she said. "Come in, come in."

I went down the three carpeted steps and stood there like a mummy waiting to be wrapped. The lady completed Operation Shoe, removed her foot from the hassock, straightened up, and turned toward me. You could have blown at me and I would have toppled.

I knew the lady. Everybody knew the lady. If you are a student of the rotogravure sections of the Sunday papers, you have seen her riding to hounds, or climbing an Alp, or watching them do the cancan in the gayest spot in Paris. If you by-pass rotogravures, you have seen her in motion pictures. She did three sensational movies before she became bored with histrionics and retreated from menacing contracts dripping gold. Jane Rawlings. I simply had not associated the name.

There was about five feet eleven inches of her, most of it a delicious throng within the shimmering gown, but not all of it. The rose-red dress was satin,

strapless, and simple, descending in long curves. Her arms and shoulders were smooth, warm-glowing olive. Her hair was long, black, thick, and curly, swept across the back of her head and massed over one shoulder, exposing a little ear absurdly burdened by a heavy dangling earring. Her eyes were bold-black and enormous in a smooth-skinned oval-shaped face culminating in a delicately pouting mouth, red and shining. She said, "Where's the tuxedo?"

"Tuxedo?"

"People just don't do things right anymore, do they?"

Blankly I said, "Don't they?"

"Seems they do not." Her eyes whisked over me in quick inspection. "At least you're tall. Good-looking, too."

"Ain't I, though, huh?"

"Well, you should be." Her eyes softened, and she smiled. "Though you're better looking than I'd expected. Much."

I was getting worried. How small can small talk get, and how crazy? In my severest tone, I said, "Miss Rawlings, I came to talk to you about your father."

"You *what?*" She did a double-take, and her eyes puckered. "Are you drunk?"

"No. Are you?"

"Now, really." She turned and walked to a corner of the room where there was a black patent-leather bar with five tall black patent-leather stools. She twitched a finger at me. "Come here. You say you're *not* drunk. Maybe you ought to have a drink."

I approached her, and she pointed behind the bar.

"There?" I said.

"There. Anything you wish. And there's a refrigerated compartment for ice. Maybe you'd better pour one for me, too. Scotch and soda, and stiff."

I tended bar and brought her a drink. I said, "Skoal," and we sipped. The doorbell sounded, and she said, "Get that, will you?" I opened the door to a tall, dark young man wearing a tuxedo and a black Homburg. He whisked off the Homburg, exposing sleek black polished hair, and enunciating carefully, he said, "Miss Jane Rawlings?"

I can get into the spirit of things. I said, profoundly, "No."

Miss Rawlings came up behind me. The young man looked over my shoulder, smiled with all the teeth, said, "Miss Rawlings? From Mr. Landon."

Laughter came from behind me. I turned to find her almost doubled up, laughing until her eyes brimmed over. She waved a hand and weakly she said, "Go away. Away, lad."

"The lady," I said to the dark young man, "says go away."

"Away," he said blankly, "says the lady?"

"Away we go," I said, and closed the door softly on his expression of complete bewilderment.

I left her in the foyer, laughing, and I went back into the living room and gathered up my drink. I didn't have to wait long. She came to me and said, "Somewhere along the line somebody owes someone an apology."

I said, "I think you're very beautiful."

"Who are you?"

"My name is Peter Chambers. I'm a private detective."

"Detective? What are you doing here?"

"I came to—"

"I know, I know. To talk to me about my father." She got her drink, raised it high in the air, bowed, and said, "Mr. Chambers, I believe I owe you an apology. But upon one point I remain adamant. I think you're beautiful. And so tall, too."

"Miss Rawlings—"

"Ever hear of Ted Landon?"

"No."

"It's an escort service."

"Escort service. I thought those things were outlawed."

"True. But when anything is outlawed, and there's a need for it, bootleg operations spring up."

"Bootleg escort services. Sister, that's one for the books."

"I just dismissed my swain for the evening. Tonight you're my escort."

"It would be my pleasure, privilege, and honor."

"Brave words, bravely spoken. But let me explain this thing first.

"Late this afternoon, I got a phone call from a press-agent friend inviting me to a nighttime cocktail party in honor of our newest bombshell, Marylin Mullaney. Marylin is an old friend of mine, and I'm dying to go to this party. Except."

"Except what?"

"Except, who's going to take me? This is a problem, dear sir, which men simply do not appreciate." She wrinkled the pertest of noses. "Remember, I'm a large one, and my man must be over six feet tall. Tie that to the fact that I'm fresh out of boyfriends, I mean, people who interest me. And remember again, that the phone call only came in a few hours ago."

"I'm remembering all of it."

"That's where Ted Landon's bootleg escort service comes into wonderful use. You make a phone call to Ted, you state your specifications, and you are provided with an innocuous escort who fills the vacuum beside you. You do not attend a

party alone. Also, you are foot-loose and fancy-free."

"And *you* mistook *me* for one of Ted Landon's boys?"

"And a fine compliment you were to Mr. Landon's selectivity." A smile dissolved to a serene expression of mock severity. "Now, look, you're not going to let me down. I had planned dinner, and then the party."

"Sold. With one proviso."

"What's that?"

"That you don't regard me as one of Landon's innocuous young men. No foot-loose and fancy-free. Very possessive type, me."

"Promise. And do you think I'm crazy? Very outspoken type, me. I think you're a godsend. You married?"

"No."

She stood up. "You'll do, without a tuxedo. Let's you and I get acquainted. Let's get out of here."

We had dinner at the Big Club, with violins. We went to Mullaney's party, and I wasn't the only man without a tuxedo. I fell in love with Jane Rawlings, but I fall in love easily, though with Jane Rawlings, I challenge you not to. We quit the party at two o'clock in the morning, but I didn't take her home directly. I asked the cabdriver to drive along Central Park South, slowly. Across from the entrance to my apartment house, two swarthy gentlemen paced the asphalt, avidly nonchalant. A cruise around the corner disclosed two more gentlemen, at the back entrance. Eddie Adams had his boys out looking. For me.

"Okay," I said. "Now we go home."

The cab let us out at 666 Park Avenue, and outside the door of 7A, I said. "Now, about your father, I think we can skip all that."

"No more business?"

"It's late. I've got to go to sleep. Got to make a plane early tomorrow morning. For Miami. That's what I mean about skipping it."

"I don't understand."

"Well, instead of getting my information secondhand, I'll get it firsthand. Miami. That's where your father lives, doesn't he?"

She opened the door, and when she turned, I saw she was crying. I said, "Did I say something wrong?"

"My father . . . He's dead."

Silence for a long and miserable minute. Then I said, "Look, honey—"

"No. I want to go in now. You've been —you've been wonderful. Please call me when you get back."

And that was that.

Miami Beach in the springtime is paradise on the best day paradise ever had. There was a dry sweet breeze and swaying trees and a blue-green ocean and sumptuous hotels rising up to unflecked azure. We checked in at the Empress in a double room, payment in advance, and at two o'clock in the afternoon, we looked out on tropical foliage and a brilliant cobalt sky. We looked out also on a spacious swimming pool, and I said, "I've got to grab a little of that sun. How about a swim?"

Casey's swift glance went to his empty sleeve and returned to me. "No swimming for Casey. I just haven't gotten used to being a one-armed guy."

"Sorry."

"Don't be sorry. You go have your swim. I'll shower, and stick around here."

I called downstairs about swim trunks. I wanted someone to buy me a pair of blue boxer trunks, thirty waist. I was told the boy would have them up shortly. The boy, when he arrived, was about sixty-five years old, with the look of a secretive father owl. I paid for the trunks and tipped the "boy," and asked him how long he'd been working at the Empress.

"Fifteen years," he said.

"Ever hear of a guy around here name of Rawlings?"

"Jack Rawlings?"

"That's the guy."

"Yeah. Used to live here. Keeled over about three months ago. Dead of a heart attack. Left a lot of dough, I hear. One kid. Gorgeous. A gal by name of Jane."

"Thanks," I said.

"Don't mention it."

I went swimming in a tiled pool with cool green water tapped fresh from the ocean. Then I soaked up Florida sun. Back in the room, I went to work on the phone book. Casey was sleeping. I found what I was looking for: Powers Protective Agency, Inc. Dave Powers had been a New York cop, a detective lieutenant out of homicide. He had retired on his pension, moved to Miami Beach, and opened a small private agency.

I called and asked the girl for Dave Powers, and then Dave's voice said, "Hello?"

"Pete Chambers. I'm calling from the Empress Hotel."

"Hi, vacation?"

"Business."

"Something I can do for you?"

"I'm trying to locate an Alice Maxwell in Miami. That was her maiden name. She's been married."

"What's the marriage name?"

"I don't know. But she was married in Miami."

"Okay, Pete. Figures for a check of the records and a follow-through. When do you need your information?"

"Sooner the better."

"All right, Pete. I'll go to work on it first thing in the morning."

"How much?"

"Twenty-five bucks." He chuckled. "You don't think I'd cheat you, do you?"

"Now that you're a private cop, who knows?"

"I'll get it to you in the morning."

"Swell. Bring it yourself, Dave. It'll be nice to see you."

"Right, kid."

I hung up and swung out on the other bed. I could hear myself snoring before I fell asleep.

Casey woke me. He was all dressed. He said. "I'm all empty inside. Let's eat."

"Brother, you talked me into it."

We had dinner in a swank place, and then did the town. Casey found a girl, and I did the rest of the town alone. When I rolled in at three A.M., Casey wasn't back yet, but when the banging started on the door and I woke up to see that it was eleven o'clock in the morning. Casey was spread-eagled on the bed, wearing nothing but a beatific smile and one shoe and one sock, both tidily in place.

I opened the door and said, "Sh. You'll wake my pal."

Dave Powers threw him a look and grinned. "Nobody'll wake your pal, pal. I'd like to have the kind of dreams he's having. Who is he?"

"Client. A nice kid. Long-ago vet out of Korea. You got my information?"

"Yeah. Her name is Alice Trenton. Husband is a mining engineer."

"Well-fixed?"

"The worst. The wandering type, and a heavy drinker. Never home. Sends money home, when he thinks of it."

"Any kids?"

"Two sons. Both married. One's in Seattle, the other in Paris. Same deal. Send money to Mom when the impulse moves them. She's got a sister living with her now, sister and an invalid husband."

"Pretty good, for a fast check."

"Oh, I don't know. It's a small town, really. I figured I'd do a complete job for you." He smiled, one side of his mouth moving up. "That's twenty-five bucks, pal."

I paid him, and I said, "What's the address?"

"Ninety Blossom Street, Miami. Not the best neighborhood in the world."

"Thanks, Dave."

Dave left, and I woke Casey. His smile disappeared as sleep went away. "Large head." Casey said.

"Get under the shower, and keep it on cold. We're going visiting."

"Whom?"

"Auntie."

"How'd you find her?"

I told him, and he looked disappointed.

I said, "What's with the face? Everybody wants glamour from a detective. You tell them about routine, and all the shine gets rubbed off. Okay. Next time I'll work in Mata Hari, international

complications, the hydrogen bomb, and blood on the poop deck."

"Sorry," Casey said. "When do we go to see Auntie?"

"Now."

A taxi took us across to the City of Miami, and tooled its way slowly toward heat and dilapidated houses and slovenly children and hot-rising odors. Ninety Blossom Street was a weather-faded, sun-baked, slatted wooden bungalow with a lopsided shingled roof.

Casey said, "I'd better go in alone, first. Remember she thinks I'm dead."

"Sure."

Casey walked up the two warped wooden steps and knocked on the door. It was opened by a frowning woman in a print dress. This was not Auntie. I couldn't hear what they said, but there was no expression of recognition on her face. Casey talked to her, and then they went in, and the door closed behind them.

Ten minutes later, Casey came out for me.

We entered directly upon a living room. It was sparsely furnished, but it was clean. The frowning woman came up to me at once. She said, "I'm Alice Trenton," and we shook hands.

Casey said, smiling, "My friend, Peter Chambers. Mr. Fred Davis, and Mrs. Davis—Auntie."

The man in the wheel chair blinked his eyes.

The round little woman wearing dark glasses said, "Won't you sit down, Mr. Chambers?"

"Thank you."

Mary Davis was small and apple-cheeked. Her white hair was worn high on her head and kept in place by many blond bobby pins. When she smiled, her cheeks dimpled. Her teeth were small and white, and her skin was unwrinkled. She was a sweet middle-aged woman with no special distinction except for the huge dark-glass spectacles. They created a shock-effect: totally incongruous with the ordinary commonplace neatness of Mary Davis.

Fred Davis. He sat utterly motionless in his wheel chair in a corner of the room. His face was thin and white-pale, a long face with a long nose and deep lines in the cheeks. His hands hung from the arms of the chair, the fingers shiny from disuse. Only his eyes seemed alive, moving, following the conversation.

Mary Davis touched Casey's arm and smiled at me again. "It's like a miracle, a real miracle. I—I still can hardly believe it."

Alice Trenton said, "I've got work to do. I hope you folks will excuse me." She bowed awkwardly, smiled, and went toward the rear of the house.

Casey lit a cigarette. Then he explained, "Auntie, Mr. Chambers is a detective."

"Detective?"

"It's about Pop."

"Please sit down, Mr. Chambers," she said. "You, too, Casey." She tapped the table. "Right here. Please sit down."

We pulled up chairs and sat.

She said. "Are you of the police, Mr. Chambers?"

Casey said, "No. He's a private detective. He's helping me to find out—about Pop."

"Why?"

"I don't understand, Auntie."

"He's dead. Why try to stir it up?"

"Because he's dead as a thief and a murderer, and Pop wasn't a thief *or* murderer."

"He's dead. We can't bring him back."

"Sure. We can't bring him back. But if I can prove that he wasn't . . . what they say he was, I'd be satisfied."

We couldn't see her eyes behind the dark glasses. She was silent, a fingernail tapping the table. Then, in a hushed voice, she said, "You're a good boy, Casey. You're right. Of course, you're right."

I said, "Is there anything you know?"

"I think so."

I wished I could see her eyes. It is difficult to talk with a person whose eyes you cannot see. I said, "Is there a reason why you wear these glasses indoors, Mrs. Davis?"

Again there was silence. Then her hand moved up, and she snapped off the glasses. The only sound in the room was Casey's gasp.

One eye seemed frozen in its socket. It was opened wide, the upper lid rigid and inflamed. Palpably, it was sightless, pale blue, and like shattered glass, giving back no reflection. The other eye was fixed on Casey's empty sleeve, and it was wet with tears.

Quietly she said, "I shall be totally blind by next year."

Casey said, "No."

She put the glasses back. Her voice was quiet and hushed, unemotional. "I don't know what will become of us, Fred in his chair, and me without eyes. It will be too much for Alice."

Casey said, "There must be something to do. You've been to doctors, haven't you?"

"To doctors I could afford."

"And what did they say?"

"What I can't afford. There's a great man, up in Boston. Dr. Blake took me to see him about a year ago. Before the one eye became blind. There was a chance. There's still a chance, even now that the one eye is gone."

"Then, if they knew why didn't they do something?"

"Because it costs fifteen thousand dollars. Fifteen thousand dollars for a series

of operations and the care after that."

"And your sight can still be saved?"

"Yes. Only one eye now, but who needs more than one eye, if that eye is strong? But we don't have fifteen thousand dollars, Casey, and these things aren't done by charity."

Something hit me. "A year ago, you say?"

"Yes."

"This have anything to do with what happened to Henry Moore?"

"I think so."

"Will you tell us about it, Mrs. Davis?"

"Yes, of course. Henry was a good, fine man." She smiled, dimpling. "He practically lived with us, with Fred and myself. Fred loved him. He was our brother. But years ago, what with Fred, an invalid, and Henry, a fine, good-looking man, there was bound to be gossip. We cured that by telling people that Henry was my brother. And a brother he was, Mr. Chambers."

She went to Fred, and patted his face. She said, "Would you bring me a chair here, Casey, please? I'd like to sit beside Fred while I talk."

"Certainly."

Casey placed a chair near Fred, and Mary Davis sat down.

I said, "About Henry Moore . . ."

"You can imagine," she said, "how Fred and I felt when I came back from Boston with Dr. Blake. And you can imagine, I am sure, how Henry felt. In a way, he seemed more distraught than either Fred or myself. We talked for hours and hours and hours—but there simply was no solution."

"And then . . .?" Casey said.

"And then your father had an idea. He knew a man, the man had been a depositor in the bank where your father worked many years ago. Your father had been a customer of his when the man had owned a small tavern, also many years ago. They had had many conversations over the bar, they knew a good deal about each other, their philosophies, their ideas, the inner thoughts that men have and express in a quiet and convivial atmosphere."

I said, "Many years ago?"

"That's right. Henry hadn't seen the man in perhaps ten years. But this was a crisis, and Henry was terribly distraught. The man had become rich, and Henry decided to go and see him."

"For what?"

"For a loan. We figured it out carefully. Henry had reapplied for a job at the bank, and they were glad to have him back. The job, including occasional overtime, paid ninety dollars a week. Of that, sixty dollars a week would go to paying off the loan. Fred and I would move in to Henry's house in Queens, thus cutting our expenses, and from Fred's compensation, we would add another twenty-five dollars a week. Thus, within four years, the loan would be paid off."

"I see."

"It didn't leave us much to live on, but we felt we could manage. And there was another consideration."

"What was that?"

"Casey. Casey was listed as dead. This was a year ago. Sooner or later, there would be money coming to Henry from the Government, a matter of Casey's policy. When and if that came, it would be applied to paying off the loan so much more quickly."

"I understand."

"We planned it carefully, before Henry went to the man for the loan. It was a form of appeal, in an emergency, to a rich man. Henry called the man, and on the morning of May tenth, he went to him, at his office."

"And what happened?"

"His appointment was for nine o'clock. At nine-thirty, Henry called us. He told me, over the phone, that he had talked to him, and that the man had told him to come back at noontime."

"And then?"

"At three o'clock, Henry came to my apartment in the Bronx. He appeared thoughtful, but not discouraged. He said he could *earn* the fifteen thousand dollars we needed so desperately but that the request for a *loan* had been turned down."

"What kind of work?"

"He didn't tell us. It was a terribly hot day, and I could see he was extremely nervous. He kept perspiring and mopping himself and saying he had to leave for an appointment. Finally, I told him to take a shower and change, that he looked all wilted. He always kept a change of clothing up there."

"And . . .?"

"He did that, and he left. I remember he went to Fred and said, 'Wish me luck.' Then he shook hands with me, and . . . I never saw Henry Moore again."

"What?"

"The next we knew was what we read in the papers."

I lit a cigarette and said. "What was the name of the man he went to for the loan?"

"Edward Adams."

I said, as softly as I could, "You knew that it was Adams' house that Henry Moore allegedly attempted to rob and where he committed a murder."

"Yes. I knew."

"Why didn't you go to the police?"

She put one corner of her handkerchief beneath her glasses and wiped her eye. "There were two reasons. I talked it over with Fred, and Fred agreed with me." She turned toward him, then back to me. "Oh, Fred and I can talk. He can blink his eyes, once for yes and two for no. We talk all the time."

"What were the reasons, Mrs. Davis?"

"The first was personal. If I went to the police, our whole story would come out. Henry Moore was our friend for eighteen years. We now avoided gossip by telling people he was my brother. Now it would all come out. What would people say? And he was dead. We couldn't bring him back. And his son was dead. What purpose could be served? All we could do would be further harm."

"How so, Mrs. Davis?"

"If we could have helped, of course, I would have gone to the police, despite myself and Fred and scandal. But how could we help? All we could do would be to add fuel to the fire. We could give them motive, that's all. Between us, we felt, that in his desperation, he had just gone crazy, that he had decided to get that money one way or another. And then when the woman had appeared, the man's wife, Henry, in his panic—"

Casey came to me and he said, "Thanks, fella."

"Thanks. For what?"

"For tracking it down, and getting it over with. Now I can understand it. At least now it's not . . . not impossible. Okay. Finished. You'll bill me, and you'll get paid."

I said. "I'm not so sure that this is finished."

"But why?"

"That's what I'd like to ask. Why? Eddie Adams denied knowing Henry Moore, said he was a complete stranger. Why?"

Hope flickered in his old eyes. "You think that's important?"

"I don't know. But let's do it logically. If Eddie Adams had told the police the story Mrs. Davis just told us, it would have been perfect. A man comes for a loan, he's turned down, he's desperate, he decides to steal. That, linked with what Mrs. Davis just told us, and I would have agreed with you. It would be finished. But the other way, it just doesn't wrap up tight, does it, Casey?"

"What do we do?"

"Let's keep punching." I turned to Mary Davis. "You said he took a shower and changed his clothes. You said he kept a change of clothes at your place. Do you have these clothes?"

"No."

"You've disposed of them?"

"No. I mean I don't have them here. Before we moved down here, I packed the things we didn't need into a little trunk and left it up there."

"In the Bronx?"

"Yes. We left everything in a basement storage room in our apartment house.

The superintendent was a good friend."

"What was your address in the Bronx?"

"Twelve Horner Avenue."

"And the super's name?"

"Mr. Gilbert."

"And is there a key to the trunk?"

"Yes."

"May I have it?"

She looked toward Casey, and Casey nodded. She said, "Just a moment," left the room, came back with the key, and gave it to me.

"Thank you. And now I think I've taken up enough of your time."

"Please. Won't you stay and have a bite?"

"No, thank you. I'm sure Casey would."

Casey said, "Yes, I'd like to stick around."

"Okay. I'll see you back at the hotel later. I'll take care of the reservations so we fly back this evening. G'by, Mr. Davis, Mrs. Davis. My respects to your sister."

"Good-by, sir."

But weather set in. Rain came down in torrents, and the planes were grounded. We were holed up at the Empress overnight, no reduction in prices, and we got off the ground bright and early next morning, sun shining bravely. We landed at La Guardia around noon. Back at the Montero, I watched Casey's reflection in the mirror as he shaved, and I admired his dexterity. He said, his lips ringed with lather, "When do we go to the Bronx?"

"Let you know in a minute."

I called Jane Rawlings. Jane was home, and I told her I was home.

"Good," she said. "Suppose we meet for a late lunch at the Drake."

"Love it. When?"

"I'm ready now. How about fifteen minutes?"

"You talked me into it."

I hung up, and I went to Casey. I looked at my watch. I said, "About four-thirty all right with you?"

"Perfect. Where you heading now?"

"Lunch. With a lady."

He grinned as he scraped at his chin. "Same lady?"

"Which same lady?"

"The one you interviewed the other night?"

"The same," I said. "I'm in love."

"Quick. Real quick."

"Quicker than that." I rubbed a hand through his hair. "Keep loose, kid. I'll pick you up at about four-thirty."

The lounge of the Drake Hotel was dim, serene, and cool. My lady was attired in an oxford-gray man-tailored suit with a high-collared pink blouse, but man-tailoring or no, my lady was all woman, and every man in the vicinity was acutely conscious of that. Her hair was combed in a tousled upsweep, and she said, almost breathlessly, as soon as I'd sat down beside her, "How's with the tuxedo?"

"Please. We're not going to start that again."

She turned down the corners of her mouth. "It'll keep. Talk. Today, I'm completely co-operative."

"Good." I hesitated a moment. "About your father, the way I handled it the other night—I'm sorry. I didn't know."

Her black eyes turned on me, and dropped. "Of course, you didn't. And the way I acted . . . I think I should apologize."

"Skip it."

Her eyes came up again. "We all try so hard to be modern, and zippy, and new-fashioned, and sometimes we just don't quite make it."

"Sure, kid."

"My father died, as all people must. He lived a good, full, long life. I miss him like all get-out. But I don't believe in a public display of grief. Now, what is it you want to know about my dad?"

"You know I'm a private detective. I'm working on a matter involving a former partner of your father's. Eddie Adams. Know him?"

"I met him. Several times."

"May I ask some questions?"

"Ask away, private detective."

"Were you acquainted with your father's business affairs?"

"Yes, I was. My dad always talked to me, sounded me out on things."

"You know anything at all about the Stardust?"

"Yes."

"How did your father and Eddie Adams get together on the Stardust deal?"

The waiter approached and took our orders and went away. Jane said, "My father had been in the restaurant business all his life, owned chains in almost every big city in the country. As he grew older, active management got to be a little too much for him, and he believed in active, personal management."

"So?"

"Bit by bit, he disposed of his holdings, and after a while, he was virtually retired. But it didn't take."

"Rarely does, with an active person not senile."

"He wasn't senile, but there was a complication. His heart was kicking up."

"I see."

"He was sort of casting about for a one-shot deal that would keep him occupied, but not too busy. That's when Mr. Adams got to him."

"About the Stardust?"

"It was in the talking stage at that

time. Adams had the idea of a night club on a grand scale over in Jersey. What with Dad's experience in the restaurant business, and Adams' in the night-club business, they were a natural combination. The Diamond Circle was on its last legs. My father investigated the Jersey proposition."

"Were they supposed to go in together as partners?"

"No. Adams wanted Dad to make the full investment."

"So?"

"Experts delivered their estimates. It came to a half million bucks. Dad could afford it, of course, but he didn't want to bear the brunt of exclusive ownership. Dad made him a counterproposition: that they go in as full partners, each investing half. Adams was winding up the Diamond Circle at the time. He was worth, oh, perhaps a hundred thousand. His part of the investment had to be a quarter of a million. Then he got into his own personal troubles, what with the death of his wife up there, but they finally straightened out the deal, as full partners, and the Stardust Room was born."

"But after a while your father backed out, didn't he?"

"He didn't back out. He was bought out."

"But why? What reason?"

"The gambling aspect. Dad wouldn't take any of that. As soon as those conferences began out there. Dad wanted out, and as a matter of fact, Adams was glad to get rid of him. With the gambling, the thing was virtually a gold mine. Adams paid him off, honestly, to the penny, and in quick time. Anything else, Mr. Detective?"

"Nope. That's about it."

"Have I helped?"

"I don't know."

She looked at me curiously. "You people always work like that?"

I couldn't help smiling. "We've got all kinds of systems."

"Now, about that tuxedo . . ."

"What's the production this time?"

"Charity affair at the Waldorf. Tickets all paid for. The nicest people."

"But I've got work to do, sweetie."

"Work your head off. We don't start till late. I don't want you to call for me before midnight."

"You're for me."

"And then there's going to be a party at Ichabod Rally's place. You know Rally?"

"I do."

"Then you know his parties. They're the craziest. All right, Peter?" She looked at her watch. "Oh, I've an appointment at the dressmaker's. Let's have dinner together and talk more. Dinner, early. Six or seven. Can you make it?"

"I don't know. I'll give you a ring."

"And try and do something about a tuxedo."

"It's all a question of getting into my apartment."

"I don't understand."

"It's a long story."

I signaled the waiter for the check, dipped into my wallet, and just about made it. Now I grabbed a glance at my watch, and I pushed back my chair. Jane said, "What's *your* hurry?"

"Got to make the bank."

Outside, she clung to my arm, turned me toward her, and widened her black eyes. "Try to make it for dinner."

"Of course. I'll try. You just be at your phone."

I broke for a cab, and she wailed after me, prompting a large and knowing wink from the cabdriver: "And do something about the tuxedo."

The cab waited while I made the bank before the doors closed. I cashed a check, got into my cab again, and was driven uptown to my car. I pulled it up in front of the Montero, and used the house phone for Casey. Minutes later, we were wheeling up the West Side Highway en route to the Bronx in my car. We swung off at 181st, went east along Featherbed Lane, across to Tremont, and on toward Horner Avenue. I made a sharp left turn, and Casey's body leaned against me.

I said, "What's the lump?" I tapped his jacket. There was steel in the inside pocket. "What is it?"

"The Luger."

"Luger," I said. "We're going up to look at a trunk. What do you expect to find in it?"

He shrugged. "I don't know."

"Don't tell me you're going melodramatic on me."

"Happens. When you buddy up with a detective."

Horner Avenue was in a crowded section of the Bronx, contiguous tenements alive with activity, stoops a forum for housewives, streets teeming with kids.

I parked the car, and we walked to 12 Horner Avenue. An alley running along the side of the house bore a rusted metal sign stating: SUPER. The alley opened to a narrow court with two doors. One door had small stenciled printing: SUPERINTENDENT. The other door had a sign tacked to it: BASEMENT. KEEP OUT. The superintendent's door had a push button, and I pushed it. We could hear a bell ringing inside and the answering wild barking of a dog, but nobody opened the door. I tried the basement door, and it gave at a turn of the knob.

"Let's look," I said.

The place was littered with baby carriages, bicycles, broken washing machines, old stoves, rotting cabinets, and ancient refrigerators. But there were no trunks. There was another door in the rear, half-open, with a stairway leading down. I said, "I'll take a gander down there. You'd better hang around outside."

"Why?"

"In case the super shows. I don't want him to think he's had an attack from marauders. You explain it. Do you know him?"

"Never saw him in my life. But you're the boss." He went out, and I could hear his heels resounding along the stone of the alley.

I pushed open the door of the subcellar. The stairway had a steep angle, and it ended in complete blackness. I went down carefully, feeling my way. When I reached bottom, I couldn't see in front of me. A thin veil of cobweb brushed against my face. I turned my head and looked up the stairway. The upper door had swung back to its half-open position, a sliver of dim light palely illuminating the top portion of the stairway. I turned back to blackness. I ran my hand along the inner wall for a light switch and finally I found it and clicked it. High up, a naked yellow bulb was a candle in the distance.

It was an enormous subcellar. The single bulb, strung on a wire and hanging from the middle, threw an eerie lemon light among the shadows. Toward the rear, tarpaulins covered a serried hill of bulky objects. I shuddered once, and I went to work.

I pulled off the tarpaulin, disclosing mildewed trunks and brown-paper bundles and cord-wrapped suitcases. I tried my key, and when I found the trunk it fit, I pulled it into the light and opened it. It didn't contain much: a man's brown suit, a blue striped suit, underwear, three white shirts, two ties, two pairs of brown socks, a few items of bent and tarnished silverware, and a broken electric clock. I looked through the blue striped suit first. It held nothing except a discolored dime. The brown suit had nothing except a folded letter in the inner pocket of the jacket. I unfolded the letter. The stationery was small, neat, and expensive. The engraving on top said Fletcher Lewis, M.D., 748 Fifth Avenue, New York City. Written beneath that was the date, April twenty-eighth, and the following: "Dear Mr. Adams, I am sorry to be compelled to inform you that, as consultant, I agree with your other physicians that Mrs. Adams has a pulmonary condition which is inoperable. I also agree with the prognosis. Her condition is hopeless and there is little chance that her suffering can be alleviated. I hope I am wrong, but I do not think I am. As a matter of fact, my prognosis is more optimistic than that of either of your other physicians. You

asked for it straight from the shoulder. I am sorry, but that is it." It was signed: Fletcher Lewis.

A little bell rang in my head, and then another little bell, but it didn't have time to go to gongs. I looked up from the letter—and Olga Adams was opposite me. There was a thin grin on her face and a small gun in her hand. She was quite near me. Too near, but she wasn't a professional. She said, "This is as good a place as any."

"For what?"

"For your demise. A shot wouldn't be heard. You know how allergic I am to publicity."

Also, she talked too much. That wasn't professional, either. It gave me an opportunity to inch closer.

"You wouldn't dare," I said. It was corny, but it gave me another step forward, and I was within reach.

Her gun hand moved outward, but my left hand slapped down on it and my right met her jaw in a jolt. She dropped like the floor had been pulled out from under her. I was stooping for the little gun when a voice said, "I wouldn't do that if I was you. I wouldn't do nothing but straighten up."

I straightened up. Frankie Gold was at the foot of the stairway, a large gun in his professional hand. He said, "Surprised, fink?"

"How'd you get here?"

"The little lady's got a lot of brains under that blonde hair." His thin grin spread. "Brains. She figured we got you tied up by your house, and we got you tied up by your office, but you don't show in neither place. She figures you got to eat. Need dough to eat. So she calls on Frankie, and we check where your bank is, and that's where we park out, me and her. The rest is a tail job. The little lady wanted the pleasure, but it looks like she muffed it. G'by, fink."

I tried to talk to him, but Frankie had run out of conversation. His arm came out, straight and level, and I saw his finger tighten on the trigger, and I heard the shot, billowing back from the walls, hollowly. I waited to drop, but I didn't drop. Frankie Gold dropped, blood bursting from the side of his head, the gun clattering on the stone of the floor.

Casey stepped over him and came into the cellar. Dryly he said, "Melodramatic. Me and my Luger."

I moved to Frankie and bent over him, but Frankie was all gone. I got up and I said, "Where'd you drop from?"

"From the middle of the stairway."

"How'd you get there?"

Casey was calm. "I'm upstairs, waiting for the super like you instructed me. I notice this car parked, with this guy and the lady inside. They both seem to be having an eye on me, so I scram. I

go to the corner, hail a cab, and drive off. Around the block. When I get out, I've got the jump on them. The lady's already gone. Me, I'm watching from a hallway. This guy's outside the alleyway. He takes one look around, and slips in. I slip in after him. You can figure the rest."

"Where were you when she was talking to me?"

"Right behind him, about twelve steps up. He's at the foot of the stairway, with a bead on you, listening. I'm on top of him, with a bead on him. Who pegs who first becomes a matter of judgment. I'm glad it worked out."

I giggled nervously. "So am I." I looked around, thought a moment, said, "This tomb is practically soundproof, and a good thing. But let's get out of here."

I closed the trunk, shoved it back into place, and Casey helped me with the tarpaulin.

Olga Adams began to move. I picked up her little pistol and watched her. She sat up. I pointed her gun at her. "You wouldn't dare," she said.

"Of course, I wouldn't."

She stood up, dusted herself off, looked about, saw Frankie, and opened her mouth to scream.

"Hold that," I said. It stopped her. I said, "He's dead."

She looked about wildly, ran toward the stairs. Casey grabbed her arm, and she flung about. I got to them, and her mouth opened to scream again. I closed it. She sagged against Casey. I said, "I'm sorry," but she didn't hear me.

Casey said, "What now?"

"Where's their car?"

"Right in front of the alley."

"Good. Who was driving?"

"She was."

I looked in her pockets and found the car keys. I said, "You got a clean handkerchief, Case?"

He leaned her against me, found a handkerchief, and gave it to me. It was large and that was fine. I gave it back to him. I said, "Shake it out and fold it into a bandage sort of thing. Like you were going to bind a wound."

He did it and returned it to me. I passed it around her head and tied it over her eyes. Casey said, "I get it. Something wrong with her eyes, somebody's got to lead her."

"Right." I gave him her car keys, and I gave him mine. "You go up first. Open her car and get the motor running, and leave the door open for me. Then get into my car, and get ready to follow me."

"Roger."

He went up. I gave him a few moments, and then I lifted her and carried her up. In the alley, I set her on her feet, put my arm around her, and half-carried her, half-walked her, out to the street. I got her into the car without too much trouble. A couple of loiterers stared, but I was helping a woman who had trouble with her eyes. I got into the driver's seat, shifted the gear, and we were rolling. A glance at the rearview showed Casey behind me. We rode north until we reached Van Cortlandt Park. I parked where it was isolated and took the handkerchief off her eyes. She stirred uneasily. I looked in the rearview. Casey was parked about fifty feet back.

I slapped at her face, until she came to. Finally, she was awake.

"Hi." I said. I reached into the pocket where I had put it and brought out her little gun. I removed the bullets and threw them far out onto the grass of the park. I said, "Here's your gun. Between you and me, I think you're nuts. Stop playing games."

She didn't touch the gun.

I opened the glove compartment and threw the gun in and snapped it shut. I said, "Personally, I don't think you know what it's all about."

Real ladylike she said, "What are you going to do with me?"

"Ain't going to do a thing. If you promise to go home and stay home. Let Eddie operate. You stay home and be a lady. Otherwise, you're going to get a lot of headlines."

"What are you up to, anyway?"

"You're going to know soon enough. Will you go home now?"

She was silent.

I said, "Frankie's dead. You could have been dead. Stop playing out of your league. You go home and shut up. You were out for a drive, period. You don't know a thing about Frankie Gold. Like that you're in the clear. Okay?"

Silence again. Then she said, "Yes."

I opened the door and moved out of the driver's seat. She shoved over, and then, very faintly, she said, "Thanks."

"Forget it."

I moved away, and the car shot forward. I watched until it was out of sight. Then I went to Casey. I said, "Switch it off and come on out."

He shut off the motor, came out, and gave me the car key. We walked deep into the park. There was nobody near. I said, "Give me the gun."

"Why?"

"I don't want you mixed up in this, that's why. This is my kind of work, and I know how to handle it. Fork it over."

He gave it to me. I pointed it upward and blasted a bullet at the sky.

"What's that for?" Casey said.

"For the record."

"I don't get it."

I showed him my palm. "In there," I said.

"What?"

"Now there are nitrate particles, invisible to the eye, but they show up under a paraffin test. I shot the guy. In self-defense. He's a murderous hoodlum, and the police'll be glad to get rid of him. Just remember, nobody was in that cellar except me and Frankie Gold. Not you, not the dame, nobody. Just me and Frankie." I pointed at the palm of my hand. "And when it comes to a check, I want it to check a hundred per cent."

"But there's only one bullet in him. And no other bullet around."

"So what? A bullet could have been discharged from this gun, at any time, a long time ago."

"And where'd you get the gun?"

"From you. I borrowed it. You're a client. I couldn't go home, and I couldn't go to the office, and I needed protection, and you had this Luger, so I borrowed it."

"And what about the little lady?"

"Her trouble is what's wrong with you and the Luger."

"Meaning?"

"Melodramatics. She's living in a jazzed-up dream world. You can spot these kids a mile away. But she got her bellyful this afternoon. She saw the real thing happening, and you saw what it did to her. Dream world, period. She knows nothing from nothing, but nothing. You think a guy like Eddie Adams would let her in on anything real? No, sir. That's a doll to keep around the house."

"Eddie Adams? What's she got to do with Eddie Adams?"

"She's his wife."

We walked back to the car and drove back to civilization. I stopped at the first drugstore, called police headquarters, said, "There's a dead man in the subbasement of Twelve Horner Avenue," and hung up.

Back at the Montero, I called the office of Dr. Fletcher Lewis. I was informed that the doctor's evening office hours were from seven to nine. I made an appointment for seven-thirty. I made more calls, three in all, to various doctors I knew. I learned that Dr. Fletcher Lewis was a specialist, a man of irreproachable ethics. I called Jane Rawlings.

"Hi," she said.

"How's about dinner?"

"A likely thought. Where and when?"

"When is right away. Where . . . let me think." I wanted a place not too far away from 748 Fifth Avenue. Le Maison Rouge was at Sixty-first and Fifth. I said, "Feel French?"

"Whatever you say."

"Maison Rouge."

"Oh. Fine. Meet you at the bar. Bet I get there before you."

She didn't. I got there before her. I waited at the bar, and had finished half a Rob Roy when Jane showed up, elegant in a black, beaded dress with a mink jacket. "Beautiful," I said.

Her teeth shone in a grin. "You, too."

"Let's go where it's romantic."

The rear room of the Maison Rouge had maroon velvet walls, and gold tapestries, and faraway dim pink lights, and each table had a candle encased in a frosted pink spiral of glass. There was soft music from a harp, and when the harp music ceased, there was a muted violin. We sat, side by side and close, at a corner table. Jane bent over and kissed the lobe of my ear.

"You're for me," she said. "You worked out the early dinner real fine. Did you work out the tuxedo, too?"

"Murder," I said.

"What keeps you from home?"

"Not now," I said. "Let's relax now. Let's chat. Let's know about each other."

The dinner was wonderful, served slowly, and we talked all through it. Over demitasse and brandy, I said, "I've an appointment at seven-thirty."

"Everything still all right, for us, for midnight?"

"Yes. I think so."

"With tuxedo?"

"I'm going to try."

"What's seven-thirty?"

"Business."

"Look, can I come? I'd like to see a detective in operation."

"Sure, if you've got nothing else to do?"

"I've got plenty to do. The dressmaker's to deliver a dress, but that's all right, the downstairs man has instructions to accept it. Then at eight-thirty, Georgette shows up. She makes me beautiful. And then at nine-thirty, a wonderful man from Paris, with the most divine jewelry. So, I'm free, until approximately eight-thirty."

"Okay. You're invited."

At seven-thirty, we presented ourselves at the offices of Dr. Fletcher Lewis. Dr. Lewis was a small man with a trim white beard, a head of fluffy white hair, and an engaging smile. I said, "I'm Peter Chambers. The lady is my wife."

I got a surreptitious pinch for that. The doctor bowed and said, "My secretary informs me you're not here as a patient."

"That's right, sir. I'm investigating a matter for the Crown Insurance Company, and I'm here to ask your help."

"I'll help you, if I can. But please remember that any information a patient gives his doctor is to be considered absolutely confidential."

"I'm aware of that, Doctor. I'd simply like to know whether you have had a patient by the name of Dorothy Adams."

He went to a cabinet, riffled through a card-index file. Finally, his head came up from the file and he said, "No."

"While you're there, Doctor. Was a Mr. Edward Adams a patient of yours?"

He didn't look in the file. "Yes. Mr. Adams has been a patient of mine."

"Now, could you tell me the date and time of his last visit?"

Dr. Lewis frowned, an expression of doubt on his face. Hurriedly I said, "I don't want to know anything about his illness or treatment. Just the date and time."

He thought a moment, and the frown smoothed out. He bent to the card index, fingered cards, pushed one back, and read from it. "May tenth," he said. "Ten-thirty A.M."

"Thank you." The little bell began to ring in my head.

"Is there something else?"

"No, sir. You've been very kind and very helpful. Thank you again."

"And a very good evening to you, young man. Delighted to have met you, Mrs. Chambers."

Outside, Jane Rawlings lifted her eyebrows, shrugged her shoulders, and with a rising inflection intoned, "That's work?"

"Go home now, dear wife."

"Midnight?"

"So I hope and trust."

I put her into a cab, and then I was a parade on Fifth Avenue, by myself. Many bells were now ringing in my head. It was imperative that I go home. Home, the bells could begin to chime a melody with meaning. I had to go home. But how?

I pondered that on my parade on Fifth Avenue. The house had a front entrance and a rear entrance. Eddie Adams' hatchet boys were playing sentinel there, front and back. How would I get in? I thought of disguise, and dismissed that quickly. It wouldn't work. Eddie's boys weren't amateurs. What else?

There was a basement, but the entrance was in the rear (and Eddie's boys were there), and the basement had no connection to any other building. The adjacent building, around the corner and tacked right close to my apartment house, was a hotel some two stories higher than my house, with a large lobby entrance and a small side entrance. But the basements of each edifice were separate. The roof? To get to the roof of my house, you had to climb a narrow stairway and push open a trap door. But the trap door was shut and locked from within. I didn't know anything about the roof of the hotel, but I decided to find out.

A cab dropped me at the side entrance of the hotel, and I slipped in quickly. I took the elevator to the top floor, and pretended to stroll the corridor looking for the right room. As soon as the elevator closed, I began a more careful inspection of the corridor. I came to a door that said: ROOF GARDEN. I opened that, ran up a flight of stairs, pushed open another door, and I was on a dark roof with potted palms, iron tables, and chairs strewn all over the place. Brick walls rose about four feet on each side. There was a break in the wall at the side touching my apartment house. I went to that quickly. The break opened upon a fire escape that ran down the two stories to my roof. Here was an emergency fire exit. But it explained why the trap door on my roof was always shut and locked: otherwise it would have been too easy for the uninvited bent on mischief to invite themselves. In case of fire, that trap door could be hacked open quickly enough, or it could be opened from within.

The rest was easy. I went back to the lobby, crowded into a phone booth, and dialed the number of the house phone in the lower hall of my apartment house. Finally, Louie's voice came on: "Hello?"

"Louie?"

"This is Louie."

"Mr. Chambers, Louie."

"He's got his own phone, upstairs. We don't call no tenants down to here. This is for the convenience of the tenants in case—"

"Louie!" I screamed.

"This is Louie."

"*This* is Mr. Chambers, Peter Chambers. I'm here, I'm talking to you."

"Oh. I didn't see you come in, Mr. Chambers. Fact, I ain't seen you around for a couple nights."

"I'm not in, Louie. I'm in the hotel next door."

"Yes, sir."

"I'm going up to their roof."

"Yes, sir."

"They've got a fire escape going down to our roof. I want you to go upstairs and open up the trap door. The one on our roof. Okay, Louie?"

"Yes, *sir*."

"Jump to it, Louie. I'll be waiting."

So, in the dark of night and a trifle worried that somebody might start screaming, I crept down the awkward rattling steps of the fire escape and waited until the trap door opened and Louie's head came up into the night.

"Is that you, Mr. Chambers?" Louie whispered.

"It's me," I said, and scrambled after him.

I waited until he locked the trap door. I said, "I don't want to use the elevator."

"Figured that," he said. "I got the freight elevator up here."

"Fine."

He took me down to my floor. I parted my wallet and fetched up a bill and said, "Here's for you."

"Thanks."

He smiled, shrugged off my thanks,

closed the elevator door, and vanished.

I put the key in the lock, and I was home. I went to the bedroom and opened the closet and flung clothes about until I found the odd jacket I had worn when I had first visited Olga Adams in Lido. I dug into the pocket and plucked out the letter I had jammed away when I'd been whirled around and a man named Paul had pinned my hands behind me. I straightened out the letter and looked at it, and the bells in my head simmered down to tinkling music.

I was on my way to the phone, when the rap came on my door. I didn't answer. Then the door-buzzer sounded, loud and long. I didn't answer. There was another rap, and then silence. I went to the bedroom, doused the light, and watched through the window. Across the street, a man was pacing. Soon, another man joined him. They both looked up toward the lights of my living room. Then they sat down on a park bench and lit cigarettes. I went back to the phone and called Eddie Adams in Lido. When I got him, I said, "Mr. Adams?"

"Yes?"

"Peter Chambers."

"Yes, Mr. Chambers?"

"You told me that if I changed my mind, I was to call you. I'd like to come over and see you. I think we can do business."

"Always willing to do business. When will you be here?"

"Within the next couple of hours. Call off your sharpshooters, Mr. Adams. I've got friends who know I'm coming out to talk business with you. Be a darn shame if I got killed on the way. You want peace and quiet. Let's do it like that, Mr. Adams—peace and quiet."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Try hard, Mr. Adams. I'll be out there in a couple of hours."

I went back to the bedroom and peered through the window at my two vigilantes on the park bench. I marshaled my thoughts, and watched. Dear Eddie Adams didn't know what I was talking about, but fifteen minutes later a car slid up beside the two men on the bench. A man hurried out of the car, there was a moment of conference, and then the three entered the car and it pulled away. I got off the bed and went out to play target but I wasn't being a hero. I was pretty sure of myself.

I strolled beneath the canopy with all the jumpy assurance of a college boy being nonchalant waiting for a first date for the freshman prom. My body was braced for a bullet, but nothing happened and I got braver. I lit a cigarette and let the match flare at my face. Nothing happened. My pulse rate was considerably slower as I went to the rear entrance and did a repeat performance. Nothing happened there, either.

I went back, was whisked upstairs, opened my door, and attacked the telephone. Number one was Casey Moore. I told him to come up to my place, but pronto. Number two was Captain Weaver at Headquarters. He was out, but I told them it was extremely important, and they said they'd be in touch with him, and he'd call back. Number three was Herb Wiley, and he sounded irritated at being called at home.

"What's so important?" he said.

"Two hundred thousand smackers. A testimonial with speeches. Remember?"

"But I've got company."

"Bring her. Bring a gun, too. And bring your car. Pick me up at my apartment. You know the address."

"You kidding about the company?"

"If she likes cops and robbers, I'm not."

"I'll ask her."

"Hurry up, Herb."

My first visitor was Casey Moore. I said, "I think we can wind it up tonight. Here's what I want you to do." I gave him the keys to my car. "Use my car. Go out to Queens, pick up Simon Gordon, and go to Lido. We'll meet at the drugstore where we had the ice-cream sodas. That's it. Get going."

"But—"

"No time for talk now, Case. Get a move on."

The phone was ringing. I hustled Casey to the door and ran to the phone. "Hello?"

"Chambers?"

"Yeah."

"Weaver."

"I'm glad you called, Captain. It's on that Henry Moore deal. You told me to be in touch if anything popped."

"Yes?"

"It's going to pop. I want you in on it."

"Where?"

"Eddie Adams' place. In Lido."

His voice was suddenly nasal. "You sure you know what you're talking about?"

"Fairly sure. I'd like your co-operation. I'd like you to get together with the Lido cops. I'd like Adams' place staked out with lots of cops, close, but not too close. In about an hour or so, two cars are going to pull up. I'm going to be in one of them, and I'm going to have friends in the other. We're all going in. I've got a hunch there'll be some action. I'd like you guys around."

"You sure you know what you're doing?"

"I think so. Can I count on you being there, Captain?"

"We'll see."

He hung up on me. I looked at the receiver, called it a couple of names, and flung it back on its bar. I removed my jacket, fitted a shoulder holster around my arm, and inserted Casey's Luger into the leather pocket. My doorbell set up a clamor. "Okay, okay," I called, and opened the door for Herb Wiley, alone.

"No company?" I said.

"I didn't ask her. Not when it's your party. For *my* girls *I* like to be the hero. I'm not bringing my company to admire you." Laugh lines deepened around his eyes as he smiled without showing his teeth. "I brought this." He opened his jacket and tapped a belt-holster. "Aren't you going to ask me in?"

"Nope. We're leaving." I switched off the lights. "Now."

We picked up Casey and Simon Gordon, and we were a two-car procession from the drugstore at Lido to the pebbled roadway of the domain of Edward Adams, ablaze with lights. We massed at the bottom of the stairs and went up in a bunch. I raised my hand for the knocker, but the huge door was swung open by the wide-smiling Mike, who said, "Enter, gentlemen. Enter, and welcome."

The door closed, and there was the scrape of a heel on the stone floor behind us. We turned to see Paul, his beefy hand wrapped around the butt of a bulky automatic.

Mike rubbed a pulpy ear. "It's what is called getting the drop, gentlemen. Anybody gets funny, gets ventilated. So don't get funny. Got us a real army calling on the boss tonight. I been told to expect one." His finger abandoned his ear and pointed at me. "You."

"I brought friends," I said.

"Yeah. So while Paul covers with the roscoe, I do what is called the frisk."

He did it quickly, and he came away with the Luger in one hand and Herb's whistle-clean revolver in the other. He winked at Paul. "As long as they come with artillery, this trip . . . hold the roscoe on them. I'll go talk to the boss."

He walked off to the oak door of the plum-walled room. He knocked and waited. Eddie Adams opened the door. Eddie Adams wore black trousers, shiny black lounging shoes, and a black velvet smoking jacket with satin lapels.

Simon Gordon grabbed my arm and cackled. "That's him."

Adams pushed Mike aside and pointed a finger at Simon. "Who's he?"

"A friend of mine," I said.

The nostrils of his slender nose quivered. "I thought we were going to talk business. Was it necessary to bring your board of directors?"

"Real necessary," I said.

Mike said, "They come loaded with

hardware. These here." He raised his hands, holding the guns like dumbbells.

"I'll take one of those," Adams said. "The flat one." Mike gave it to him. Adams balanced it in his hand. "Luger. Excellent gun." He went back to the oak door and pushed it wide open. "All right, gentlemen. Let us begin our business conference."

We filed into the coral-carpeted room. Olga Adams was inside, in a simple, shining black dress. Her braided gold hair gleamed. If there were any bruises on her jaw, they were artfully covered. Adams said, "I believe you know my wife, Mr. Chambers."

"Yes. Yes, I do."

She started for the door. I said, "I'd like Mrs. Adams to remain here."

Adams smiled. "It's your conference, Mr. Chambers." He signaled Mike, who closed the door, remaining on the outside. Olga sat down and crossed her legs. Adams said, "Please remember, Mr. Chambers, that I have two eager sentries beyond that door, both armed, both capable."

"I've got you topped, Mr. Adams. I've got cops."

"Cops?"

"You've got two hoodlums, parked on the outside of that door. I've got cops staked all around the premises."

He was old all of a sudden. He said, "Cops? Why?"

"Because I'm going to accuse you of murder, Mr. Adams. Perfect murder—almost. A double-header. And we'll throw in arson, just to round it out."

Olga Adams gasped. It was the last sound she made until we were finished. There was silence, then Adams spoke.

"A peculiar way to talk business, Mr. Chambers. But I suppose it takes all kinds. . . ." The fingers of his left hand caressed the smooth muzzle of the Luger. "Suppose we try to conduct this meeting in as orderly a manner as possible. Won't you sit down, please, all of you?"

Everyone sat, except me.

Simon Gordon said, "That's him, all right."

Sharply, Adams said. "What's he talking about?"

"We'll come to it," I said.

He turned his back and walked to the carved mahogany desk. He turned, sighed softly, and sank into the high-backed chair. His elbows came up on the desk, and the Luger pointed in our direction. He said, "I'm listening, Mr. Chambers."

"May I introduce my friends?"

"Please do."

"Herbert Langhorn Wiley, an officer of the Crown Insurance Company. Simon Gordon, delivery clerk of a grocery in Flushing, Queens, in the vicinity of 116 Whitehall Place. And . . . Casey Moore, son of Henry Moore."

The last name brought him up rigid. "*Moore?*" he said.

"Yeah. Henry Moore's son. Guy was supposed to be dead. You do a perfect murder, double-header, and a guy comes back from the dead to spoil it. A year later. Perfect murder, Mr. Adams, it doesn't happen. But I'll tell you something, Mr. Adams, you came the closest I ever heard of."

He was an old man, and he was beaten before I started. His face was ashen. His voice was toneless. But there was a dignity about him. He parried, like a boxer unconscious on his feet, going through the motions. Eddie Adams knew it was over, all of it. He said, "Speak your piece, Mr. Chambers. Never mind the flourishes."

I rubbed one palm against the other, as I walked his coral carpet. I said, "You're Eddie Adams. Your Diamond Circle has collapsed. You're a guy with a hundred thousand dollars to his name—cash, that is—and you're a guy who's used to a lot more than that. You're down deep, and you're almost out. And then you pop a business proposition to Jack Rawlings, a millionaire. You want him to back you, and he sounds willing."

"No crime," Eddie Adams said. "No crime in that."

"Only it gets to a point where Jack Rawlings wants you as partner—with you to invest half. Half means two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. You're a fighter, Mr. Adams. Here's a chance to come up swinging—but who's got two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to invest?"

Eddie Adams said, "No crime yet, Mr. Chambers."

"No, but the groundwork is there, the spur, the motive. You're Eddie Adams, a playboy from way back. You're married to an elderly lady, and there's a policy, for a hundred thousand dollars, double indemnity for accidental death. You play around with that, it tickles in back of your mind, but you're Eddie Adams, you don't fiddle around with planned murder, not when it can kick back and blow up in your face. So, just like the devil sent him, a guy comes to you."

"Who?" Eddie Adams said.

"Henry Moore."

"For what?"

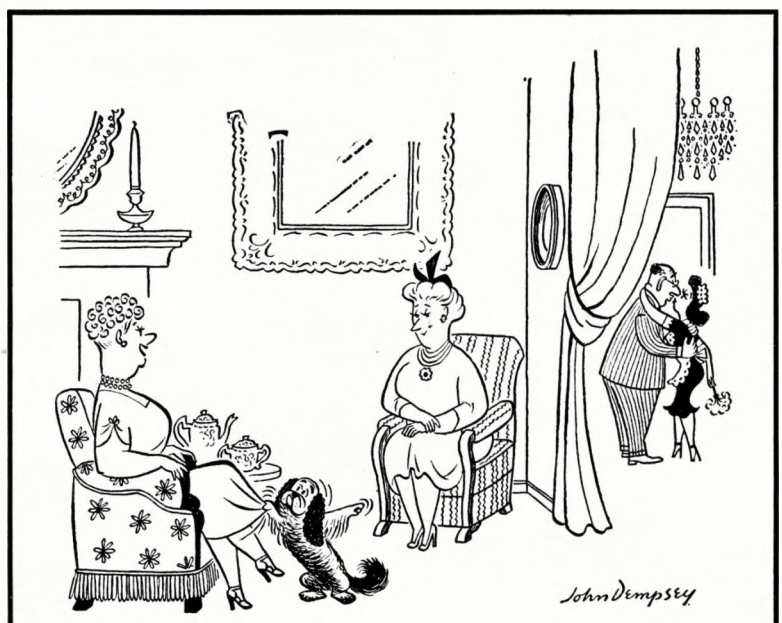
"For fifteen thousand dollars." I stopped at his desk and hitched up on a corner of it. "Fifteen thousand dollars. A guy crazy in need of fifteen thousand dollars. An old man whose only child is dead, a man alone, no family, a man desperately pleading for fifteen thousand dollars. An idea begins to glimmer in your brain."

His head tilted up. "Idea? Why?"

"Because you remember the guy."

"Henry Moore? I deny that."

"Deny, Mr. Adams. See what good it will do you. You denied it to the police,



"Every once in a while she acts like she wants to tell me something."

too." I shifted my position on the desk.

"Please go on."

"Henry Moore. A guy you used to know many, many years ago. A guy who was a bank guard when you were a small depositor. A guy who used to trade philosophy with you when you were a little man who ran a small saloon. Henry Moore. A guy who had a bug on a subject. Euthanasia. You remembered that."

"Remembered what?"

"What he was hugged on. Mercy killing. All of a sudden it began to shoot sparks in your brain. The devil had sent him, and you were going to use him. The perfect murder. You had it cold, and clear, and workable. Had your out. Had your recovery. Had your partnership in what turned out to be the Stardust Room. And you had a guy just desperate enough, just crazy enough, to make it work."

Eddie Adams waved his left hand toward the others. He said, "You may be impressing them. You're not impressing me." But Eddie Adams didn't mean it. Eddie Adams was a tired old man. But tired or old, curiosity is a prod even when you're dying. Eddie Adams was dying, but he lifted his lips in a grimace meant to be a smile. He said, "I'm sorry I interrupted you."

"You know," I said, "in a cockeyed kind of way, you've got class."

"Let's get on with the story."

I looked toward Herb, and Herb winked and nodded his head. I said, "From here, I'll do it chronologically. Let's begin with the morning of May tenth. You're in your office, an upstairs walk-up. Henry Moore had called you, and you had told him to come over that morning, May tenth, nine o'clock. You didn't know yet that you could use him. You knew nothing. An old-timer was bothering you. You had your own troubles. You figured on having him over early, giving him a fast brush, and getting rid of him. Nine o'clock. A crazy man presents his problem. He needs fifteen thousand dollars. You remember him, and all of a sudden the gears shift in your head. You tell him to come back at noon."

"Why?"

"You need props. You want to get this guy properly squared away."

Eddie Adams' brows knit, and there was unashamed perplexity on his face. "How could you know this? In the event that any of it were true—how could you possibly know it?"

"Let's skip that. You want me to tell you where you went?"

"I'm interested in your version."

"Dr. Fletcher Lewis."

That threw him. He made choking sounds in his throat. I had him reeling, and I kept jabbing. I said, "Dr. Fletcher Lewis. You were there at ten-thirty on some kind of trumped-up complaint. He keeps his stationery on his desk. You grabbed a hunk of it, and you had what you came for. Back in your office, you wrote out a deal about how your wife was incurably ill and suffering a lot, and now you had your prop. At noontime, you went to work on Henry Moore."

Herb Wiley stood up. "Frame-up?" he said.

"The weirdest." I talked to Herb now. Eddie Adams was sunk in his chair. "He made Henry Moore a proposition. He told Moore he was stuck for dough. He told him his wife was incurably ill, showed him a letter from a specialist, coinciding with the report of other doctors. She would spend the rest of her life in pain. He told Henry Moore about the insurance policy, double indemnity for accidental death. And then he came up with the snapper."

"Snapper?" Herb Wiley said.

"He made Henry Moore this fantastic proposition. He said, in substance, 'Henry, I've got a wife who is in great pain, all but dead. If she dies by a bullet, I get two hundred thousand dollars, instead of one hundred thousand. We're both in a spot, Henry, and you can help me, and you can have your fifteen thousand free for nothing.' And the desperate man listened to him."

"He must have asked for some proof that the wife was that ill."

"You bet he did, Herb. And Adams gave him proof. I'm going to guess a little bit here, but this kind of guesswork, with the actual stuff we've got, constitutes circumstantial evidence, which, in this case, is enough to convict."

Herb Wiley said, "Do it slow here, Pete."

"Adams arranged for it to look like a burglary. He wanted Henry to be there, up in Mamaroneck, at about two in the morning. He'd leave the door open for him. Henry would make a noise, Adams would send his wife out for a look-see, Henry would shoot, and go off. Adams would cover for him, and it would be over. A killing during the commission of a burglary. The woman dead, the double indemnity arranged, and Henry can pick up his fifteen thousand dollars. For himself, for his conscience, he killed a woman who was already dead."

"Where did it go wrong?" Herb Wiley asked.

"It didn't go wrong. Adams is no dope. He wouldn't leave it wide open like that. So, when it was done as he had wanted it done, he appeared with his own heater, and killed the intruder. Perfect murder. Double-header. *And* double indemnity. He had even provided a witness, and an honest witness for the first time in his life—Matt Bennett."

There was no more fight in Eddie Adams. His left hand clasped about his mouth to hold back the twitching. "How? How?" he said. "Loose end. What loose end? How? Please . . ."

I thought about taking the Luger away from him and changed my mind. I said, "A little is guesswork, most of it isn't. In your office, when you laid it out for him, Henry probably wanted that supposed letter from Dr. Lewis, for himself. For proof, if anything went wrong. You were in no position to argue. You gave it to him, but you planned to get it back."

"How?" he said. "How?"

"You wanted to keep him in line. You sent him home, for his gun. You told him to wait there, at home, you'd pick him up at five o'clock. You did pick him up at five o'clock, and you were seen." I turned to Simon Gordon. "Is this the man who picked up Henry Moore at five o'clock on May tenth a year ago?"

"That's him," Simon said. "That's the man."

To Adams, I said, "You denied to the police that you'd ever known Henry Moore. We can prove you did know him. We can prove you picked him up at his home at five that afternoon."

Herb Wiley said, "Then?"

"Then he delivered him up at that motel in Mamaroneck. Got there at about six o'clock. That put Moore at the scene of the crime. Adams then doubled back to New York. He was worried about the phony letter he had given Moore. It was in his own handwriting. But he even had that figured down to a tee. He had seen Moore's ramshackle wooden house. The letter was either there in the house or on Moore's person. So, at about eleven o'clock at night, he was at Whitehall Place, a dead spot in Flushing, Queens. He did a real job there, gasoline, the works. Completely incendiary."

"Then?" said Herb Wiley.

"He went home. He got there about one o'clock. He left the door open, and went up to his bedroom. Then the thing played out the way he had planned it. After he killed Henry Moore, he looked through his pockets and the letter wasn't there. He was certain it no longer existed."

"Did it exist?" Wiley said.

"And how. Loose end, like I told Mr. Adams. Right now it's looped around his neck."

"But wasn't it destroyed? He certainly was thorough enough."

I said, "Henry Moore didn't go directly home."

Eddie Adams' glazed eyes twisted toward me. "Didn't," he said. "go home?"

"No. He went to the Bronx first, where he changed clothes. And the letter remained in the clothes he left up there. I had occasion to see a specimen of your handwriting, and when I saw that letter

—well, there are experts to testify about handwriting."

Wearily Eddie Adams said, "There will be no need for experts."

Herbert Langhorn Wiley was suddenly the complete vice-president. He disdained the Luger. He marched up to Adams. "Mr. Adams, do you admit that you perpetrated a fraud on the Crown Insurance Company? That two hundred thousand dollars was paid to you, under fraudulent circumstances, which, together with fifty thousand dollars of your own money, purchased for you an interest in the Stardust Room?"

Eddie Adams nodded, his head hanging weakly.

"I congratulate you," he said, "on Mr. Chambers." His mouth was working as he smiled at me. Then he looked at his wife, looked back at me, and he raised the Luger to his temple and pulled the trigger.

Pandemonium burst in all directions. A window was shattered and cops poured in. There was the sound of gunshot in the tomblike outer lobby, and then the oak door banged open, and Paul was hustled in, bleeding from the neck. Outside, I could see Mike with his hands in the air, pinned by pistol-point against a wall. I turned to Casey but he was bent over Simon Gordon who had fainted. Then Olga Adams was near me, sobbing, and I moved with her to a remote corner of the room. Her forehead was against my chest, and my arms were around her, as her whole body shook, convulsively.

"Now you know," I said, "what I was pitching for."

"I . . . I . . ." she was whispering. "This is the first I heard of any of it."

"Sure. It was before your time. And even if it wasn't, Eddie wouldn't let you in on that kind of secret. That's not for dolls. Look, you're not a bad kid. Stop playing the heroine of a lousy movie. It's a real world, and a pretty tough one. Maybe this will wise you up, give you a couple of years of experience all clumped together."

"Yes. Yes, Mr. Chambers. Yes, sir." She was like a little girl listening to Papa.

"Get yourself a good lawyer, get your assets in order, and blow the whole deal. And about that thing in the Bronx, it never happened as far as you're concerned. You're out of it."

"Thank you. Thank you, sir."

Herb Wiley took her away from me, consoling her. Weaver was stooped over Eddie Adams, retrieving the Luger with his fountain pen thrust through the trigger guard. I said, "Don't mess with the Luger, Captain. It figures in another homicide."

"Whose?"

"Frankie Gold's."

Weaver brought the gun to a cop, came back to me, called Herb to us, said, "We gotta talk, fellas."

We talked. For a long time. And then Captain Weaver said, "I'm going to need statements from you. And don't worry about that Frankie Gold. That certainly was self-defense. Under the circumstances, they ought to strike a medal for you."

"Thanks. How about tomorrow?"

"For what?"

"The statements."

"Fine. Tomorrow's fine."

Herb said, "I've got to get back to town."

"Me, too," I said.

Weaver was talking to Casey Moore. "You want to stick around, kid? I wish you would."

Casey looked toward me. "All right?"

"Sure."

"What about your car?"

"Hang on to it. Call me tomorrow. Herb'll drive me back."

We used the Triboro coming back to town. It was a beautiful starlit night, cool and brisk. Herb said, "Do you have that doctor's letter?"

"I've got everything, Herb."

"I'm going to need all the physical evidence and statements from everybody."

"You'll get the works, pal. How's it look?"

"Can't miss. You can receive payment tomorrow."

"I want it cut up a little, Herb."

"Cut up? How?"

"This is what you do, Herb. Tomorrow. You get in touch with your Miami branch. Fifteen thousand dollars of my fee—but not called my fee or anything like that—goes to Mary Davis, Ninety Blossom Street, City of Miami. Explain it any way you like. That her information broke the case, that she saved your company two hundred thousand dollars—any explanation that fits. But get that money to her, and get it to her tomorrow." I looked at his profile. "Possible?"

He nodded. "In the bag. How about the balance?"

"That's my end. Five big ones. Pay when you like."

He sneaked a look toward me. "You're a queer one, Pete. Always have been. I don't even try to figure you anymore."

"Who," I said, "can figure whom? In the ultimate analysis, I mean, who the hell really knows anybody else?"

"Well, that's a fit subject for chitchat. Let's have a go at it. Get our minds off blood and murder."

Chitchat ended when he dumped me at my apartment house.

Upstairs, I drew a bath. I lay out, long and luxuriously, in a warm and peaceful bath, reading from a book of plays, but keeping an eye on the time. I got out, had a cold shower, and rubbed down vigorously. I shaved meticulously, dressed, and arrayed in all my finery, presented myself, at precisely midnight, at 666 Park Avenue, Apartment 7A. I laid a languid finger on the buzzer and buzzed.

Jane Rawlings called, "Come in."

I wondered whether this door was always open when she was at home. It had been open the very first time I called on her. My wonderment ceased at the next command. I had hardly opened the door before she called, "Click that clicker, will you? It locks the door." I pushed the thing in the lock, closed the door behind me, whipped off my Homburg, and bowed.

"Me," I declared. "Plus tuxedo. Finally."

No vision of loveliness rushed up to meet me. Jane Rawlings, in silver lounging pajamas, was stretched supine on the couch, one leg up on the armrest. She wore no make-up at all. Her hair was tied in a knot on top of her head. Lugubriously she wailed, "Well, come in. Don't just stand there."

Stiffly I moved down the three steps into the living room. "Waldorf," I said. "Charity affair. Ichabod Rally's party. Me in a tuxedo. What happened?"

"Men," she said. "They think things happen to them. I bet you think you had a rough day. Get yourself a drink, and listen to a short tale of woe."

I went to the bar, made a drink, went to the hassock, and sat down. I said, "I sit, and I listen."

Dourly she regarded me beneath lowered lids. "Everything's gone wrong. Remember about the man from Paris?"

"The one with the divine jewelry?"

"That one. He never showed up for his appointment. And do you remember Georgette? Georgette who makes me beautiful? She never showed up."

"Rough."

"And then late, very late, they delivered my evening gown. Guess what?"

"Not me. I'm not guessing."

"It wasn't my evening gown at all. And when I tried to call, the shop was closed. I got so excited, I banged down the phone, tripped over the wire, and this is the result." She pointed a long finger at her foot over the armrest of the couch. "Sprained ankle. So, we shall stay right here this evening and, fondly, we shall gaze upon one another."

"Even there," I said, "you lose. I win."

She smiled for the first time. She said. "Do me a favor."

"My pleasure."

"Stand up, very carefully, and come here, very carefully, and kiss me, very carefully. I've got my fingers crossed that *that* doesn't go wrong."

I stood up, very carefully.

I went to her, very carefully.

I kissed her, very carefully.

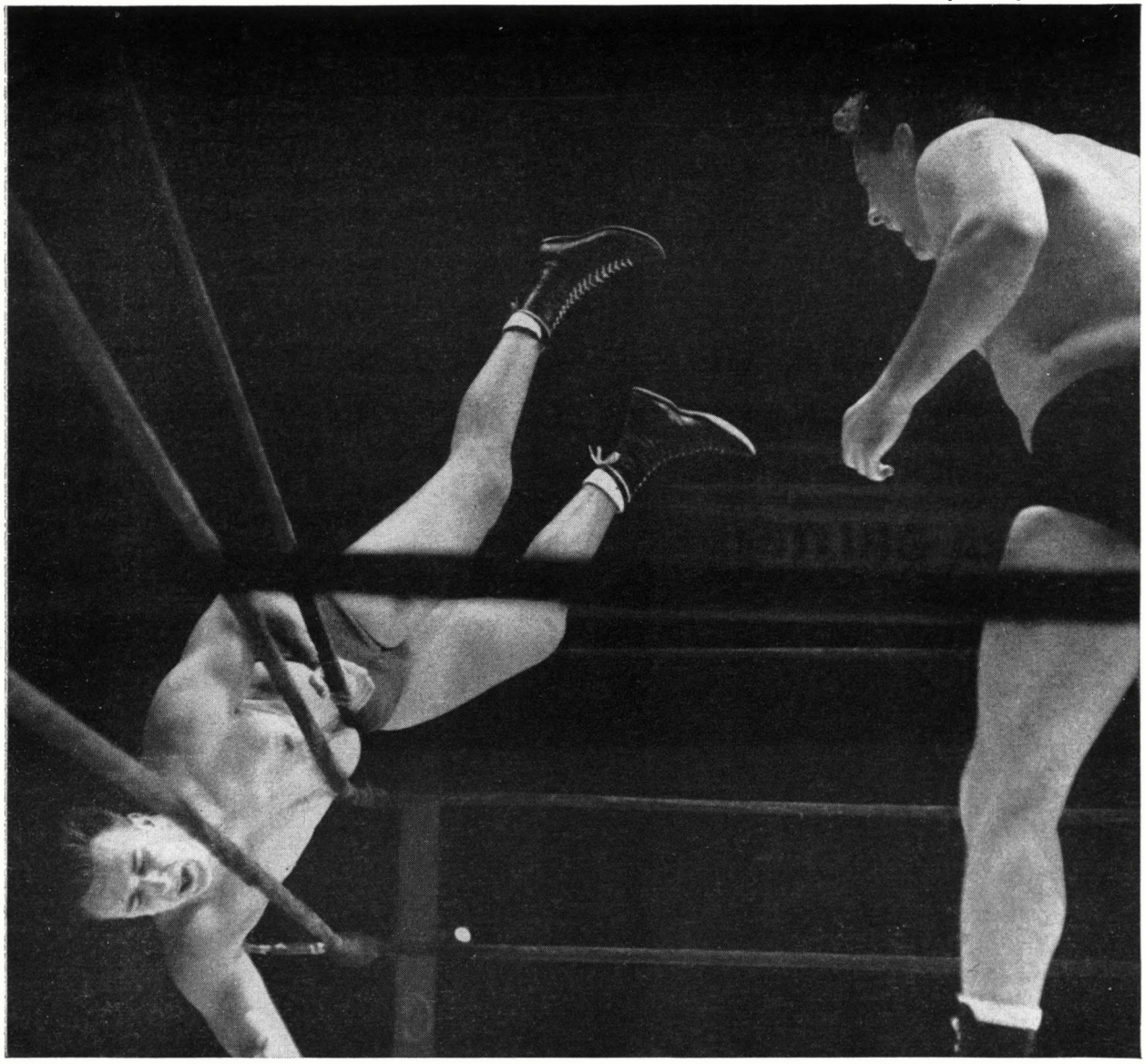
It didn't go wrong. THE END

At Chicago's Marigold Gardens, a young fan leaps from her seat shrieking in horror as her hero, Bob

Where Grandma Can Yell "Bum"

It's at the wrestling matches, revived by TV, where legal mayhem makes for a gory night's entertainment

Photos by Carroll Seghers II—Black Star



Norton, gets the heave ho. Somewhat less perturbed, Norton astutely grabs the rope for a gentle tumble.

BY JOHN KOBLER

On a recent Saturday night, in Chicago's Marigold Gardens, a snarling professional wrestler billed as Hans Schmidt, who glories in what he insists is his German origin, defeated Ronnie Etchison, an all-American-boy type from Missouri. In the process, Schmidt, a hulk of 240 pounds standing six-feet-four and a ringer for Piltdown Man, seemingly violated all of the few rules the profession theoretically recognizes. He appeared to hit Etchison with his clenched fist, kick him coming out of clinches, gouge his eyes, and pull his hair. The referee paid scant attention. There is, in any event, only one mild penalty for such behavior: the offender must break his hold, if any. Usually, the Marigold referee failed to inflict even this.

As they have been every Saturday night since 1949, the goings on in Marigold were televised over the Du Mont network (at present some thirty-three stations receive the program), and following the main event, Jack Brickhouse, a veteran sports announcer, interviewed the victor. "Why," more than two million televiewers heard him ask Schmidt in a tone of pious horror, "are you so unruly?"

"I'm here to win any way I can," Schmidt growled, his accent a mishmash of unidentifiable foreign cadences.

A Thoroughly Hateful Guy

As a matter of fact, his performance had been, for him, comparatively restrained. He once pretended to strangle an opponent with a microphone cord.

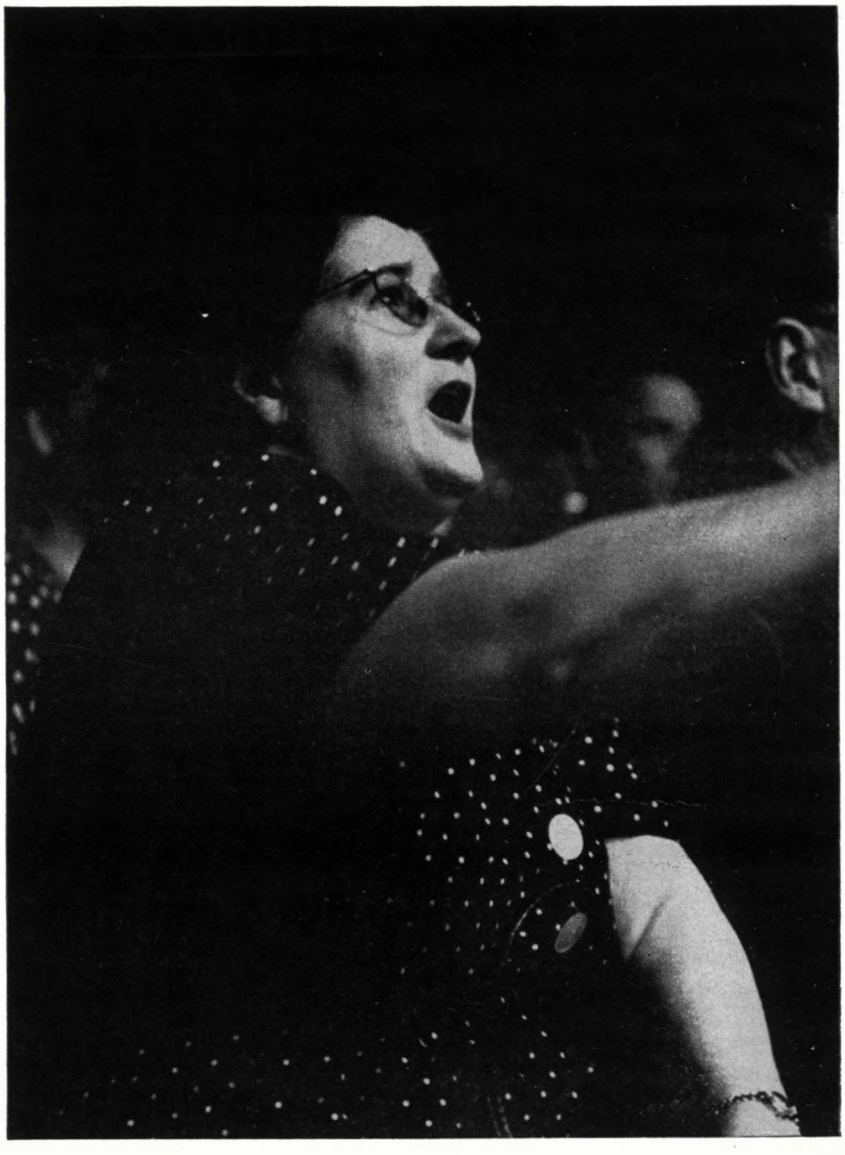
"You are of German descent, I understand," Brickhouse said stiffly. "Do you feel no obligation to your fellow German-Americans?"

"So what have they done for me?"

"But the youngsters, think what a

(continued)

Grandma's running conversation isn't always one-sided. On occasion a performer has a few things to say himself



bad example you're setting for them."

"Ach, let them learn about life the hard way like I did."

"I see. . . . What are your future plans?"

"I'm gonna win the world championship, take it back to Germany, and keep it there."

Brickhouse recoiled as if struck. "You," he said, "are besmirching everything I hold dear. I cannot go on with this interview."

Schmidt stalked away, unruffled.

The repercussions were thunderous. Three thousand letters inundated Brickhouse, all but about a hundred condemning Schmidt. Among the exceptions were twelve from women who wanted to marry him. Six psychiatrists offered to treat him free. Three undertakers volunteered their services, no charge. Twenty ministers urged Schmidt to abandon his evil ways. The Chicago *Daily News*, however, sounded a note of dissent. "For anyone concerned with wrestling to even mention the word sportsmanship." it editorialized, "is an insult to American youth and sports. Hans Schmidt should get a raise for honesty."

(Schmidt's financial situation at this time was not precisely precarious. He was grossing around $80,000 a year.)

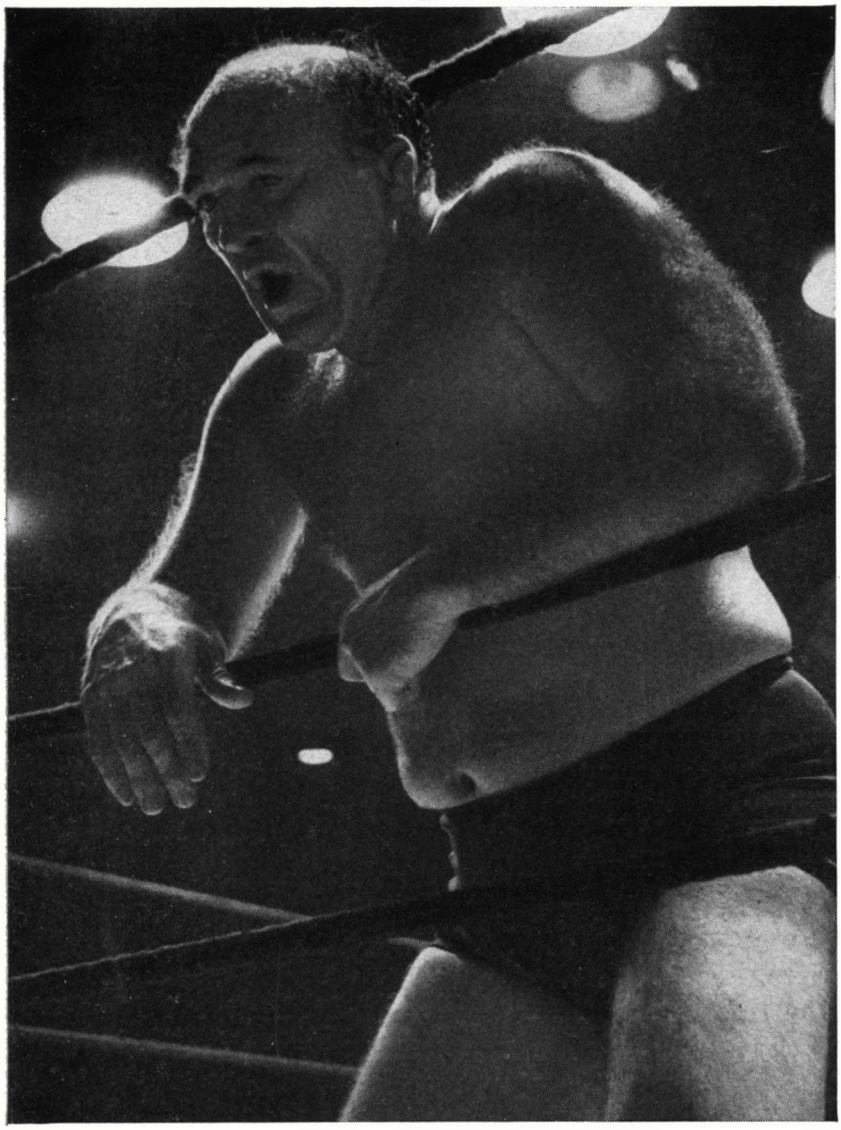
The Illinois State Athletic Commission made the gesture of publicly reprimanding Schmidt, and he recanted his more inflammatory statements.

Meanwhile, a Chicago *Tribune* reporter began digging into the wrestler's background. It turned out that Schmidt had never set foot in Germany. His real name, according to the *Tribune*, is not Hans Schmidt. but Guy Larose. Larose comes from Montreal, has a wife and small boy and a naturally gentle, kindly disposition.

He Means to Shock 'Em

Hans Schmidt, the Horrid Hun, is largely a creation of James Barnett, a young wrestling impresario. Aware of the kind of questions Brickhouse would ask his man, Barnett dreamed up answers calculated to shock. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Harvard whose private tastes run to opera and ballet, he manages a number of star wrestlers.

As the Schmidt affair indicates, pro-



fessional wrestling in America today is primarily good theatre. The action is often planned; the dénouement, predetermined. Few promoters try to maintain the impression that wrestling is the same kind of contest as the World Series, for example. They call it, under the regulations of most state athletic commissions, an "exhibition." Their jargon derives from Broadway and Hollywood rather than the sporting arena. They speak of a wrestler putting on a good or bad "show," of his looks, bearing, personality, costume—in short, his audience appeal.

"When good fortune comes to a man in the field of entertainment," wrote the Minneapolis *Tribune's* sports columnist, Dick Cullum, referring to another Barnett protégé, Pat O'Connor, "it can come as an avalanche, all because he has some little distinguishing twist in his act." Nowhere in the entire column did Cullum discuss O'Connor as an athlete.

This is an appropriate critical view. Almost every wrestling match follows the basic formula of drama, which calls for a hero, a villain, and a conflict. The fans enjoy booing the villain ("heel," in wrestling parlance) and cheering the hero ("babyface" or "clean fighter") as much as theatre audiences, watching old-time melodrama, once did. Unless the casting is right, however, wrestling fans lose interest.

Schmidt-Larose, for example, proved to be no sterling attraction until he "turned heel," as they say. Today millions love hating him and will pack an arena in hopes of seeing him mangled. So convincing has been his portrayal that police have to guard him in the ring. In Albany, not long ago, as he walked up the aisle on his way back to the dressing room, an overheated spectator lunged at him with a knife. The police disarmed him, and Schmidt proceeded, unscratched and pleased by this evidence of his success in villainy.

It Pays to Be Villainous

Since the Brickhouse interview, audience reaction to Schmidt has waxed even more intense. Nor does the Chicago *Tribune* exposure seem to matter. The villain-worshipers don't want to believe that at heart Hans Schmidt is just an old babyface. Consequently, he stands to earn more than $100,000 this year. As the owner of the Marigold Arena, Fred Kohler, remarked, when informed that a Philippine delegate to the UN threatened to submit a resolution denouncing Schmidt, "Great! Now, if only Congress would get sore at us . . ."

Among wrestling's other successful villains is "Ivan Rasputin from Odessa," also known as "the Mad Monk" and "the Russian Hangman." A shapeless quarter-ton, almost as wide as he is tall, both his face and body matted with thick, black hair, he waddles into the ring wearing a shako and muzhik's blouse. His favorite hold, appropriately, is the bear hug, which he administers with bellows nerve-racking to hear and grimaces horrific to behold. A fan once whacked him with a steel chair, causing him to have twelve stitches taken in his scalp. His real name is Hyman Fishman, and he grew up in Boston.

Wladek (Tarzan) Kowalski specializes in the knee drop, which consists of landing on a prone opponent knees first. He stands six-feet-seven and weighs 270 pounds. In publicity material distributed by the Marigold Arena's press agent, he is quoted as saying that he got where he is through hypnotism. "I made a recording with a background of soft music," he recounts, "and I put myself to sleep with it. You see, with enough sound slumber, a man can organize his thoughts and understand what goes on around him." Despite his apparent ferocity, he is pictured as shy. "People frighten me," he is supposed to have said.

Not quite up to Schmidt, Ivan Rasputin, or Tarzan Kowalski in hate appeal but still able to raise a gratifying round of boos are "Gypsy Joe," who wears gold earrings and is seconded by his wife, a fortuneteller; Benito Gardini, a neckless wonder, who makes a large

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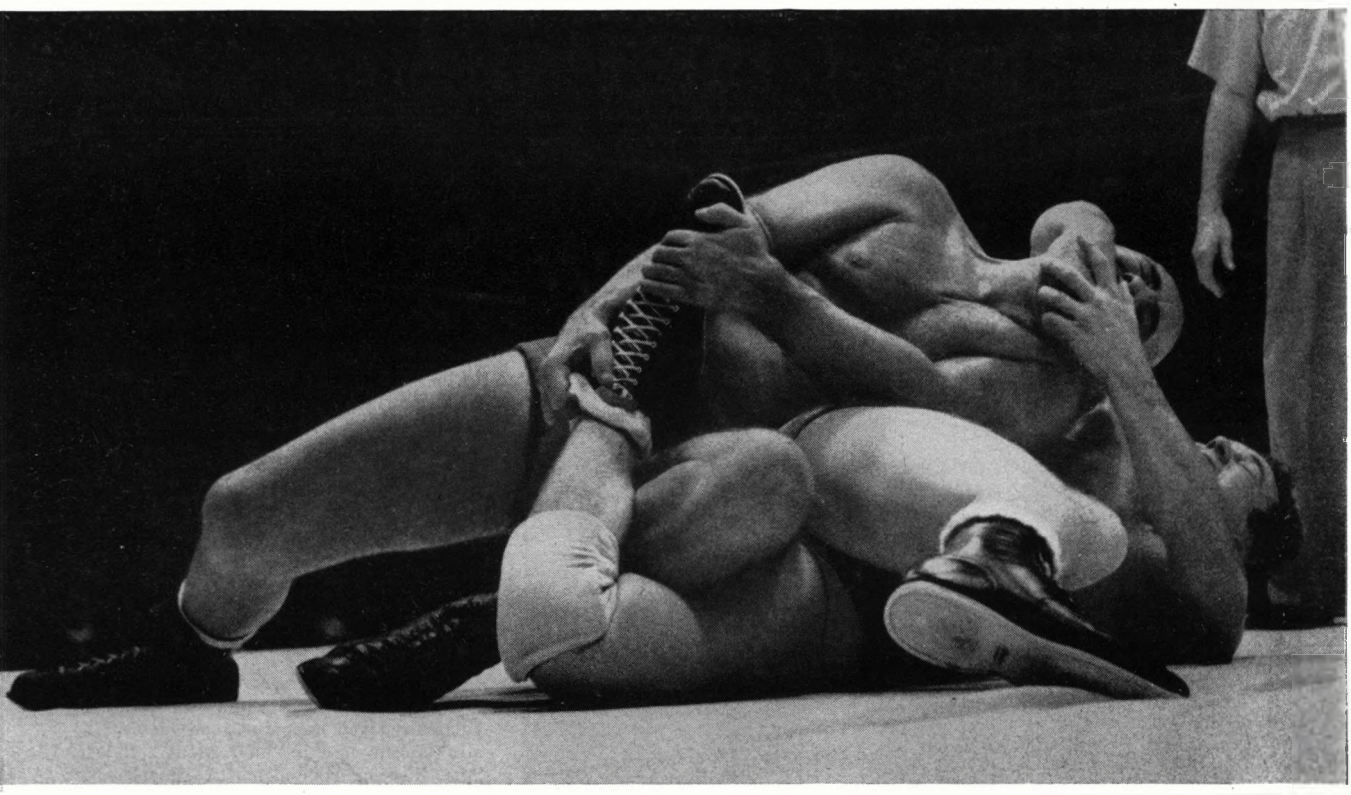

Often they get knotted into a pretzel of flesh

entrance wafting kisses at the audience and singing operatic arias and who, when entangled in a seemingly unbreakable hold, taps his forehead, as if to say, "Watch me think my way out of this"; Maurice ("the Mighty Atlas") Shapiro, a former circus strong man, who ballyhoos his appearances by hauling a Greyhound bus through the streets with a rope gripped in his teeth.

Among the heroes are Verne Gagne (pronounced *gon-ya*), who claims to be U.S. champion; George ("Gorgeous George") Wagner; "Lord" Jan Blears; Eric ("Yukon Eric") Holmback.

Gagne is an anomaly among wrestlers. A University of Minnesota alumnus, he has a pleasant face, a graceful physique, and several authentic amateur titles—the 1949 NCAA championship, for instance. He wrestled on the U.S. Olympic Team in 1948. But far greater as a crowd-pleaser than these distinctions is his use of what he terms "nerve holds." For a while it was the "sleeper." Time and again, an opponent would suddenly faint. "I exert pressure on the carotid artery," Gagne explains, "blocking the flow of blood to the brain." More recently, it has been the "claw," involving nerves in the chest. The opponent's arm appears to be paralyzed and remains so for some minutes after the match. Such holds are well-known in judo and can kill a man, but whether Gagne applies them in earnest and whether his opponents are really incapacitated, only he and they know. Either way, it excites the audience. Gagne is one of the three or four wrestlers who earn more than $100,000 a year.

How "Gorgeous George" Began

George Wagner owes his rise in the profession to a woman spectator who yelled at him one night, "Ain't you gorgeous!" It inspired him to let his hair grow to shoulder length, dye it platinum-blond, and bill himself as "Gorgeous George." He now makes an entrance wearing one of eighty-eight blindingly garish silk-and-satin robes. He boasts he has his hair regularly "permed."

"Lord" Blears is another long-haired wrestler. The quasi-peer says he is champion of the British Empire. His manager and second, a Captain Leslie Holmes, appears in a dinner jacket and monocle and carries a cane. But there is nothing spurious about Blears's war record. He was a radioman on a Dutch vessel which the Japs captured. While the other crew members were being butchered, he dove overboard and swam for fourteen hours until a U.S. cruiser picked him up. His testimony was used in the Japanese atrocity trials.

"Yukon Eric" Holmback, part Swede, part Eskimo—it says in the publicity releases—looks and dresses like a citizen of Dogpatch. He wrestles barefoot in tattered dungarees. He has a chest expansion of 67½ inches. His fighting technique consists chiefly of ramming his opponents into the ropes with this monstrous pectoral equipment. Some of them feign terror and dash out of the ring, a piece of stagecraft that never fails to fetch scornful laughter from the audience.

In the forty states whose athletic commissions countenance it, women wrestlers sometimes head a card. The current "queen of the mat" is Mildred Burke,

an ex-stenographer from Kansas City. In fact, she is undefeated after more than three thousand matches. A top contender is another former stenographer, Violet ("Little Tiger Dynamite") Vann. "For a hobby," her press agent reveals, " 'Little Tiger Dynamite' collects diamonds."

Possibly the outstanding performer in the specialty class at the moment is "Gorgeous Gus." No wrestler can equal his bear hug. This is not surprising. He happens to be a bear. Like women, however, animals are not allowed to wrestle in all states. In general, Texas is the most lenient state; Illinois and New York, the toughest.

Is pro wrestling, then, all histrionics and no athletics? The answer is a resounding yes-and-no. There are innumerable aging, overstuffed wrestlers with little to offer except an ability to produce fearful sounds and facial expressions and an imitation of violent action. They fill the early portion of an evening's wrestling card, like the jugglers and dog acts on a vaudeville bill. Moreover, even among the big stars, the outcome of a match has only secondary interest. The means, not the end, is what counts; appearance, not reality.

It Requires Real Skill

But to stage the kind of show that makes the crowd roar takes not only enormous physical power but the skill to co-ordinate and control it. Consider some of the standard holds the fans love. The unspeakable Hans Schmidt, for instance, specializes in the "back breaker." He stretches his opponent over his knee face up, grabs him at both ends and bends him back like a bow. Frankie Talaber favors the "pile driver," upending his opponent and ramming him into the canvas. Rudy Kay is among the foremost exponents of the body slam. Lifting his opponent high overhead, he hurls him down flat on his back.

Now, if these maneuvers were as brutal as they look, crippling injuries and deaths would be common. As it is, accidents do happen. Rudy Kay once bodyslammed a man clear through the floor of the ring. Tarzan Kowalski dropkicked part of Yukon Eric's ear off. But the last thing most wrestlers want to do is damage each other. They avoid it by working as a team, the attacker pulling his punches a little; the defender, forewarned, dodging their full force—a performance requiring great skill if it is to look convincing. The grunts and groans, of course, enhance the illusion. Professional wrestlers should be regarded as a combination of acrobat and pantomimist rather than as competitive athletes exclusively.

Nobody realizes all this better than the fans themselves, though they like to forget it while watching a match. Few are naïve enough to believe pro wrestling is a serious trial of strength. But the knowledge in no way diminishes their pleasure. They bring to the arena the

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Women—of all ages—are wrestling's best friends

same eager-to-be-fooled spirit they might bring to a carnival. The routines quickly become familiar—the faces contorted with simulated agony and fury, the holds that should but somehow don't pulverize the victim. They learn to look for them, they shout for them. They are perfectly aware that when Frederick von Schacht, "the Milwaukee Murder Master," refuses to shake hands with an opponent, he isn't really mad; he is merely making one of the traditional gestures of the wrestling villain. Yet knowing this, the audience will not boo a decibel less loudly.

The most ardent fans today are women. They comprise sixty per cent of the paying customers. Usually exposed to wrestling by television, they come for an experimental look at it in the flesh and remain to scream themselves hoarse. Women of all ages and classes, sizes and shapes, are wrestling's best friends. Every top wrestler has his national fan club. Invariably, women are the founders: the membership is almost a hundred per cent female.

It is obvious from the kind of sentiments expressed by many of the women in the heat of a match that their psyches are responding to something besides the purely dramatic aspects of wrestling. "Lookit that hunk of man!" is a common cry. "What a build! How would ya like to date that one. C'mon, Superman, bust him one for me." A wrestler need be no Apollo, either, to attract such admiration. Raw masculinity is what counts. From the spectacle of large, lusty males in violent contact, droves of women derive, to use one promoter's euphemism, "a romantic thrill."

An Ugly Man's Appeal

In the course of the Du Mont show, announcer Brickhouse receives a good many questions by mail, telegram, and phone, and he normally answers them on the following week's telecast. A woman recently wrote asking for the address of Jules Larance, one of wrestling's least appetizing characters. His head is totally hairless, his body so hirsute that he seems to be wearing a fur coat. Brickhouse asked Larance if he wanted to disclose his address. "Why not?" said the wrestler. "Tell her the Chelsea Hotel."

Next time the announcer saw him, Larance looked worn out. "My phone's been ringing for three days," he wailed. "Hundreds of dames want to meet me."

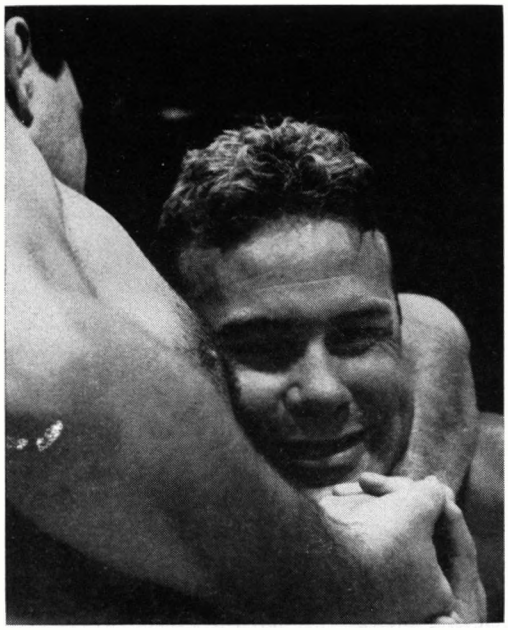
"Well, did you give them any time?"

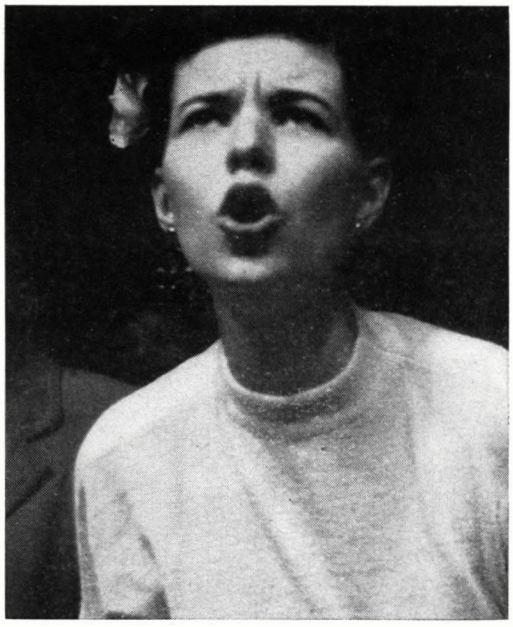
"Hell, no. I blew 'em off. They all sounded screwy to me."

For many other women, wrestling exerts a somewhat subtler appeal. Leonard Schwartz, the owner of another Chicago wrestling arena, the Rainbo, has devoted a good deal of thought to the reactions of his female clients. "An ugly wrestler," he concludes, "lots of times may make the lady's husband or boyfriend look real pretty by comparison, and this hands her a big bang. She'll tell herself, 'Joe's not so bad, after all. I'll bet if he was up there, he could hold his own with that ape.'"

But it's the women in need of letting off steam, the suppressed, overworked, underappreciated, elderly housewives, who probably get the deepest satisfaction out of watching wrestling. They can transfer all their resentments to the villain. "Where else," Schwartz demands, "can Grandma yell, 'Kill the bum!'?"

The capital of wrestling is Chicago, chiefly because of its central location. The Chicago arenas offer the barnstorming muscle men convenient bookings whether they're playing the East or the West. Sooner or later, most of them wrestle there. In Chicago, moreover, originate the only two wrestling shows on TV networks—Marigold, Saturday night on Du Mont; Rainbo, Wednesday night on ABC. The hostility between the groups who run them is more sincere than anything that goes on in the ring.





She's convinced her hero is on the verge of a broken neck, but Ray Gunkel isn't too worried

Rainbo provided the first of all TV sports shows and one of the first TV programs of any description. It made its debut on the video screen in 1948, only shortly after TV itself bowed in. Marigold followed a year afterward. Promoter Kohler of Marigold will let no star wrestler appear in his arena who also appears in the Rainbo. Promoter Schwartz, until now somewhat more generous, has been threatening to retaliate.

Pro wrestling throughout America is controlled by thirty-eight promoters, most of them former mat men, who comprise the National Wrestling Alliance. They include Hawaiian, Mexican, and Canadian, as well as U.S.. promoters. It is they who bestow the championship titles, which, though pretty meaningless as an index of true superiority, since the decisive match was probably prearranged, have distinct box-office value. What standards the N.W.A. bases its choices on are likely to elude outsiders, especially since regional promoters reserve the right to pick their own titleholders. Reciprocity undoubtedly enters into it ("You favor my boy this time, I'll vote for yours next"). For example, the "world champion" since 1947 has been Lou Thesz. Yet in 1949 a number of Eastern Seaboard promoters agreed the title belonged to a Blackfoot Indian, Don Eagle, who enters the ring in feathers and beads.

The acrimonious relations between the Marigold and Rainbo factions deteriorated still further recently over this matter of who is champion of what. Thesz had been wrestling in Marigold and, at Kohler's insistence, nowhere else in Chicago. Schwartz protested to the N.W.A. of which he and Kohler are members, and Thesz finally appeared in the Rainbo Arena. At this defection, Kohler expunged the name of Thesz from his books, and cast about for another exclusive attraction. He settled on Verne Gagne. A minority group of N.W.A. promoters then obligingly named Gagne "U.S. champion." Yet Gagne has never defeated Thesz.

Some Wrestlers Are Ageless

The stars of wrestling get a percentage of the gate, 12½ per cent to 22 per cent, of which their managers customarily retain 2½ per cent. The lesser performers get a straight fee—$75 to $150 a match. Only a rare few make big money. Unlike prize fighters, however, who are usually finished by thirty, wrestlers enjoy a long professional life. When their strength declines, they can still get by on showmanship. Jim Londos, who is in his sixties, still wrestles occasionally today.

Mighty Atlas swells a bicep, tells Jack Brickhouse over TV he's no meaner than other men of the mat.

To the detractors of pro wrestling, the promoters have an unanswerable rebuttal. "Have you ever watched collegiate wrestling, the real scientific stuff?" it runs. "A hold may last half an hour, the wrestlers hardly moving an inch. It bores you to death. The public wants action, drama, a show. We give it to them, and it does them no more harm than a movie."

The true promoter spirit was typified a few years ago in Mexico City, when a wrestler called Miguel Torres played his role of villain so effectively that the crowd got slightly hysterical and looked ready to lynch him. For his own protection, two policemen dragged him out of the ring. Torres, showman to the last, lashed out at them with his feet and fists. One of them shot him in the shoulder. The crowd broke up the seats. "Ah," murmured the promoter happily, rubbing his hands together, "a good finish!" THE END

Statement required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) showing the ownership, management, and circulation of Cosmopolitan, published Monthly, at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1953. 1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, The Hearst Corporation, 959 Eighth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.; Editor, John J. O'Connell, 959 Eighth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.; Managing Editor, Lewis W. Gillenson, 959 Eighth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.; Business Manager, L. M. Bishop, 959 Eighth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y. 2. The owner is: The Hearst Corporation, principal office, 100 West Tenth Street, Wilmington, Delaware. All of the stock of The Hearst Corporation is held by the following Voting Trustees, namely: Martin F. Huberth, 959 Eighth Avenue, New York, New York; Richard E. Berlin, 959 Eighth Avenue, New York, New York; Henry S. MacKay, Jr., 458 South Spring Street, Los Angeles, California; Richard A. Carrington, Jr., 1111 South Broadway, Los Angeles, California; Harold G. Kern, 5 Winthrop Square, Boston, Massachusetts; G. O. Markuson, 959 Eighth Avenue, New York, New York; William Randolph Hearst, Jr., 959 Eighth Avenue, New York, New York; John Randolph Hearst, 959 Eighth Avenue, New York, New York; and Randolph A. Hearst, 860 Howard Street, San Francisco, California, under Voting Trust Agreement dated as of February 23, 1952. The beneficial owners of the stock deposited under the aforesaid Voting Trust are The Hearst Foundation, Inc., the Estate of William Randolph Hearst, Deceased, John Randolph Hearst, William Randolph Hearst, Jr., Randolph Apperson Hearst, David Whitmire Hearst and George Hearst. 3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None. 4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner. L. M. Bishop (Signature of Business Manager). Sworn to and subscribed before me this twenty-fourth day of September, 1953. Andrew E. Macyko, Notary Public, State of New York, 41-2537300. Qual. in Queens Co., Cert. filed with Queens & N.Y. Co. Clerks and Registers. Term Expires March 30, 1955. [Seal]

The Last Word

AIR CRASHES

Fort Worth, Texas: Amen to your "How Accidental Are Air Crashes?" [October]. My husband was an air-line pilot for years. I've heard repeatedly of a captain who can hardly see well enough to sign the clearance, and I have been on parties where liquor flowed freely, with pilots present until a few hours before flying.

I.N.P.

A needless tragedy?

And don't let anyone say, "That's just a housewife talking." I've got a commercial pilot's license with a multiengine rating! —NAME WITHHELD

East Greenwich, Rhode Island: I am horrified. The names of dangerous pilots should be posted in every air terminal and a Congressional investigation begun.
—MRS. E. A. SHOMSTED

Campbelltown, Pennsylvania: The illustrations in the article are unfortunately true. It is a shame, however, that this handful of irresponsibles will harm thousands of innocents. —ARTHUR M. HORST

Redondo Beach, California: As an air-line pilot, I find this sort of sensationalism rather sickening. No one is more anxious than we to improve our already impressive safety record. —W. L. JONES

No one can deny the fine safety record of the air lines; our article points it out. But neither can anyone defend a situation that needlessly threatens the lives of air-line passengers. —The Editors

"A COUPLE DEVOTED"

New York, New York: The training of young people for leadership in our organization is not widely known, and we are proud it is presented ["A Couple Devoted," October] in such an understanding manner. —NORMAN S. MARSHALL
COMMISSIONER
THE SALVATION ARMY

Babe Didrikson Zaharias

BEAUMONT'S "BABE"

Beaumont, Texas: You have a heart-warming article [October] on the "Babe." During her recent illness she was very kind to her many well-wishers, ill as she was. There are very few people like "Babe," with a heart as big as all Texas. Beaumont is very proud of her.
—ANN PURDOM TERRY

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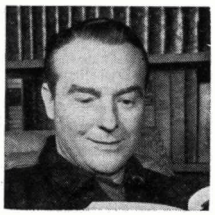
Looking into January

SEX CRIMES regularly shock the nation—but even more shocking is the fact we release habitual offenders almost as fast as we capture them. Learn the tragic story in "We're Still Paroling the Sex Criminals."



RALPH EDWARDS, creator of TV's highly successful "This Is Your Life" and radio's perennially popular "Truth or Consequences," is profiled in next month's COSMOPOLITAN.

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EXOTIC BREAKFASTS, a dozen of the most glamorous ever created, are food expert Harry Botsford's recipes for a happy marriage.

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