COSMOPOLITAN

SEPTEMBER 1953 · 35¢

SEX BEHAVIOR OF WOMEN

A First Look at Kinsey's New Report

SHEREE NORTH

See "Nothing Sacred" by James H. Street

Another Terrific Murder

COSMOPOLITAN

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(P. OVALE)

INFECTIOUS DANDRUFF?

Go after the germs with

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and Massage . . . Quick!

THOSE flakes and scales on coat shoulder—especially if they persist—may be symptoms of infectious dandruff and the millions of germs that go with it.

Don't delay or experiment with untested methods. Get started at once with Listerine Antiseptic and massage twice-a-day and keep it up. This is the tested way that has helped so many . . . may help you.

Listerine treats the infection as an infection should be treated . . . with quick germ-killing action.

Kills "Bottle Bacillus"

Listerine Antiseptic kills millions of germs associated with infectious dandruff, including the "Bottle Bacillus" (P. ovale). This is the stubborn invader that so many dermatologists call a causative agent of infectious dandruff.

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Remember, in clinical tests twice-a-day use of Listerine brought marked improvement within a month to 76% of dandruff sufferers.

When You Wash Hair

To guard against infection, get in the habit of using Listerine Antiseptic every time you wash your hair. It's a wise precaution against infectious dandruff as well as a grand treatment.

LISTERINE ANTISEPTIC . . . *FOR INFECTIOUS DANDRUFF*

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Picture of the Month

This is the month when the three R's acquire a special sparkle and significance. M-G-M has given them new glamour in a gay Technicolor entertainment motivated by Riches, Romance and Rio!

Think of a blonde goddess with a breath-taking figure. Add a bank account that makes her the richest girl in America and you have Lana Turner as Nora Taylor ...an heiress who wants to find real romance, that's more honey than money!

Lana's search leads all the way to Rio... and makes M-G-M's lilting, lusty, lavish "Latin Lovers" the gayest, most glamorous musical romance we've previewed in many a moon.

Bring *all* your moods with you because "Latin Lovers" is full of enchanting surprises. At first you'll want Nora to marry playboy Paul (John Lund) who has his own private money mint ...and is likewise loaded with manly charms!

But when Lana goes to romantic Rio and meets Roberto (Ricardo Montalban) ... virile, volatile South American who ardently woos her before he knows who she really is...you'll feel yourself as deliciously disturbed—and undecided—as she is!

Don't try to guess what finally happens. It's enough to say that you'll be more Turner-thrilled than ever. Lana was very exciting in "The Bad and the Beautiful" ...but in "Latin Lovers" she's even more tempestuous, tempting and terrific.

There's glorious music, too!...that will sweep you up into the soaring, star-bright, Brazilian sky... miraculous melodies like the swirly, sensuous "Night and You"... a deep beat South American song, "Come to My Arms"... and a soft "I Had To Kiss You" number that keeps time with your racing heart!

You'll love the love in "Latin Lovers"... the tantalizing, tingling triangle of Lana, Ricardo and John as it is unfolded under the worldly-wise eyes of Louis Calhern... the eye-entrancing color by Technicolor ...the "Everything" that makes it just perfect entertainment... full of kisses and caresses! So... Go!

★ ★ ★

M-G-M presents "LATIN LOVERS" starring LANA TURNER, RICARDO MONTALBAN, JOHN LUND and LOUIS CALHERN with Jean Hagen and Eduard Franz. Screen play by Isobel Lennart. Music by Nicholas Brodszky. Lyrics by Leo Robin. Dances staged by Frank Veloz. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy. Produced by Joe Pasternak.

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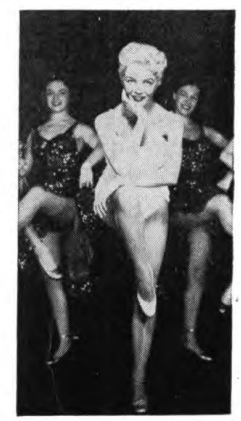
COMPLETE MYSTERY NOVEL



COVER *Broadway prophets had been predicting stardom for some time for such actresses as Vanessa Brown, Helen Gallagher, and Geraldine Page, so it was no surprise when they achieved it this past season. But the big surprise was one Sheree North, who stopped the show as "Whitey," in "Hazel Flagg." This shimmying platinum blonde, whose favorite reading is any cookbook, is on the way. Cover photo by Erwin Blumenfeld.*

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Lilli Ann
san francisco

FABRIC-OF-ITALY FINEST SHARKSKIN SUIT, STUNNING SIX-TONE CHROMATIC COLOR ROUTINE... GREY, BROWN... ABOUT ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS AT FINE STORES OR WRITE LILLI ANN, 16TH AND HARRISON, SAN FRANCISCO OR 512 SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

What Goes on at Cosmopolitan

A GRUBSTAKE, "HAZEL FLAGG," A FRENCH BOY

Most unrecognized face around town belongs to a man who has put more beautiful faces before the public eye than Solomon had wives. Erwin Blumenfeld is the fellow. Chances are that when your glance is captured by a cover girl, you're looking at a Blumenfeld photograph. That delectable young lady, Sheree North, of "Hazel Flagg" fame and now on our cover, is a sample.

Now *there* is one Broadway show for which we have a soft spot. After all, the original story of "Hazel Flagg" was born in COSMOPOLITAN, fathered by James Street, who has finally accepted the fact that it is his most famous work, despite his best-selling *The Velvet Doublet*, *Tap Roots*, and *The Gauntlet*. In Street's own words, here is the slightly delirious account of what happened:

"In 1937 I was a newspaper reporter in New York, and for some unexplained reason I needed some money. So I decided to write a short story. I had never written a short story. However, I had done some rewrite on a radium-poison case.

"I went to a corner store and bought a magazine. It was COSMOPOLITAN. I picked out a short story, read it, and counted the words. Then I wrote my story about an Arkansas girl who wrote a newspaper that she had radium poisoning and got to New York and things happened to her. COSMOPOLITAN bought it and published it as 'Nothing Sacred.'

"Then Hollywood purchased it. Ben Hecht took my story, moved the girl to Vermont, and wrote a hilarious movie.

"The story had given me a grubstake, so I quit the newspaper business and moved to Connecticut and became a quote author unquote. Now I live in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and still am authoring.

"I forgot about 'Nothing Sacred' years ago. In 1952 I began to get letters about it, that it was to be made into a musical comedy. So it was, as 'Hazel Flagg.'

" 'Nothing Sacred' started me writing for myself. I had nice brown hair in those days, and a happy smile. Now my hair is white and I'm grumpy."

For the original story, exactly as James Street first wrote it for COSMOPOLITAN, turn to page 90.

An Artist Is Sprung

We've always heard that a smart trainer keeps a promising horse under wraps until the right moment—a bit of wisdom, we can here and now prove, that extends not only to horses but to women. Some five years ago we had a little chat with GOOD HOUSEKEEPING's Art Editor, Suren Ermoyan. He told us his wife, Arpie, was working hard studying magazine illustration under his supervision. "She's ready now," Ermoyan said, "but I'm not quite ready to spring her. When I do, her work will knock magazine editors dead."

Arpie Ermoyan

Arpie Ermoyan has now been sprung. We took one look at her illustrations for "The Trouble with Erica" (page 68) and promptly admitted to being knocked dead.

Arpie hasn't been kept *completely* under wraps (what woman ever has?), so if you have a private conviction you've seen her face before, you probably have. The Ermoyans live in Westport, Connecticut, habitat of sports cars and illustrators. Neighboring artists drop in on the Ermoyans, and before you know it, Arpie has to put aside her drawing board and start modeling. It all works out fine, says Suren. Gives *him* a chance at the drawing board.

One Easy Lesson in French

Back from an exploratory trip to Europe, our Fiction Editor, Kay Bourne, insists the world has shrunk to the size of a doughnut and is rapidly becoming almost as American. U.S. magazines have taken over the newsstands, Coca-Cola is a popular Italian drink, and nowadays when someone refers to The Rock it turns out he's talking about Manhattan, not Gibraltar. The clincher came when Kay entered a Paris music store where a group of jivy French youngsters were monopolizing a phonograph. In careful French, she asked if she could play a record on *"le phonographe."* One youngster looked startled; then light dawned. "Ahhh!" he exclaimed. "Le *peek-up!*"

H. La B.

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What to Do About Family Infections

Though everyone in your household has a different ailment, the cause—and the cure—may be the same

BY LAWRENCE GALTON

Why do some families seem to be victims of a perverse fate that keeps them constantly running to the doctor? Why are some individuals, especially children, seemingly the whipping boys of disease?

The answer in both cases may be: a "family reservoir of infection."

Because of the intimacy of family life, bacterial infections may become rampant within the whole family—with bizarre results. Often, just one child, who is particularly susceptible, is repeatedly infected by one or more adult carriers, who themselves may show no symptoms.

Sometimes several members of a family may become ill—at the same time or in succession—with ailments that seem strikingly different in nature but are actually caused by the same disease organism passed back and forth within the family.

In just one year, in the experience of a single physician, 48 family outbreaks were noted in which two or more members of a family were infected by the same disease agent, with a great variety of results. In one family, the first signs of infection were a superficial nipple abscess in the mother and impetigo of the face in a newborn baby. Both mother and child were treated effectively, but shortly after being returned home, the child had seborrhea of the scalp with scaling, and the same disease agent was found to be the cause. Then it was noted that the sister who handled the infant had boils on her hand and arm, also caused by the same disease agent. The sister improved, but the child's skin infection became worse again. A massive breast abscess then developed in the mother.

The grandmother, during the mother's hospitalization, burped the child by holding him against her left cheek, and boils developed on that portion of her face and her left ear. The mother eventually improved and was discharged from the hospital. But the sister still had some boils on her hands and arms, and now boils also developed on the mother's hands and arms. The father then had a carbuncle of the leg which required prolonged hospitalization. The grandmother next had a flare-up of the boils on her face. Conjunctivitis and sinusitis, caused by the same disease agent, developed in the brother. Finally, the entire family picture, which had previously involved three different physicians, was brought together under one doctor who decided to treat every family member at once with the drug that seemed to be most effective against the disease agent. There was marked progress after that.

This is a spectacular example of the family as a reservoir of bacterial infection and the need for family, rather than individual, treatment.

Crippling infections associated with diabetes in elderly patients have been controlled with terramycin. The antibiotic benefited 46 patients with infections of the feet, the most common type of diabetic infection, caused by reduced blood circulation. Swelling and pain subsided rapidly and there was over-all improvement in forty-eight hours.

A sobering effect is exerted by vitamin B_6. A single injection of the vitamin will sober inebriates in two or three minutes. An important medical use may be in distinguishing between cases of drunkenness and severe head injury.

Infections of the nose and sinuses have been helped by a new nasal spray, Biomydrin. In addition to two antibiotics and an antihistamine, the spray contains a decongestive plus a wetting agent that helps spread the medication more evenly. Tested in 65 patients, the spray eased congestion without producing "rebound" stuffing. THE END

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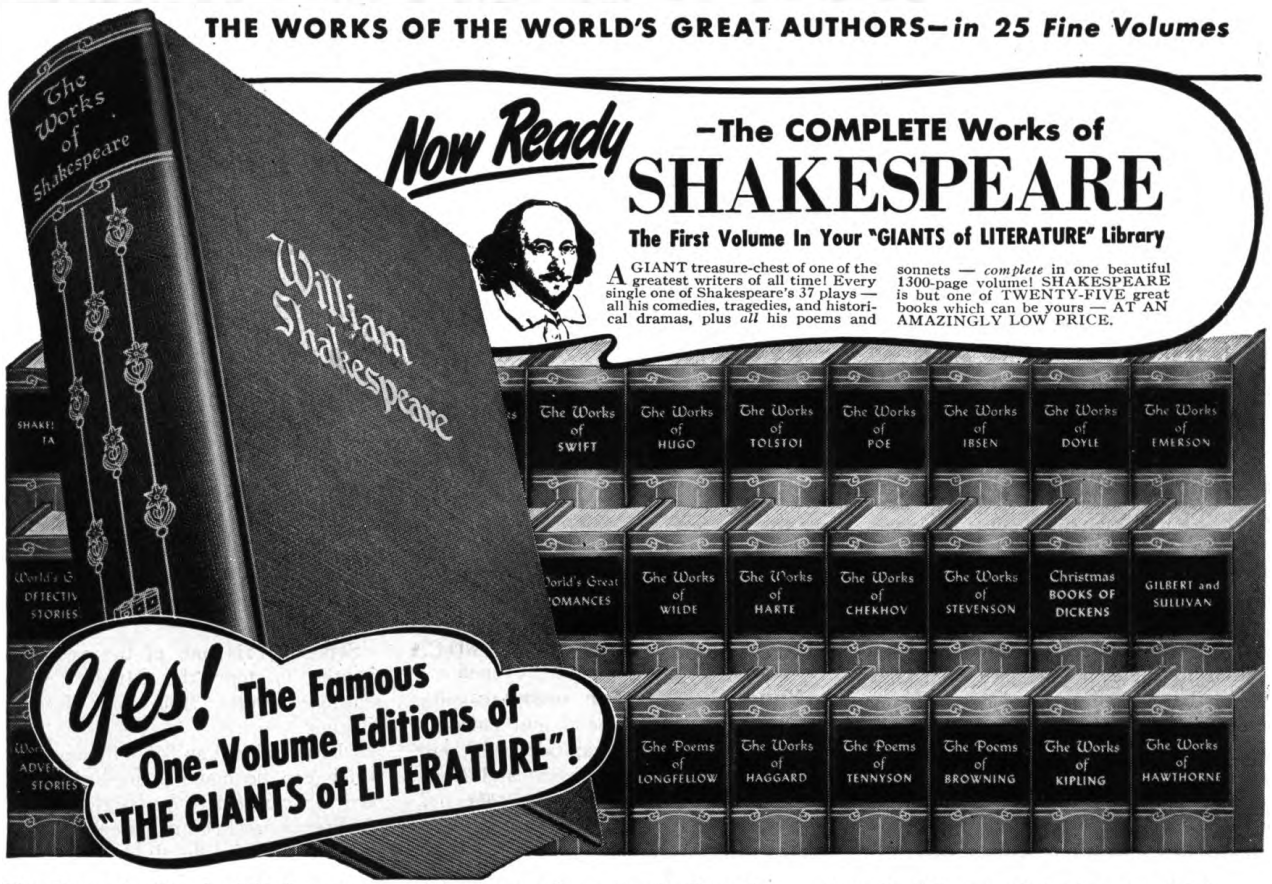

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Tourist Court Journal

Today's luxury motel, elegant successor to the tourist cabin, has all the facilities of the best hotel, even a swimming pool.

Luxury Along America's Highways

BY EDWARD R. DOOLING

Since its inception about thirty years ago, the motel has undergone a complete transformation. The first tourist cabins—which is what they were called then—were strictly amateur jobs, slapped together by a farmer or gas-station proprietor in his spare time. They usually had a framework of two-by-fours, clapboard siding, tar-paper roofs, and no interior walls. A toilet, wash basin, and sometimes a metal shower box might be located in a curtained-off alcove. There were no closets, no reading lamps, no easy chairs, and rarely a floor covering. The standard rate for such accommodations was $1 a night a person, and 50 cents to rent an army cot which might be squeezed into the cabin for a child.

Today's motels are actually hotels, specially located and designed for the convenience of automobile travelers. Construction is usually modern, fireproof, and professional. They have closets, baths, carpets, plenty of hot water, easy chairs, dressers and dressing tables, reading lamps, telephone service, modern heating, and, frequently, air conditioning. Many motels, particularly in the Southwest, have swimming pools, good dining rooms, bars, room service, and every hotel facility except a mid-city location.

Millions of dollars are invested in today's ultramodern motel developments, so you can't expect rock-bottom bargains. But at $5 to $8 a night for a double room, motels are still a good buy.

Much-criticized United States customs officials are really extremely accommodating—if you follow instructions.

Too many tourists return home with a chip on their shoulder, and even try to sneak something past the eagle-eyed inspectors. It has been done but it isn't easy, and chances are those who try it will wind up in Leavenworth—where they belong.

The whole business is simplified in a little folder entitled "United States Customs Hints," distributed free of charge by the Bureau of Customs, United States Treasury Department, Washington, D.C.

Europe's summer tourists miss the glamour of the social and cultural seasons. Most of the capitals end their summer hiatus in September, and from then on opera, theatre, ballet, concerts, and social affairs continue at full tilt until carnival time in February.

Vienna, really gay again, fits into this picture. A dollar still buys a full-course dinner in Vienna, and opera seats are $2.

Devaluation of the Greek drachma creates another bargain stop for the tourist. A double room with bath in a first-class Athens hotel is about $5 a night; a dinner including hors d'oeuvres, steak, salad, cheese, fruit, and wine, about $2.

This is a far cry from the jerry-built huts that used to greet weary motorists.

THIS MONTH'S BUDGET TRIP

September is one of the year's best months to tour the Middle Atlantic seashore resorts, from New Jersey to Virginia.

I have outlined an 855-mile motor tour, which can be made in as little as four days or can easily be stretched to an interesting week or two weeks. There is plenty to see and do all along this route. When taken as a four-day tour, the complete cost for two people is about $108.

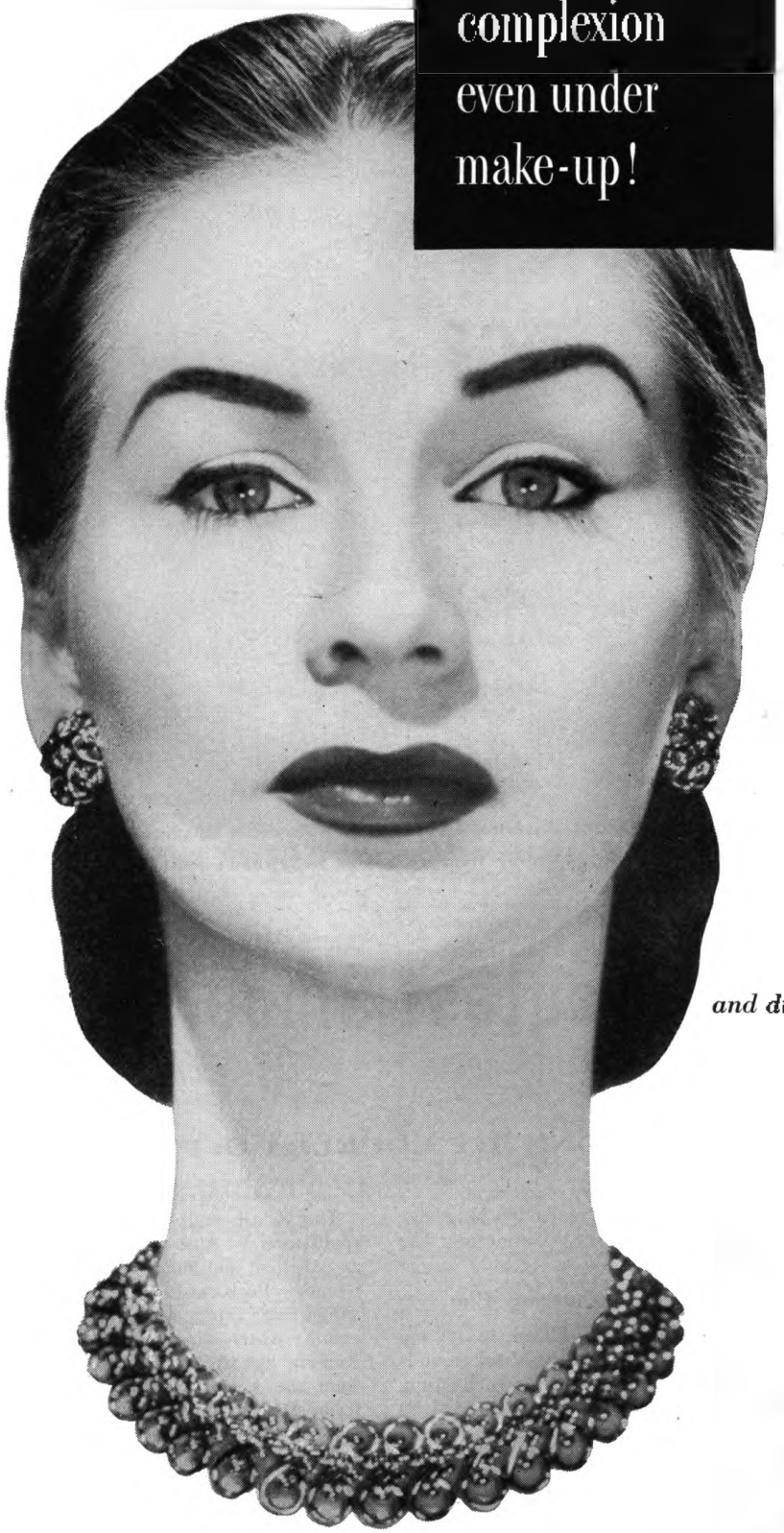
The route from New York is via the New Jersey Turnpike to the Bordentown-Trenton-U.S. 206 Interchange, where you turn left on U.S. 206 and follow that route and U.S. 30 to Atlantic City, New Jersey. The Miss America pageant begins in Atlantic City on the day after Labor Day, and the sea-food restaurants, boardwalk hotels, and amusement piers are open through September.

The main route of our budget trip tour is U.S. 40 from Atlantic City and over the Delaware Memorial Bridge to U.S. 13 and south on the latter route through the scenic Del-Mar-Va Peninsula to Kiptopeke Beach and the ferry to Little Creek, Virginia. Crossing time for the pleasant sail is an hour and twenty-five minutes.

U.S. 60 leads you directly to Virginia Beach. More than a million dollars was spent on enlarging and improving Virginia Beach last spring, and it is now one of the finest along the Atlantic Coast.

The return route to New York is through Norfolk to historic Williamsburg, Virginia, the restored Colonial capital, and then to Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Delaware Memorial Bridge, and the New Jersey Turnpike. THE END

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 normally use cosmetics, when you wash beforehand with Dial Soap, the fresh clearness of your skin is continuously protected *underneath* your make-up.

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works in a new way! Until Dial came along, there was no way of removing these bacteria safely and effectively. These pictures taken through a microscope are proof.

No. 1 shows thousands of bacteria left on the skin after washing with ordinary soap. (So when you put on make-up, they are free to cause trouble underneath.) No. 2 shows how daily washing with Dial removes up to 95% of these blemish-spreading bacteria.

and dial is so mild, you'd never guess it gives such benefits. Doctors recommend it for adolescents. With Dial, *your* skin becomes cleaner and clearer than with any other type of soap. Let Dial protect your complexion all day—even under make-up.

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P. S. For cleaner, more beautiful hair try *New* DIAL SHAMPOO, in a handy, unbreakable squeeze bottle. Contains AT-7.

DIAL DAVE GARROWAY—NBC, Weekdays

WITH HER FIRST STARRING ROLE, in Paramount's "Roman Holiday," Audrey Hepburn begins Hollywood's most promising career.

Audrey Hepburn—Greatest Since Garbo?

COSMOPOLITAN MOVIE CITATIONS BY LOUELLA O. PARSONS

The story of how Audrey Hepburn and "Roman Holiday" got together makes me feel sorry for all the ambitious girls who daily arrive in Hollywood armed with nothing but a pretty face, a curvaceous figure, and somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty dollars in cash. Plus hope.

"Roman Holiday" is the Best Movie Production of the Month. In some ways, it is the best production of many a long year. And in it, Audrey Hepburn, tall, blue-eyed, and twenty-four, becomes the kind of star I haven't seen since the young Bergman, or, much too long ago, the twenty-two-year-old Garbo in "The Torrent."

An Utterly Enchanting Film

"Roman Holiday," filmed in its entirety against the fabulous backgrounds of the Eternal City, is utterly enchanting. It is endearing, sensitive, romantic. It is also adult, and yet its plot couldn't be simpler. A young princess meets an American newspaperman, and in the course of twenty-four stolen, idyllic hours, they fall in love.

That's all—and yet you are held spellbound by Audrey Hepburn. She has an excellent and handsome co-star called Gregory Peck, an excellent and funny supporting actor called Eddie Albert, and a superb director, William Wyler. And she has Rome itself backing her up, from the Forum to the Spanish steps, from the magnificent churches to the more magnificent palazzi. There are scenes on the Tiber—notably a hilarious dance sequence on a Tiber river barge crowded with five hundred Italian working people—and by way of contrast,

Allied underground agent, Broadway star, ballerina—

these are three of the amazing roles she has played in life

there is a fabulous ball, photographed inside the famed eighteenth-century Palazza Brancaccio, with forty-four titled ladies, ranging from mere baronesses to true princesses, as extras.

Miss Hepburn, with the utmost delicacy, dominates it all.

A Hollywood Miracle Unfolds

And thereby hangs a tale of how Hollywood works such miracles.

You see, Paramount has owned the story of "Roman Holiday" for more than five years, and all during that time, it has been seeking a girl to play its princess. Three years ago, in London, a sharp-eyed talent scout saw Miss Hepburn.

He had to be extremely sharp-eyed, because up until then, she had played only the tiniest bits in films. She was a ballerina, though not a particularly outstanding one. She appeared in "Sauce Piquant," a musical comedy, on the London stage in 1949. She whisked through a brief scene in "The Lavender Hill Mob." She danced, practically invisibly, in the London version of "High Button Shoes." Then she turned up in something called "Monte Carlo Baby," which the famed French writer, Colette, happened to see. Colette, aware that her story "Gigi" was to be staged in New York, sent for Miss Hepburn—and apparently that's all you have to do to be mesmerized. Colette immediately cabled Anita Loos, who was doing the stage version of "Gigi," that only Miss Hepburn could play Gigi. And play her she did, to a resounding success on Broadway and later, after making "Roman Holiday," on the road.

But Hollywood, to its credit, had signed Miss Hepburn even before this. The original talent scout, a Paramount employee, had cabled William Wyler. Wyler went abroad, took one look, and "Roman Holiday" was activated. Paramount felt very smart that their discovery was receiving excellent dramatic experience at someone else's expense, while they went ahead with their script, casting, and doing preliminary work for filming. They had a budding star, constantly available for screen tests, make-up tests, clothes tests, and every type of audience test—and all at virtually no cost to them. Thirty-six hours after "Gigi" closed on Broadway, Audrey Hepburn stepped before the camera in Italy for the first scene of "Roman Holiday."

What does Audrey Hepburn possess that the ambitious, pretty little girls don't possess?

Background, for one thing. She is a child of the war, born to an Irish father and a Dutch mother in Brussels. She was not quite ten when Hitler overran Belgium, and she was hastily sent to England. But when the German hordes swept on, she crept back. She went into Arnhem, Holland, with her parents, where she worked in the Dutch underground. She was so young that no one suspected her of conveying important messages while she danced.

When peace was declared, she went to Amsterdam to study ballet, and later returned to England and resumed her schooling there. But her real loves were ballet and music. She is a much better than average pianist. But she got started as a ballerina by sheer accident one day in London.

She had gone along with a girlfriend to an audition for "High Button Shoes." Three thousand young dancers had turned up. Ten of them were chosen. Audrey was one of those ten. Her friend wasn't.

She has this kind of instantaneous impact on everyone who meets her. Last summer she was on Paramount's Hollywood lot for merely one day. Cecil B. de Mille saw her, as she walked between sets. He didn't know who she was, but he stopped, sighed, and said, "I wish I were a young man again."

In "Roman Holiday," her personality is so subtly beguiling that she will make everyone feel young again—or if you are really young, she will set you dreaming.

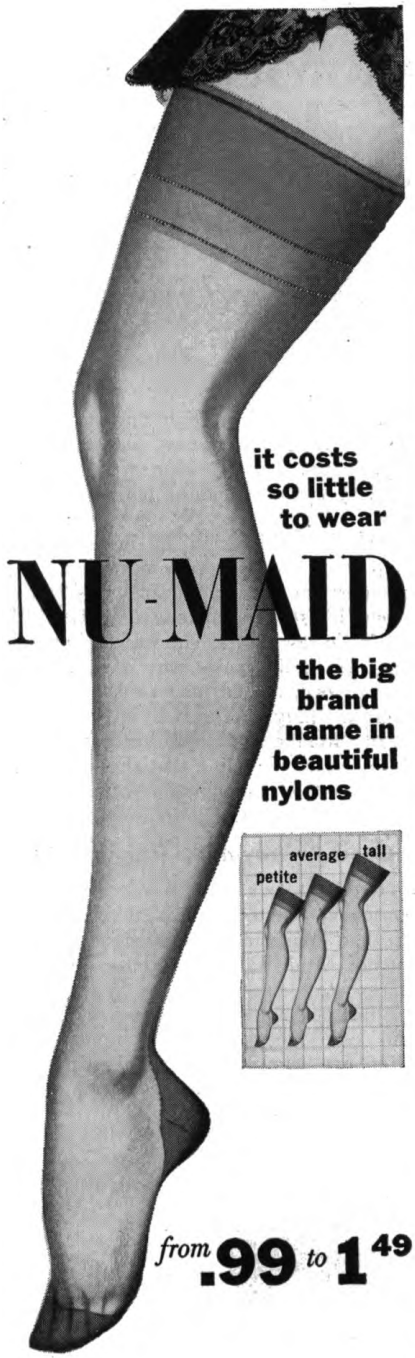
Good Portrayal by Gregory Peck

Gregory Peck gives a very good performance—better, I think, than anything he has done since "Gentleman's Agreement." And William Wyler's direction, I repeat, is superb.

But the film, with its especially beautiful and right ending, belongs to Miss Hepburn. She is truly magnificent.

(continued)

BEST PRODUCTION—"Roman Holiday" features the fabulous Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck in his best performance since "Gentleman's Agreement."



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Cosmopolitan Movie Citations for September

BEST MUSICAL—M-G-M's "The Band Wagon" overcomes the shaky support of an arthritic and weak backstage "the-show-must-go-on" plot by leaning heavily on the able legs of Cyd Charisse and Fred Astaire. Their memorable ballet a la Mickey Spillane is worth the cost of admission, but the dry humor and other talents of Oscar Levant coupled with the sprightly music of Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz go a long way toward awarding an extra entertainment bones.

BEST ADVENTURE—Marilyn Maxwell and Jeff Chandler co-star in the latest of the "Easterns," which are proving to be as exciting as Westerns. In Universal's "East of Sumatra," Jeff Chandler has to hack his way through a jungle to a tin mine, with the aid of a strong back, the beauteous Miss Maxwell, and a native chief's fiancée. With Chandler at his rugged best and Marilyn at her prettiest, the whole picture has what it takes for a very pleasant evening's diversion.

BEST DRAMA—Errol Flynn performs at his swashbuckling best in "The Master of Ballantrae." Most of the credit for the excellence of this Warner Bros. film should go to Technicolor and its script writer, an old Hollywood hand, one Robert Louis Stevenson, who will be remembered for his "Treasure Island." Filmed partially in Scotland, it skillfully blends beautiful scenery, fine color, Errol Flynn's swordplay, and romantic intrigue. This one is lots of good fun.

THE END

Wide World

WHEN THEY WERE CAUGHT near Dubuque, Iowa, Fred McManus, eighteen, and his girl, Diane Weggeland, sixteen, hugged and kissed. Diane doffed her glasses and posed for this "glamour shot." Neither of them seemed concerned by the killings.

The Boy Next Door

In sixty hours this model boy killed five people. Was it murder or madness? A top-ranking reporter helps explain a tragic mystery

EDITOR'S NOTE:

On Friday afternoon, March 27, 1953, in Pittsford, near Rochester, New York, an eighteen-year-old Marine on a ten-day leave hitched a ride in a 1953 Plymouth hard-top convertible. He shot and killed the driver with a .45 automatic; took his money, watch, and car; drove back to Rochester; picked up a sixteen-year-old girl who was waiting for him; and headed west for California. Within sixty hours after his first killing, the young Marine had murdered four more people.

Fred Eugene McManus willingly typed out a statement admitting his guilt, explaining that he expected to go to the electric chair and wanted "to get it over with."

The young man came from a better-than-average middle-class family. Reports of those who knew him were common in tone—"A fine, gentlemanly boy."

To dig through the mystery that hangs over this shocking tragedy, COSMOPOLITAN *assigned Croswell Bowen, a distinguished reporter and author of the book* They Went Wrong, *to be published by McGraw-Hill. Bowen, who has made an extended study of why people commit antisocial acts, spent long hours talking to Fred McManus in his Canandaigua, New York, cell, and to his parents, the girl, his neighbors, and all the participants in the case. His report follows.* THE EDITORS

BY CROSWELL BOWEN

Fred Eugene McManus was born at ten minutes past two on Tuesday morning, August 28, 1934, at the Maternity Clinic of the Methodist Episcopal Hospital in Brooklyn, New York, after sixty hours and ten minutes of unusually difficult labor. His mother, Charlotte Lodewick McManus, aged twenty-three, was giving birth to her first child. The young intern in charge had to resort to obstetrical instruments. Mrs. McManus remembers that when she was first shown her newly born son, "I thought they had blinded him, because he was so bloody around his eyes and face." She also noticed a V-shaped gash in his forehead. He still has the scar.

From the start, Fred's arrival intensified the unhappy complications of his mother's life. A Louisville girl, she had met her husband, Mose McManus, in the gracious South when she was fourteen, and married him in a New York Methodist church eight years later. She didn't like living in Brooklyn, was homesick and repelled by her neighbors. All her life she had felt lonely, inferior, and unattractive. Marriage didn't reduce her insecurity. Nor did the arrival of her first-born. "I just never seemed to be able to do anything with him," Mrs. McManus recalls. "He cried all the time and used to wake up in the middle of the night screaming his little head off, as if he'd been having terrible nightmares. My husband didn't think I was doing the right things. I was awful dumb about babies then. Maybe I didn't love Fred enough or something. I've had two girls since, and I know there are some babies you feel like loving and some you don't. Fred was one of those babies it's awful hard to be affectionate with."

In his second year, Fred's legs became thin, gnarled, and bowed. "He was as brown as a berry, and I was so dumb that I thought a child who'd been in the sun couldn't possibly have anything wrong with him." A doctor told her Fred had rickets. In a year he was cured.

But he was still a problem baby. The screaming continued. He hardly ever ate. The nightmares got worse. In addition, he began to develop severe temper tantrums. It was necessary for him to wear diapers for more than a year after the usual two-year period. He acquired an intense attachment for a giant woolly panda given him when he was six months old. Children usually outgrow such dependence by the time they are four or five years old. Fred was still hugging his panda at seven. Finally his mother threw it away because it was so worn and dirty. For several weeks after, he screamed and threw tantrums over its absence. He sucked his thumb savagely.

Charlotte McManus became increasingly distraught about her son. "I couldn't seem to get anywhere talking to my husband about it," she says. "We always had trouble talking things over."

Mose recently explained, "I knew she had problems, but I felt things would work out. Besides, I've always had trouble showing what I feel."

Lonesome and unhappy, Charlotte McManus changed apartments in Brooklyn five times during the first four years of Fred's life.

Fred got worse. He began tearing off pieces of his fingernails and toenails, and pulling out strands of hair, causing an ever-growing bald spot on the side of his head. To break him of the latter habit, his mother had his head shaved. The crying, the nightmares, the temper tantrums, grew more intense.

In the winter of 1939, Charlotte McManus decided her five-year-old was just plain bad. Playing in the halls of the apartment house in which they lived, Fred began to hurt other children his own age or younger. He would strike them or bend their fingers. One of the mothers descended upon Charlotte McManus, yelling and shouting what she thought of bad boys and of mothers who could not manage their children. She screamed all this before Fred. Mrs. McManus received the outburst meekly, then scolded her son for his misbehavior.

At Four, He Set Fires

At the age of four, Fred had started to set fires. Later, he set fires all over the apartment, once in the basement. Again a neighbor complained. Mrs. McManus, now really alarmed, strongly upbraided the child. She took up the matter with her husband, who responded by giving the boy a good whacking. His wife tried another tack. She had heard that a child can be cured by not frustrating it. She handed Fred a full box of kitchen matches and sat beside him while he lighted them, one by one. A woman friend suggested that she take Fred to a pediatrician. He told her Fred needed psychiatry. Fred was examined at a psychiatric clinic in Brooklyn in March, 1939, and was found to have a superior intelligence and to be in good physical condition. The psychiatrist said Fred was "a very emotionally disturbed child—so much so, that I think he ought to have a month's detailed observation in the children's ward at Bellevue Hospital in New York." The doctor also suggested the parents go to the clinic at regular intervals for psychotherapy with the boy.

Neither the McManuses nor Fred ever returned. Neither parent recalls the incident clearly. Both vaguely associated mental illnesses with lunatics and insane asylums, which, to them, spelled disgrace and despair. Unconsciously, they may have blacked out the unhappy incident. The record of the visit, however, remains intact in the clinic files.

Partly because of their trouble with Fred, the McManuses found little happiness in each other. Also, there were hours of quarreling over money. Finally, they agreed upon a separation. Fred and his mother left for Louisville in June, 1939. They lived in her family's house.

Troubles for the McManuses

McManus remarked recently, "Those times were hard. I guess I didn't show Charlotte the sympathy I felt. I worried a lot about my job in the beverage company. But I knew we'd all be together again, I believed, and still believe the Good Lord takes care of everything."

Despite the fact that he now had his mother all to himself, Fred remained disturbed. Neighborhood children seemed to sense the boy's misery and tormented him further. Once a youngster hurled a rock which struck Fred on the head. After that, he chose to play alone. On another occasion, he climbed out on the limb of a tree and jumped about fifteen feet to the ground, breaking some of the small bones in his feet. He later fell out of a swing, severely gashing his lip. Another time he almost drowned. "He always seemed to be wrapped in bandages," his mother recalled. "Sometimes I thought he liked to be hurt." Depressed children, it is believed, have an unconscious drive toward self-destruction.

But matters did begin to improve. Charlotte's health got better. Fred, too, seemed happier. She sometimes noticed how he responded to the affection of men, and she remarked to her mother, "I think it would be a shame if Fred were deprived of his father."

In June, 1940, Charlotte McManus came north again with their son, to rejoin her husband. By December, 1940, they were installed in a six-room house in Jamaica, Queens, in New York City. One decision connected with making a new life for themselves was to have another baby; and on May 16, 1941, their second child, a girl, was born.

On the surface, Fred appeared to be taking the new competition in the family—his sister—with good grace.

Mr. and Mrs. McManus, meanwhile, were somewhat happier in their marriage. But there was one unhappy note: their neighbors. One family kept them awake at night by their screaming. On the other side was an old, childless couple who were extremely hostile to eight-year-old Fred. The old man menacingly waved a broom at all approaching children, especially Fred.

With the birth of their third child, a girl, on April 18, 1945, the McManuses felt they were becoming a happy family.

In the fall of 1945, when Fred was

eleven, Mose McManus solved the neighbor problem by buying a house farther out on Long Island in a pleasant section of Valley Stream called Green Acres. Their new home was a $25,000 three-bedroom Colonial house.

His I.Q. Was Above Average

Fred entered the sixth grade of the Valley Stream school three months after the term began. According to the Otis Test, his intelligence quotient was 124, which is above average. Records of his physical condition from 1946 through 1952, when he was graduated from high school, show he was in good health throughout, although it was noted that he was a "nail-biter." During those seven years, he grew from five-feet-one to six-feet-one-and-a-half; from ninety-eight to one hundred and seventy-eight pounds.

In Fred's twelfth year, his mother recalled, "Everything seemed to happen." At Hallowe'en, he was overheard boasting to some boys that he'd cut the porch screens on a neighbor's house. The owner irately demanded payment of forty dollars. Mose McManus believed the man and whipped Fred. Later in the fall, a neighbor saw Fred catch a rabbit and throw it into a pond. A policeman called at the McManus house. Although Fred explained he "just wanted to see if the rabbit could swim and it swam ashore," his father whipped him again. Fred brooded about the whippings, and a few days later "ran away" on his bicycle, not returning until two in the morning. His father, who waited up, did not whip him this time but said simply, "Son, I'm glad you're home. Let's go to bed."

It was the age of puberty. Fred's entry into it was violent. One of his teachers noted in his record, "He emphasized that his mother spends most of her time with the youngest daughter, and he feels, I think, that she has little time for him."

His father meant one thing to him—authority. "The only time my father ever talked to me," Fred said recently, "was when he was gonna whip me. I don't think he ever loved me, because he's like me—he's never felt love."

Unable to establish a good relationship with either his mother or his father, Fred also failed in establishing relaxed, friendly relations with girls and boys his own age. "I found out," Fred said recently, "what life was really like, and I was disappointed. I ignored everybody, and they ignored me."

One gate was left open to Fred McManus—the world of dreams and fantasies. He shut himself up in his room whenever he came home. Alone, he wandered in the woods and swamps around Valley Stream. One day a neighbor happened to see Fred shoot a bird with his BB gun. He picked it up and stroked its feathers as it trembled in his hands. Then, suddenly, he wrung its neck and tossed it away. He shot woodchucks, crows, sparrows, and rabbits. He also kept in his room at various times a turtle, a toad, a woodchuck, baby birds, and tropical fish. The animals served him well: when he felt hostile, he killed them; when he needed love, he petted them. Humans didn't offer as much.

"Any chance I could, I'd just get up and walk in the woods and let my imagination wander. I always went where everything was a surprise, where there was danger, and quicksand, and snakes. I was happiest in swamps, everything quiet, like going into another world, nobody to yell at you, nobody to tell you what's wrong with you."

Asked what his imagination wandered to in the swamps, he said, "Anything from an invasion from another country to an invasion from Mars. Then, at other times, I'd be on my own up in the hills. I'd pick myself plenty of ammunition and only just come down to civilization to raid the countryside."

He said that in his room, where he would seclude himself, "I used to daydream. I could make things happen in dreams the way I wanted them to." These daydreams were often an extension of the comic books and paperbound books he kept in his room. Most of them were violent and sensational. Out of forty-five of his books I checked, there were thirteen sex novels, ten war books, eight books about gangsters and crime, eight Westerns, and six on historical adventure. One well-thumbed novel, *The Hunter*, was subtitled, *A Novel of a Man Who Wanted to Live Like a Savage.*

World War II made a deep impression on Fred. He liked *The Naked and the Dead* because of the way it described suffering, "wonderful and horrible."

Facing the reality of everyday relations with his family and schoolmates confused and frightened him. "I used to run all the way home from school, I'd get feeling so terrible," he said recently. "Then, when I was home, I'd still feel lousy and run all the way to the movies, and then run home again. In the movies, especially war movies, I could forget how unhappy I was."

Meanwhile, in high school, Fred did just enough studying to get by. His record notes that he was tardy a good deal and often failed to show up for examinations. He elected to take general and shop courses, but his family insisted he change to courses preparing him for college.

He Was Fascinated by Rifles

One of his few friends in high school introduced him to the world of pistols and rifles. With money he earned working for a local newspaper and some help from his father, Fred bought a Remington .222 rifle, a Higgins .22 rifle, a Stevens 20-gauge double-barreled shotgun, and an air pellet pistol. When he was sixteen, he joined the local Junior Rifle Club, and later won several marksmanship medals. At seventeen, he obtained his first hunting license. He not only spent a good deal of time taking his firearms apart and cleaning them but, with the help of books and magazines, tried to master the history and

I.N.P.

"I WANT TO MAKE you-guys' jobs easy," McManus told police. He dictated a detailed confession, then read the entire statement before TV cameras.

lore of rifles. In his high-school public-speaking class, he delivered a long, well-researched lecture on American rifles and their history, and received many compliments on it. Because both his parents came from families who loved hunting and guns, neither of them thought his interest was unhealthy.

With several boys, Fred was arrested one afternoon for hunting without a license. His father took him into the basement and whipped him with a clothesline. He learned later that the other boys had not been whipped. This added to his outrage, not only against his father but against all authority.

One Act Won His Mother's Praise

In his last year of high school, a friend who was not very strong asked Fred to help him keep order at a dance in the basement of the Methodist church. One of the rules was that there was to be no smoking. Fred took the job very seriously, and when he saw a somewhat husky boy smoking near the entrance, he shoved him through the door and slammed it after him. The boy, who had had some boxing experience, asked Fred to step outside. Fred complied, and was so mercilessly beaten that he had to be taken home in a car. His mother came up to his room and put her arms around him saying, "Son, we're proud of you." Fred was crying not at the beating but at his failure. "Mother," he said, "this is the only time I've known you to approve of anything I've done." That was the only time his parents remember his ever crying after he was six.

During his last three years in high school, the one thing in which Fred sustained a deep interest was a white mouse he kept in his room. His mother remembers, "He used to sit up there in his room by the hour, just talking to that little mouse." This inordinate attachment to a mouse or a bird is often characteristic of personalities that have blank areas of emotions for human beings. Fred was only partially able to explain to me what "Kiddo," as he called the mouse, meant to him: "He was the one thing that was all my own. I bought him, and he liked only me. He wouldn't let any other members of the family touch him. If they tried, he'd bite or scratch them. I felt he understood me when I talked to him."

Fred's sex drive, meanwhile, emerged through the usual stages. He was discovered masturbating by his mother. "Don't misuse yourself, Fred," she said warningly. "Get your mind on something healthy." The idea that masturbation weakened him grew in his mind and later, when he had casual sex relations with girls, he became convinced he was being drained of his strength. "One girl," he said recently, "spoiled my track season. She took away my energy."

Track was the one sport he engaged in successfully, and one year he won

the 880-yard dash. He chose track "because you don't have to bother with anybody else. You're on your own."

Next he became convinced that he was sterile, because a girl he had relations with did not become pregnant although they had taken no precautions. He rationalized this ostensible sterility by recalling that when he'd tried out for the football and baseball teams, he had been "injured both times in the groin." His records reveal no such injuries.

Disturbed Relations with Girls

His relations with girls confused him. "One girl was very conventional," Fred said recently, "and would swear she wasn't ever going to pet again. You see, she believed in rules and regulations and I didn't. We'd get out on the beach, and she'd start right in again. I'd hate her as soon as she'd give in to me and didn't want any part of her," he says. "I didn't really like sex. I didn't feel any ecstasy. It was not like it said in the books."

In the spring of 1952, as the time approached for his graduation from high school, he remembers nightmares involving war and killing, in which, with a gun in his hand, he fought "against terrible odds." One dream kept recurring. He was about to ascend a staircase and at the landing, looking down at him, was a black, monsterlike figure, vaguely resembling his dark-haired, dark-complexioned father. He tried to go up the stairs, but he couldn't.

In his waking hours, he seemed oddly confused. When he was given a college-entrance application form, he signed his name almost illegibly, "Fred Manus." On another form, he described the type of work he expected to do as "demolition." Asked to name his future course of study, he wrote, "Pyhscalegy."

He determined to enlist in the Marines, hoping to fulfill his other self, the secret self of his fantasies.

His disappointed parents bought a car for him and told him he could have it if he went to college. Fred drove the car a few times but refused to accept the inducement. He applied for entrance into the Marine Corps, then began packing to leave before graduation for Parris Island and boot training.

His only feeling about this first real departure from home was his anxiety about what he would do with Kiddo, his beloved mouse. "I knew my mother wouldn't take care of him, and none of the rest of the family wanted him," Fred commented recently. His mother remembers he spent hours on the phone calling his friends and asking them to take the mouse. The morning before he was to leave, he came downstairs for breakfast with a terrible look of desperation on his face. "I flushed Kiddo down the toilet," he blurted. Fred denied to me that he killed Kiddo. Lowering his voice and nervously averting his glance (which he is apt to do when he is being untruthful), he told me, "I just found my mouse dead in his cage when I got up that morning. I didn't know any other way to dispose of him than flushing him down the john." Even when I later broached the subject indirectly, he insisted he had not killed Kiddo. He told me that he "didn't think there was any difference between killing a human being and an animal."

I. N. P.

THE FIRST TIME HIS FATHER, a Long Island brewery executive, came to the jail, he made a cutting remark about the girl, and the boy flew into a violent rage.

Mr. and Mrs. McManus received a certificate stating that their son at boot camp had "successfully passed the mental, moral, and physical examinations" of the Marine Corps. "I can't let my past life interfere," he wrote in a diary he began to keep in the Marines. "I wonder if it is possible to change your personality." His first step in changing his personality was to change his name. He systematically informed his fellow Marines that he was to be known as Gene.

He wrote a girl he had "learned to kill without malice." To another, he ended a long letter with the casual comment, "We have the same old courses, how to kill a man in five different ways and what to do with a bayonet in your stomach until the doctor comes. You know, stuff just to pass the time away."

The Marine indoctrination, with its intense training in fighting and killing, bridged an escape from his life as Fred to his fantasy self, Gene.

In the PX at Camp Lejeune, where he was stationed after boot training, he purchased a .45 Colt Automatic with a supply of ammunition. With another Marine, who also had a .45, he would go into the nearby woods and practice shooting. Then they would unload their pistols and practice drawing and shooting at each other, hour after hour. "We imagined," Fred said, "we were leading revolutions in South America, or taking part in some kind of military operation."

Fred did not go into town with his fellow Marines to drink and pick up girls. Instead, he went off with his .45 and a shotgun into the tropiclike swamps near Camp Lejeune. "I liked them better than Long Island, because they were kinda dark and dangerous. You had to be careful where you stepped. Sometimes I'd shoot a snake. I always went where everything was a surprise."

He Immediately Liked Diane

Fred hitched home on leave several times during the fall and winter of 1952, carrying his Colt .45 "for safety." His parents were pleased with him and told him how nice he looked in his uniform. Over Thanksgiving, he went with his family to visit his mother's sister, Grace Simpson, and her family in upstate New York. Fred had spent many summers at Marion at his aunt's farmhouse. On the Friday after Thanksgiving, he went with his mother to the home of her friend, Mr. Merritt Means, who lived at a nearby farm. There he met one of Mrs. Means's

foster children, Diane Weggeland, who had just turned sixteen. They seemed to like each other, and Fred asked her to accompany him that night to a basketball game. Pleased, Mrs. McManus lent him the family car. They arrived at the gymnasium to learn that the game had been canceled, so they drove down a country road and parked. They talked until nearly three in the morning. Their compatibility was not sexual. "All we did was sit and talk about psychology," Fred said recently. "I figured out she was unhappy and I could use psychology to help her solve her problems, and in solving her problems, I would be solving mine. Diane had been in seven or eight foster homes. Both of us were pretty sick of society. We didn't like rules or regulations, and were sick of being pushed around." Diane gave him a feeling he had perhaps never experienced before, that of being completely approved of.

Diane Liked His Good Manners

"I liked Gene," Diane told me recently. "He wasn't rough like the other boys. He was so good-looking and had manners. He didn't drink and gamble and go racing around in jalopies like the other boys. We agreed on music [popular], dancing [slow numbers]. I just liked the way he walked and talked, the way he was so polite, the way he opened doors. He gave me the love no one else gave me. At least, he showed it to me. I didn't know what Gene meant by psychology. I guess psychology is what makes things tick, shows you how to get along in foster homes. I couldn't adjust myself. I guess I was too headstrong."

Physically, Diane Weggeland is a slim, wiry girl of about five-feet-six with blue eyes and medium-blonde hair with golden highlights. Her features and breasts are small, her lips slightly pouty. She wears horn-rimmed glasses which, quite falsely, give the impression that she is studious. Her mother and father separated when she was a year old, and during her early years, she was cared for by her grandmother on Long Island. When her father married again. Diane came to live with him. She quarreled with her stepmother, she told me, because she was jealous of the attention she gave her own children, and although she "loved my father more than anything in the world," she ran away from home. A children's-court judge decided she would do better in a foster home. The Meanses' was her fifth foster home. At one of them, she had made a futile attempt at suicide by swallowing a bottle of aspirins. A line in one of the social-service records on her states, "Deep psychoneurotic disturbance, a long history of rejection by parents and foster homes." (She was later sentenced to from one to three years as a wayward minor. She is now at Westfield State Farms, a reformatory at Bedford Hills, New York.)

Diane and Fred began exchanging

letters soon after he returned to Camp Lejeune. Diane had a good deal to write about, as she was asked shortly after to leave the Meanses' home and then another foster home, before she settled down in a foster home at Sommerville, near Rochester. Fred wrote her long letters of advice. He confided to her his resentment toward the Marines. "Going into combat is what I wanted most," he wrote, "so they have put me to work doing what I'm worst at—office work."

He Had to "Straighten Out" Diane

Late on March twentieth, McManus arrived home on a two-week leave and announced quietly and firmly to his parents that he was going to Rochester, "because I have to straighten Diane out." The McManuses tried to discourage him. They refused to finance the trip or lend him the family car.

Early Sunday morning, Fred's mother dropped him at the western end of the George Washington Bridge. He hitched rides, and arrived at Diane's home late Sunday night. She went into Rochester with him, and he checked into the YMCA. Diane had quit high school and was now working as a cashier in a Rochester store. Fred met her each afternoon after work, rode home with her on the bus, and waited while she changed to go out. They went to ice-cream parlors, listened to the jukebox, and talked about how unhappy they had been all their lives and how they wished they could "go where there was nobody to tell us what to do and what not to do."

Thursday evening, their last before he was to begin his journey back to camp, Diane told him she was in love with him.

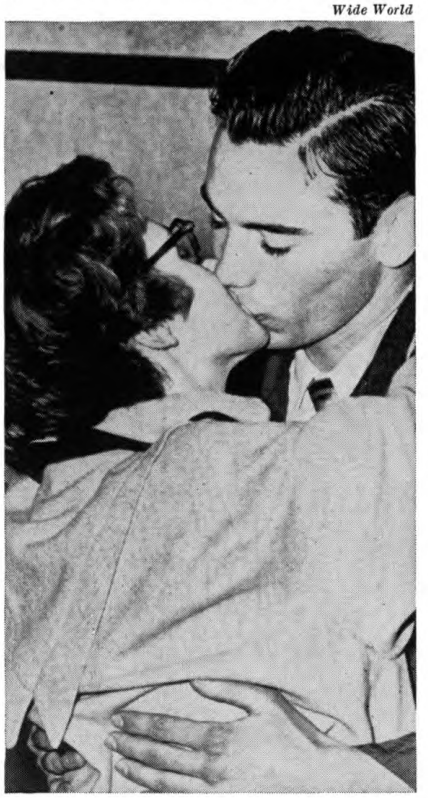
That night, they missed the bus and did not arrive at Diane's foster home until after one. Her foster mother was waiting up, and she told Diane she was going to report the matter to the social worker. The next morning at seven, before Fred got up to begin hitchhiking back to camp, Diane telephoned him. They had a Coke at a drugstore, and Diane poured out her distress at her foster mother's threat. At times, she became hysterical and incoherent. Then she would cry and say she "could not stand being kicked around anymore." Couldn't Fred take her away with him? Maybe they could go to California together. When she asked him how they'd get there (he had about seven dollars in his pocket), he said he knew a way.

Diane, who has a somewhat more practical turn of mind, said she wanted to get married but was worried about whether she would need parental consent, since she was under eighteen. They searched the "World Almanac" and found they could marry in Minnesota.

They bought a fifty-cent wedding ring. They also bought, at Diane's insistence, a fifty-cent rosary for Fred to wear. "I don't believe in God, but I felt that because Fred believed in God, a cross would protect him," she told me. (Fred denies that he believes in God, in retribution, or in a hereafter.) "I figured that, since he was going out to steal a car and had a gun, he'd be in danger and needed protection." At noon, they checked into an inexpensive hotel.

In his Marine uniform, Fred took a bus to the outskirts of Rochester and thumbed two rides, but both drivers "had wives and kids and needed their cars." The third car was driven by William Braverman, a Hobart College student on his way to a college dance. Fred sized him up as a "stuck-up college guy with a brand-new car." He took his pistol out and told Braverman to stop the car and get out. Braverman complied and then readily handed over his wallet containing eight dollars and his wrist watch. As Fred put the car in gear, Braverman started to get back into the car, saying, "Not my new car." Fred pointed his gun and fired in virtually one motion. The shot killed Braverman instantly. A shudder immediately went through Fred. "I couldn't think, and my hands were trembling so I couldn't control them," he said recently. He put Braverman's body in the trunk of the car and drove several hours trying to collect himself sufficiently to get rid of the dead student.

Wide World



OBLIVIOUS OF ALL around them, they kept embracing passionately until separated.

After partly burying the body in a stone quarry, he returned to the hotel at about five, and "Diane started yelling at me the minute I got in the room. 'Don't you ever dare come into a room without kissing me!' she said. So I kissed her." In a few minutes, they were driving west to California. They drove all night, then stopped at Toledo, where Fred pawned Braverman's wrist watch. He received seven dollars and an inexpensive watch in exchange. The rest of Saturday they drove through Indiana and into Illinois. "I used my last twenty cents to cross the Mississippi," Fred said. Saturday night, they checked into a motel twenty-five miles north of Chicago and went out to dinner.

Before returning to the motel, Fred stopped the car at a combination garage-store-home on the highway. While Diane stayed in the car, he walked into the living room, where a man and his wife were watching television. Pointing his .45 at the man, he called out, "This is a stick-up." The man came toward him saying, "Now look here," as if he were a naughty little boy. Fred fired, again killing him instantly. Then the woman screamed.

Fred fired and killed her. "I spun rubber getting away from there," he says. "I never could stand screaming. I was white as a sheet, and my hands were trembling so much I could hardly steer." That night Diane took him in her arms and tried to comfort him.

Two weeks later, in jail, she was to weep bitterly when she realized that she was not to bear Fred's child. "All Diane really wanted," Fred said, "was to get married, settle down, and have kids of her own. We both figured we could do a better job than our parents had done."

Sunday morning they got up early and drove to Dubuque, Iowa, where Fred decided to revert to hitchhiking to get money. While Diane remained parked by the side of the road, Fred put on his Marine uniform, which he had taken off before leaving Rochester, hitched a ride with a Dubuque couple. He took their car and twelve dollars, then drove back, abandoned the car, and picked up Diane. They checked out of the motel, and the bill was seven dollars. "We were living from hand to mouth," Fred said. They drove back through Iowa and into Minnesota, where, in the evening Fred parked the car, at Diane's insistence, and went to sleep in the back seat.

Two Murders for Forty Dollars

He woke up at seven Monday morning, and while Diane slept, went into a roadside restaurant and tried to release the drawer of the cash register. A waitress came running toward him, screaming. He fired, and killed her. From the kitchen came another woman, pointing a knife at him and yelling, "Stick 'em up!" He shot

over his shoulder and killed her instantly. He remained long enough to get the cash drawer open and take forty dollars.

They drove to Minneapolis, checked into a hotel, and went to the city hall to get married. They were told they'd have to wait three days for tests.

The next morning Fred headed his car south, "because I figured they'd be looking for me to head west." They picked up a partly intoxicated hitchhiker. A few miles from Dubuque, they heard the mounting crescendo of a police siren. Fred stopped the car and waited. The officer did not come to their car at once, but quite sensibly radioed for help. Oblivious of the hitchhiker, Fred and Diane embraced again and again. An exultation came over Fred. They were still kissing and hugging about ten minutes later when a uniformed police officer, pointing a rifle at them, told them to "Get out of the car with your hands up!"

He Was Eager to Confess

At the sheriff's office, in Dubuque, Fred's confession cascaded from his mouth. He said, "I want to make you-guys' job easier for you." He talked freely before a television camera. Asked why he killed five people, he said, "Who can say why anybody does something?"

His father came at once. In the sheriff's office, his opening remark was, "Son, anyone can have that kind of girl." Fred tore at him and had to be restrained.

His mother, crying as she talked with him, irritated him. "Even when I am facing the electric chair, she treats me like I was a naughty little boy. All she cared about was what the neighbors would think. She told me not to let the other prisoners make me rough and common. Why, the men in jail with me are my friends. For the first time in my life I'm where I'm really wanted."

Once again his parents had failed to reach him.

On May seventh, the superintendent of the state hospital at Willard, New York, certified that Fred was legally sane. The district attorney of Ontario County then took the position that Fred McManus "knew the nature and consequences of his act and the difference between right and wrong." McManus was indicted for first-degree murder. The court appointed as McManus' lawyer Maurice M. Chacchia, an outstanding Geneva, New York, attorney. The trial was set for September 8, 1953.

The theory of his defense is that the boy's behavior, in the light of modern psychiatric knowledge, can only be accepted as a psychotic act understandable in such an ambulatory schizophrenic personality.

For Fred McManus, in his own wistful words, "it is the end of the line," the end of an old, old dream "of living in the hills with my rifle and only coming down to civilization to raid the countryside for what I needed." THE END

Photos by Zinn Arthur

IT TAKES FOURTEEN PRINCIPAL PERSONALITIES to put on the show. Once performers get on the "Breakfast Club," they settle down to the most secure job in radio.

Breakfast Every Day with 2,000,000 Women

For twenty years, Don McNeill's "Breakfast Club" has delivered puns, prayers, and plain corn to radio's most fanatically loyal audience

BY EVAN M. WYLIE

Every weekday about six-thirty A.M. a long canary-yellow convertible glides through the slumbering streets of Winnetka, Illinois, then picks up the North Shore Drive and follows it into Chicago's Loop.

Slouched behind the wheel is a big, iron-jawed fellow in his mid-forties who looks like just another business executive getting downtown for an early appointment. Actually his appointment is with approximately two million people. The convertible's driver is Don McNeill, master of ceremonies of the "Breakfast Club," one of radio's oldest and most popular programs.

Now celebrating its twentieth year of consecutive weekday broadcasts, the "Breakfast Club" began spreading its happiness at the American breakfast table during the gloom of the Depression. Today, when radio itself is believed to be gasping its last, Don McNeill's popularity has hit an all-time high. His hour-long program is broadcast over the entire network of the American Broadcasting Company, from WABI, Bangor, Maine; to KFAR, Fairbanks, Alaska; KULA, Honolulu; and WQAM, Miami, Florida. Its gigantic audience includes just about everybody who turns the radio on around nine A.M. E.S.T.

But McNeill, a man with a long memory, recalls that the "Breakfast Club" went six long sponsorless years and that he himself once lost out on a radio-station job to his wife.

Besides, he also points out, a good many of the millions who tune in every morning aren't hanging on his every word, anyway. The great charm of the "Breakfast Club" lies in the slight demand it makes on its listeners. While it's a favorite of farm folk in the Dakotas, its fans also include Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, millionaire Texas oilman Glenn McCarthy, and Chief G-Man J. Edgar Hoover.

Such a national habit has the program become that school children and commuters time their departures from home by its well-known features (I'm always out of the house by "Memory Time"). Every fifteen minutes there is a "Call to Breakfast," with a roll of drums, blare of trumpets, and much shouting — ideal accompaniment for swooshing showers, buzzing electric razors, popping toasters, and early-morning squabbles.

Though no breakfast or any other kind of food is served during the "Breakfast Club," the show unwinds with the unrehearsed informality of a typical household breakfast—also with an impressive

FANS OF EVERY AGE trek to Chicago from twenty states to sit in on the show.

(continued)

The studio audience,

disregard for formal broadcasting practices. McNeill gaily swings from a sales talk about refrigerators to prayers and poetry, from chatting with elderly ladies from the audience to kidding the pretty singer Peggy Taylor about her numerous boyfriends. In between, he trades jokes with comedian Sam Cowling and acts as amiable straight man to "Aunt Fanny," a gossipy rural relation addicted to endless conversations on the party line.

The Irrepressible Funnyman

Comic Cowling, a roly-poly, irrepressible cut-up, is constantly interrupting McNeill with spur-of-the-moment puns and gags, giving "Fiction and Fact from Sam's Almanac" (sample: "A lion and tiger are big cats, but panther what you wear"). When such atrocities fail, he disrupts proceedings further by blowing a raucous, unidentifiable horn. A graduate of the uninhibited school, Sam has been known to dive off the stage into an orchestra pit twenty feet deep in search of a laugh.

Sam's special talent is lying in wait for women who innocently inspire impromptu practical jokes. During one interview, a lady told McNeill she didn't feel at ease because she usually listened to the program while she washed dishes. She was called back to the stage a few minutes later and presented with a dishpan, soap, and stack of soiled plates that Sam had hustled from a nearby restaurant.

Most of the "Breakfast Club" spontaneity comes from the interviews with specially invited celebrities, characters with odd occupations, and with members of the studio audience. Recently guest stars Martin and Lewis caused such a commotion that a flustered announcer missed a cue for a commercial for 275 stations.

Although McNeill rarely gives away anything more than a handshake, women trek to Chicago from all over the country to meet him. Instead of being tongue-tied with mike fright when he calls them up, most of the women feel that they already know McNeill so well that they speak freely on any topic he starts them on. One housewife proved such a tireless talker that McNeill kept bringing her back until Actors' Equity finally demanded she join their union.

Just as eagerly awaited by his audience

BECAUSE McNEILL FANS FEEL they know him personally, guests are seldom nervous. McNeill asks questions about everyday doings, and his ladies feel right at home.

prompted by McNeill and comedian Sam Cowling, gives the show its spontaneity

as the comedy are his serious features such as "Memory Time," when McNeill reads nostalgic verse contributed by listeners (this he declaims in a throaty, relaxed voice described by one lady guest as "cuddly"); "Inspiration Time," devoted to brief inspirational vignettes; and "The Sunshine Shower," for which McNeill each morning asks his followers to write notes of cheer to the inmates of a hospital, an orphanage, or old folks' home. In the past few years more than 5,000,000 letters and tons of food, clothing, and money have been sent to such institutions because of these pleas.

In the early days of the "Breakfast Club," the director of the Chicago station tried to discourage McNeill from making "Memory Time" a regular feature. Sentiment, he intoned, had no place on an early-morning broadcast. Even among radio vice-presidents, few men have been more mistaken.

More than a million people have requested collected volumes of the poems. Most of the 10,000 letters that McNeill receives a month contain poetic contributions, and many correspondents report that they count on "Memory Time" to pull them out of the morning doldrums.

A little later in the program comes "Prayer Time." The studio lights are dimmed, the orchestra plays a few soft strains of a hymn, and McNeill requests that both his studio and radio audience bow their heads and pray "each in his own words . . . each in his own way . . . for a world united in peace." "Prayer Time" was conceived as a comfort for families with sons in the service during World War II. But in 1946 more than 100,000 letter writers persuaded McNeill to continue it. Members of Alcoholics Anonymous have written him that they use "Prayer Time" to help stay on the wagon. A woman with five children wrote him that she had decided to give her husband the divorce he wanted until she heard McNeill offer a prayer one morning for broken families. This changed her mind, and soon afterward the family was reunited.

Spellbound Fans and Sponsors

McNeill's enshrined position with his fans is a never-ending source of awe in radio-advertising circles. "I love to watch their faces," whispered a spellbound sponsor in the studio control booth recently, watching the blissful countenances of the audience as McNeill launched into a commercial about baked ham.

One advertising agency learned a painful lesson about the McNeill impact when it came up with the idea of awarding charter-membership cards to any listener who would write in. In ten days more than 800,000 pieces of mail flooded the agency's offices. Frantically the ad men got McNeill on the air to call the whole thing off. It cost the sponsor around $50,000. No similar schemes have been tried since.

The Show Staggered New York

Once a year the "Breakfast Club" takes to the road for a month's tour. The most memorable of these occurred a few years back when McNeill was visiting New York. Amazed Manhattan dwellers on their way to work found police lines thrown around Madison Square Garden and mounted patrolmen trying to cope with hordes of determined-looking women. Many had been standing in line all night for seats.

A little later 17,000 jammed their way into the Garden. After being entertained by several acts from the Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Bailey Circus, which happened to be occupying the basement at the time, the audience shrieked a greeting to McNeill, who entered the arena to a fanfare of trumpets aboard a huge float. A few minutes later he was hoisted in the claw of a steam shovel as high as the balconies. From this perch he leaned out and interviewed members of the audience. The program's singer was bundled into a rope harness and hauled up to serenade trapeze artists. Searchlights played over the throng as McNeill

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IRREPRESSIBLE CUT-UP SAM COWLNG inspires the raucous atmosphere on the show, and often drags a housewife out of the studio audience to act as his straight woman.

So loyal are fans, they ask for "Don McNeill's refrigerator" or "that Breakfast Club cereal"

led them in "Prayer Time." In the center ring, a circus sedan disgorged midgets, clowns, giants, animals, "Aunt Fanny," and a discomfited Sam Cowling who had come off second best in a luggage-compartment wrestle with the midgets. Police added to the uproar with the unscheduled pursuit of a robber who had taken refuge in the crowd. The dazed audience afterward wrote to McNeill that they had never experienced anything like it. Neither had McNeill and his cast.

The Cast Dates Way Back

A good many Breakfast Clubbers have been with the program almost as long as McNeill. Sam Cowling and "Aunt Fanny" (portrayed by Fran Allison, of "Kukla, Fran, and Ollie") joined the show sixteen years ago. Cliff Petersen started with the program in 1936 as a member of a trio called "The Escorts and Betty" and returned nine years later as producer-director. Eddie Ballantine, who now conducts the "Breakfast Club" orchestra, was a young trumpet player in the original ensemble that backed up McNeill in 1933. He is now a grandfather.

"Actually the family man next door," is the way the American Broadcasting Company likes to describe Don McNeill himself. "Righteous, God-fearing, orthodox in every way, he is not at all slick and could never be a sharpie."

Born in Galena, Illinois, in 1907, he was brought up in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where his family had a furniture business. A childhood siege of rickets made him conscious, he believes, of what it's like to be a shut-in. He thinks that may explain his success in reaching shut-ins with his show. After his recovery he went right on growing until he reached six-feet-two.

He entered Marquette University with the aim of becoming an editorial cartoonist. When the family business suddenly collapsed, he took his first radio job as a part-time announcer on a Milwaukee station. He stayed on in school to become valedictorian of the class of 1929, and fell in love with a fellow student named Katherine Mary Bennett. They were married a year later in San Francisco where McNeill, having decided on a radio career, had teamed up with another announcer in a daily program called "The Two Professors." When San Francisco tired of their program, the "Two Professors" headed cross-country to crash the big time. Several months in New York left them so discouraged and penniless that they split up the act and Don and Kay McNeill retreated to Milwaukee to live with her folks. They both obtained radio editors' jobs with a local station. One morning the station manager called in McNeill and told him that he had to prune his staff and was letting McNeill go but keeping his wife.

Both McNeills quit. A few days later Don drove to Chicago to audition for a master-of-ceremonies job on an early-morning show called, "The Pepper Pot." Told to appear with suggestions for filling an hour of air time, he jotted down the name "Breakfast Club" and "Four Calls to Breakfast." Of the eight members of the auditioning board, only one, Sidney Strotz, liked McNeill. Fortunately for McNeill, Strotz, as station manager, cast the deciding vote. McNeill was hired at $50 a week.

Six Years to Land a Sponsor

The McNeills moved to a modest Chicago apartment. No sponsor would consider buying time at such early hours, so to keep the family exchequer solvent, McNeill had to hustle around for other announcing assignments. This lasted for five dreary years. During that time he felt so pessimistic about his future in radio that he kept up his drawing lessons.

The first hint that he might be wrong came in his fan mail. "Even though I felt miserable I must have sounded cheerful," McNeill recalls. "People began to tell me how much they enjoyed smiling with me at breakfast. Their letters pepped me up, and I began to enjoy myself."

Finally, the "Breakfast Club" picked up some sponsors. Today it costs a sponsor a million dollars a year to have his product mentioned a couple of times during one of the fifteen-minute periods. The broadcasting bill picked up by all his advertisers runs to between four and five million dollars annually.

AFTER THE SHOW, McNeill is bushed. He's usually besieged for autographs, patiently signs, never relaxes his showtime geniality.

McNeill's income has swelled to around $200,000 a year, making him one of radio's highest-paid entertainers. But his tastes and private life have not soared with his salary. The McNeills dwell in a comfortably large English Tudor house in Winnetka, a lakeshore suburb of Chicago. They have three sons, Bobby, in the seventh grade; Don, Jr., six-feet-five and captain of the New Trier High School basketball team; and Tom, six-feet-four, president of the sophomore class at Notre Dame.

No Night Life for McNeill

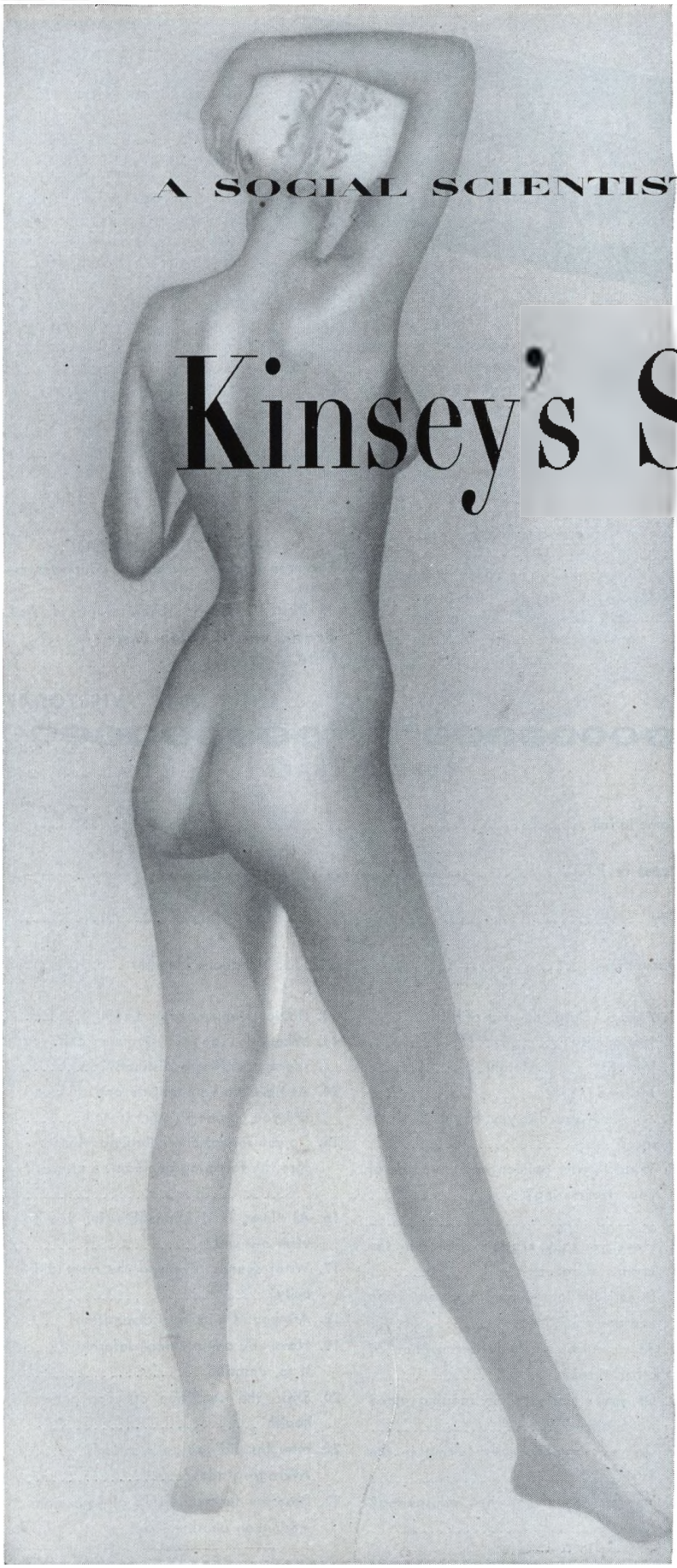
McNeill's chief diversion is fishing. He cares little about night life. An evening out for him and his wife may consist of dinner and a fast session of "samba," a card game, at a friend's home. Because the "Breakfast Club" compels him to rise at five-thirty, he and Kay are usually in bed by ten-thirty.

The man who exhorts so many people to be bright and cheerful in the morning is himself only limitedly communicative at his own breakfast table. By seven-thirty, when McNeill arrives at the Morrison Hotel's Terrace Casino, from which the broadcast originates, Sam Cowling, writer Eddie McKean, and secretary Mary Canny, have already skimmed through the several hundred interview cards collected from the audience and selected about thirty of the most promising for McNeill to choose from. McNeill mutters a greeting, seats himself at a dressing-room table offstage, and begins shuffling through the cards, sighing heavily and mumbling to himself like a man behind a breakfast-table newspaper. Then at 7:59:45 A.M., Eddie Ballantine strikes up the band and McNeill lumbers out on the stage. The thunderous applause that greets him acts like a cold shower. Instantly he is wide-awake and beaming.

After the show, McNeill has a second breakfast, conferences with radio and advertising men and with his business manager, Ralph Bergsten, and promotion and publicity manager, Fred Montiegel. He reads as much of his audience mail as he can himself and sees to it the rest is answered. By three he can start for the golf course, but more often he goes straight home.

After twenty years, his future at the American breakfast table seems assured for as long as he wants to stay there. A sally into television a year ago via an evening variety show was unsuccessful, mainly because he froze up at the sight of the cameras. Now experiments are under way with simulcast TV of the "Breakfast Club." Once McNeill gets over his camera self-consciousness, his joviality and the show's intimate gaiety should make it a huge success on TV.

In any event, his legions of admirers will be with him all the way. As one radio man said, "He's got the whole good old American middle class, and brother, that's a helluva lot of people." THE END



A SOCIAL SCIENTIST'S EVALUATION

Kinsey's Study of

Well, the Kinsey report on female sex life—the most feverishly awaited, most wildly speculated on, most sensationally publicized book in history—is open for inspection at long last. And we can all breathe easier.

True, it makes many interesting disclosures—and some disturbing and surprising ones—about the girls and women interviewed by the Kinsey team. Also, it boldly attacks many of our existing sex standards with blistering arguments plainly slanted *against* chastity and in favor of what used to be called free love. But for the most part, it is a technical treatise offering little that is startlingly new and much that is doubtful. It definitely does not measure up to the expectations of a shattering blast that was to upset all our sex thinking and change the whole pattern of our lives.

The Report Is Disappointing

Those who anticipated a lurid, all-revealing peek into the boudoirs of American women will be greatly disappointed. So, too, will be the scientists and other serious thinkers who had hoped that now, finally, we would get the full, frank, *scientifically accurate* facts to guide us toward a saner handling of women's sex problems. For instead of emphatically proclaiming, "This *is* the sexual behavior of American women," the report haltingly asks, "*Is* this the sexual behavior of American women?" and reluctantly answers, in effect, "Well . . . no . . . not exactly of *all* women.

Amram Scheinfeld takes issue with the startling conclusions in the most widely heralded sex study of modern times

Female Sex Behavior

Only of those who are like those we interviewed, and they, we admit, are not quite typical."

So, when this Kinsey report says, "40 per cent of our sample were nonvirgins before marriage," "adultery had been committed by 25 per cent or more of the married women by the age of forty," "homosexuality had been actively engaged in by 20 per cent, masturbation by 62 per cent," it may be referring not to you, and people like you, but to a couple of other females somewhere.

Be equally wary when you read the sizzling Kinsey conclusions—that what we've been teaching our daughters about sex is all wrong, that chastity may often do more harm than good, that premarital sex relations are likely to help toward adjustment in many ways (maritally, psychologically, socially), and that girls who don't indulge in sex may be refraining less because their morals are strong than because their sex urges are weak. These and other Kinsey conclusions may be largely theories, without scientific proof as yet to back them up, *particularly when they are applied to American women in general.*

Before going on, let's explain that we're discussing the big sex-study project directed by Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey of the University of Indiana. To date, sex histories have been gathered from over 16,000 males and females who *volunteered* for questioning by Dr. Kinsey or his chief aides, Dr. Wardell B. Pomeroy, Clyde E. Martin, and Dr. Paul Gebhard. The first Kinsey report, published in 1948, was a study of the sex behavior of 5,300 white males. The forthcoming report, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female,* discloses what was told by 5,940 white females.

The Supersecret Sex Institute

Although at this writing the book still awaits formal publication (it will be published later this month), we were privileged an advance look at it at the university. There, in the soundproofed chambers of the Institute for Sexual Research, where the sex records are kept in secret code amid all the precautions of an atom-bomb project, proofs of the book were shown to a small group of writers representing leading magazines and press services.

There was an Alice in Wonderland quality about the whole thing—the awesome atmosphere, the solemn signing of contracts binding us and our editors to certain stipulations, the briefing, the pledges of secrecy, the injunctions about guarding the proofs and our notes, the disclosure that a half dozen quickie book publishers were set to rush into print on the Kinsey report the minute they could get the facts and that Dr. Kinsey had turned down a $100,000 offer for a scoop on his findings. In the memory of the oldest reporter, there'd never been anything like this.

Then, behind bolted doors, we read the book. The letdown was as big as the build-up.

It isn't only that the new findings aren't very startling (the estimates for nonvirginity, adultery, and homosexuality, for instance, are almost the same as those reported years ago in sex studies of similarly selected females), or that the conclusions echo long-familiar arguments of proponents of greater sex freedom. But the new report not only confesses its own shortcomings but backtracks or hedges on much of what was considered most important in the previous Kinsey report, on males. In fact, recognizing that its findings are uncertain and too limited for general application, the new Kinsey book greatly cuts down on the tables and statistics that seemed so impressive in the previous volume, and devotes much more space to discussing other sex studies.

But if the new Kinsey report lacks much of the sensationalism and dogmatism of its predecessor, it is by the same token a much sounder work—perhaps, from the professional standpoint, the best treatise on the biological and functional aspects of sex yet produced. However, it has so many ifs and buts that for the average reader it should be labeled, "Handle with care."

Kinsey's Females Aren't Typical

Now to details. The book concedes at the outset that the Kinsey females are a rather special group. Fully 75 per cent have attended college, and of these 19.4 per cent have done graduate work, though only 7.5 per cent of American white women have gone to college. Unmarried women comprise 58 per cent of the Kinsey females, which is three times their national representation. About 60 per

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cent of them belong in the upper white-collar and professional ranks. Catholics are underrepresented (12 per cent) and Jews are overrepresented (29 per cent), and of the latter, less than 7 per cent were devout (a significant fact since nonreligious women were found to be far more sexually active and unconventional). Finally, almost 70 per cent of the Kinsey females came from ten states (mainly New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Indiana, and also California, New Jersey, Ohio, Florida, Massachusetts, and Maryland), and 90 per cent lived in cities or smaller towns.

Thus the females dealt with are least apt to be like you sexually if you are a woman who didn't go to college, or are not in the white-collar or professional group, or are Catholic, or live on a farm, or were reared in the Southeast, Pacific Northwest, or the high-plain and Rocky Mountain areas. And since, in the first place, it is likely that a woman who volunteers to be interviewed on her sex life is not typical, that leaves the Kinsey females in a pretty small minority.

Why the Report Is Important

What point, then, is there in talking about them at such length? First, the sexual behavior of these females may not be too different from that of millions of others. Second, since Dr. Kinsey is regarded as our No. 1 sex expert, what he reports merits our earnest attention. Third, because the new Kinsey findings, right or wrong, are going to be talked about for years to come, it is important that you know the facts.

Here, then, is the story of the Kinsey females:

Sexual arousal began for many in early childhood. By the age of ten, 8 per cent, and by thirteen, 14 per cent, already had experienced climax, chiefly from masturbation and petting. With the teens, petting increased, and by eighteen, a big majority had petted, many to climax. However, other sexual activity by girls ran far behind that of adolescent boys. Masturbation was reported by 20 per cent of the girls, compared with 80 per cent of the boys, and climactic sex dreams were infrequent among the girls. Further, the incidence of sex dreams and masturbation increased among women as they matured, whereas in males it greatly declined. Two women in five had at some time experienced a climax as a result of a sex dream.

Half the Kinsey females were nonvirgins, if single, or had been nonvirgins before marriage, though many of the nonvirgins had had relations with only their future husbands. By fifteen, 3 per cent of the Kinsey females had had intercourse; by twenty, one in five; by twenty-four, one in three. Dr. Pomeroy estimates that by thirty-five, one unmarried American woman in two is not a virgin. However, to parents worried about their coed daughters away at school, Dr. Kinsey says, "It is in the home where most premarital intercourse takes place. What is more, . . . coeds have a smaller proportion of their sex relations with men in the college town and a larger proportion while at home during vacations."

For the married Kinsey females, a significant point is the withdrawal of the first report's finding that intercourse is more frequent and more satisfying among less educated couples. The new report finds that frequency of intercourse is about the same on all educational levels and that sexual satisfaction may be even greater for the more educated women. The biggest factor is age, which most affects the husband's desires and capacities. Among wives in their late teens, intercourse averaged about three times weekly; by thirty, it was somewhat over twice a week; by forty, about three times in two weeks; by fifty, once a week, and decreasing thereafter. After fifty-five, 80 per cent were still having intercourse.

Married women experienced a climax in about three out of four sex acts. Climax was reached less often in the first years of marriage, more often later. About one in seven wives said they responded during each sex act with two or three climaxes. The report says that too much sophistication in sex technique may hinder rather than aid achievement of a climax. Though Dr. Kinsey still estimates that about 30 per cent of the American women are sexually unresponsive, he no longer claims that many of these women were born that way. He now believes that "probably all females are physiologically capable of response if properly conditioned."

Adultery figures for the Kinsey females may or may not be shocking, depending on what is expected. Of the married women up to the age of forty, one in four admitted to having cheated at one time or another. However, we're told that in view of the tendency to conceal unfaithfulness, the actual figures may be even higher. Half the Kinsey males had extramarital relations. Many women said their husbands had encouraged them to have affairs, and others were unfaithful to get even for their husbands' cheating or other abuses. The majority claimed they got away with it, even (in about half the cases) if the husband knew or suspected. A number felt their marital adjustment was improved by the outside experience.

The woman who isn't a virgin at marriage is twice as likely to commit adultery. Also, adultery is held to increase as a marriage lengthens, because both marital ties and moral restraints grow weaker and motivations and temptations grow greater.

According to Kinsey, modern wives have less sex activity but better sexual adjustment

Morals Unchanged Since 1920's

Are American women becoming sexually looser? No, says Dr. Kinsey. There hasn't been much change in the past thirty years. The big change he dates back to the Roaring Twenties, just after World War I, when increasing numbers

of young women began to flout sexual restraints. Thus, more premarital petting and intercourse were reported by the Kinsey females of forty or younger than among the women fifty and older. In the forty-or-younger group, we're told, intercourse is about 20 per cent less frequent than that reported by the fifty-and-older group when they were at the age of the younger group. However, among the younger wives, there is greater sexual satisfaction. In fact, failure to respond to climax occurred less than half as often among the younger women as among the older women. This is attributed to a better understanding of sex, more premarital sex experience by women, and more considerate efforts by the more modern husbands to evoke their wives' responses. (A note on lessened inhibitions: The report says more than half the wives interviewed slept in the raw and that sleeping in the nude is found oftener among the younger women, "much to the consternation of manufacturers of night clothing.")

Some of the most interesting, though still speculative, Kinsey observations are about male-female sex differences:

—The sex organs of males and females, the report maintains, are anatomically much more alike than generally assumed, and they differ little in their sensations. The climax itself, as well as its aftereffects, are essentially the same in both sexes. (This assumption, to which we'll refer again, is open to serious doubt, as was pointed out in last month's COSMOPOLITAN.)

—If women don't respond sexually as quickly or easily as men, it's not because they can't. It may be because of something in the techniques of intercourse or because of the fact that women are more easily distracted during the sex act (this is also true of females among the lower animals).

—A woman's breasts are much less a source of sexual stimulation to her than men suppose. In fact, they may contribute more to the male's sexual arousal than to her own.

—Though most males can get sexually excited by just thinking or talking about sex, two-thirds of the females experience little or no arousal. Sex jokes leave 86 per cent of the Kinsey females cold, although they may enjoy the humor.

—Seeing nude males or pictures of them is no thrill for 88 per cent of the women, and it is even revolting to many. Two thirds of the males admitted to having peeped at a disrobing female, but women rarely bothered to peep at disrobing men.

—At movies, women seem more sexually stimulated by love scenes, but the men are probably trying to suppress their emotions. Reading sexy fiction arouses just as many women (60 per cent of them) as men, though 40 per cent in each sex say they aren't affected.

—Strip-teasers say that no matter how they may wiggle and oo-la-la, they themselves get no erotic kick out of their performances and have contempt for men who are so easily misled as to think they do.

In general, the Kinsey theory continues to be that women are by nature much less sexually responsive to psychological factors than are men and that it is this, rather than any greater morality of women, that makes them indifferent or antagonistic to sex exhibitions, lovemaking in the light, or anything that has to do with the portrayal of sex. Also confirmed is the first report's conclusion that the female's sexual development lags far behind the male's and takes an entirely different course throughout the individual's life. The male peak of sexual performance and potency is placed at about the age of seventeen, and it is thought to decline steadily and sharply thereafter. In females, the sexual peak is not reached until about the age of thirty, and thereafter it remains at almost the same level—or declines very gradually—until the fifties and perhaps later. The latest age at which any woman in the Kinsey study reported having a climax was seventy-five, but in some of the Kinsey cases not dealt with in this book, climaxes were reported by women as old as ninety.

Differences in Premarital Sex

The most important difference between the average man and woman, it is claimed, is in the amount of sex experience each has had before marriage. Taking all the Kinsey statistics on wives and husbands, we find that at marriage, 80 per cent of the males had had intercourse, compared with 50 per cent of the females; and whereas virtually 100 per cent of the men had previously experienced climax through one means or another—the average bridegroom more than 1,500 times—a third of the brides had never had this experience.

This difference in premarital sex experience, in Dr. Kinsey's view, accounts for many cases of marital incompatibility. The great extremes of sex experience among women—with one woman having had thousands of climaxes, another going through life with none—is considered by Dr. Kinsey a major reason why there are many more women incapable of understanding other women than there are men who don't understand other men.

The Findings Favor Looser Morals

The real impact of the new Kinsey report, as we noted at the outset, will come if its findings and conclusions are used to support demands for widespread changes in our codes and standards governing women's sexual behavior. The report itself, although professing to be scientifically objective, leaves little doubt as to where it stands. It briefly sets up the arguments against premarital sex activity for girls—the dangers of pregnancy, abortion, venereal disease, guilt, loss of male respect, weakening of will power—and then proceeds to counter each of these arguments by citing the experiences of the Kinsey females.

First, there is a vigorous defense of petting during adolescence. In addition to providing a sexual outlet, the report maintains, petting introduces girls to the "physical, psychological, and social problems involved in making emotional adjustments to individuals," helps to acquaint them with various types of males and to "acquire wisdom in choosing their future husbands," and gives them needed sexual experience at an age when they are "biologically best equipped" to acquire it and when trial and error will be less disastrous to them than after they are married.

Next is the clear implication that once a girl pets, she should carry it to the climax, which, the report claims, will bring her "comfort and peace" (unless "contaminated with guilt reactions"). Among those who stopped before the climax, a quarter suffered nervous upsets, physical pains, and disturbed thinking.

Third, I find it plainly implied that a girl might well go beyond petting. The Kinsey contention is that premarital intercourse, in addition to satisfying a physiological need, "may enable individuals to learn to adjust . . . [and] come to understand each other . . . in a way not possible in any other type of social relationship" and will "contribute to the effectiveness of nonsexual relationships as well."

The dangers of premarital intercourse, on the other hand, are held to have grown less and less. Among the Kinsey nonvirgins, the risk of pregnancy from a single act of intercourse was reported as one in a thousand (a total of 476 pregnancies resulted from 460,000 acts by 2,094 single women), and it is argued that with more attention to modern means of contraception there would be practically no reason for even this pregnancy

(continued)

rate. Also, though venereal disease was acquired by about one in forty of the Kinsey nonvirgins, new preventive methods and cures make this threat relatively unimportant.

But of even more significance than these arguments is Kinsey's denial that loss of virginity brings psychic disturbances and lasting regrets. Of the nonvirgins interviewed, three out of four expressed no regrets. The least regretful were those who'd been most promiscuous, and the most regretful were those who'd had the least sex activity. But even Dr. Kinsey was surprised that among the unmarried women who'd become pregnant, four out of five "registered little or no regret."

An Approving Nod for Nonvirgins

While giving the nonvirgins an approving nod, the Kinsey report indicates that if a girl doesn't engage in sex activity before marriage, it may be less because she's overrighteous than because she's undersexed. Noting that almost half the Kinsey virgins admitted lack of sexual responsiveness as a factor, the report quotes the saying, "It's easier to abstain from sin when one is not physically or physiologically endowed with the capacity to sin." It adds that fear of what others would think was a major factor in keeping many girls virgins, while 22 per cent frankly conceded lack of opportunity as among the reasons, and 14 per cent of them cited fear of venereal disease.

Expressing pity for the "sexually frustrated" and "inhibited" females, the report blames "the church, the home, and the school" as "the chief sources of the sexual inhibitions, the distaste for all aspects of sex, the fears of physical difficulties that may be involved [and], the feelings of guilt . . . which many females carry with them into marriage." Citing its finding that among wives who had not experienced climax before marriage, failure to respond to their husbands was three times as often as among those who had, the report observes that "the chances of working out sexual adjustments seem to have been materially reduced for the girl who hadn't previously learned what it means to let herself go and respond uninhibitedly." Also: "When there are long years of abstinence and restraint . . . the acquired inhibitions may do such damage to the capacity to respond that it may take some years to get rid of them after marriage, if indeed they are ever dissipated."

A Dig at Frigid Spinsters

Kinsey's most biting comments are reserved for the "frigid spinsters" who, not understanding what sex is, attempt to restrict the sex behavior of others. Referring to the more than a quarter of the unmarried older Kinsey females—including many teachers, directors of youth organizations, club leaders, physicians, and political figures—who never had climax, the report warns of the damage that may be done by such "sexually unresponsive, frustrated females" in the "guidance of our youth" and the dictation of public policies and legislation governing sex. An implication is that the better mentors of sex might be "the other half to two-thirds" of the unmarried Kinsey females "who did understand the significance of sex and were not living the blank or sexually frustrated lives which our culture, paradoxically, had expected them to live."

How should we take these sweeping conclusions? Whatever one's own attitude, it should be absolutely clear that the Kinsey arguments are based chiefly on the reported experiences of a highly selected, limited, and atypical group of females. And furthermore, the whole Kinsey system of rating the sexual adjustment or lack of it in women appears to be governed primarily by a single criterion: the number of climaxes and their frequency in relation to the sex acts performed, regardless of how the climaxes are experienced. The impression is given that women with high scores are well-adjusted sexually, and probably in other respects, too, whereas women with low scores are not. *None of this is supported by any real scientific proof.*

With respect to the married women, no evidence is offered to show that those with the highest number of sexual responses were indeed the *happiest* with their husbands, or that there is a direct relationship between climax-frequency and the lasting quality of marriages. No check was made by the Kinsey team on whether divorced women actually did have the lowest climax scores. This should be so if the theory is correct. Nor is any evidence offered that the unmarried Kinsey females who had the greatest amount of sex experience are the happiest and best-adjusted of all.

In many other ways, the criticisms of the first Kinsey book, and those predicted for the new book, are now amply justified. It remains extremely doubtful whether the sexual behavior of girls and women can be reduced to and measured in terms of "biological performance" without full attention to the social and psychological factors in individual lives. The Kinsey studies have not yet considered these factors. It is even more questionable whether from the shaky springboard of uncertain statistics about limited and special groups of females, it is possible to jump straightway to drastic conclusions concerning American women in general.

When the professional critics have had a chance to analyze the new Kinsey report, we will be better able to judge its *scientific* validity and importance. Meanwhile, one may venture the belief that many more *representative* sex histories will have to be gathered and much more research will have to be done on the psychological and social—and on the *moral*—aspects of sex before the American public can be told, "This is the full truth about your sex lives, and this is what *Science* prescribes that you do about the sex lives of your children."

What Kinsey's Report Overlooks

Just one more thing. Flying back from Indiana, high above the clouds, I kept wondering why this new Kinsey report seemed so unreal as well as unconvincing. Then I happened to glance across the aisle at a young GI and his wife, with their baby. The soldier was fast asleep. So was the baby, nestled in its mother's arms. But the young woman was dreamily awake, her head snuggled against her husband's shoulder, and I watched her eyes look up at him adoringly, then move down to her baby, then back to her husband again. It came to me, suddenly, what was lacking in the Kinsey treatise. Among all the hundreds of pages of statistics, tables, and text, dealing in such detail with "premarital and marital coitus," "petting," "masturbation," "homosexuality," "adultery," and so on, I could recall seeing nothing about two experiences which, one would certainly suppose, have a great deal to do with a woman's sexual behavior: motherhood—and love. THE END

By twenty-four,
one unmarried woman
in three has had
sexual experience,
says Kinsey

ILLUSTRATED BY AL BUELL

$84 a [illegible]

He was rich, young, and hateful—made to order for a pretty hostess with an idea

BY WILLIAM BRUCKNER

At the age of sixteen I left the orphanage to earn my own living. Fifteen years later, by dint of hard work, persistence, and intelligence, I was head of one of the largest financial organizations in California. In all that time I had never taken so much as a Saturday afternoon off, and hence I was somewhat stunned to learn the expenditure connected with a first-class vacation.

"Eighty-four dollars a *day?*" I repeated. "Just for a place to sleep?"

Mrs. Willoughby, who is my private secretary, nodded her graying head. "A man in your position can afford the finest accommodations available," she said, "so I've made a reservation for you at the Hotel Esplanade in Palm Springs." She cast a quick glance at the outer office. "Now, please don't carry on about it, Mr. Waite," she urged. "People will think you're a tightwad."

"Let them." The fact that I was unpopular left me completely unmoved, and I had not even bothered to fire the employee who, after my annual speech at the office Christmas party, had drunkenly suggested a public burning of Horatio Alger's collected works. "I don't care what people think."

Mrs. Willoughby sighed. "Maybe that's your trouble."

My secretary is old enough to be my mother and I allow her a number of liberties, but I dislike being lectured. I swept her with a frosty glance. "Tightwad, indeed!" I went on. "Who keeps up the payments on your husband's dentures? Who pays your nephew's tuition?"

"*You* do, Mr. Waite," she said. "And it's because I'm so grateful that I suggested you take a vacation."

"What do you mean?"

"If you don't get away from the office for a while," she explained quietly, "if you don't learn to relax, if you don't start behaving like a human being, it's only a question of time until I put a bullet through your head."

This was a little too much. "I expect that I'm perfectly safe," I told her coldly, "until all your retarded relatives have

"I intend," I told her bare shoulders, "to take advantage of everything I'm entitled to."

$84 a Day (continued)

She waited at the pool, all honey and gold, apparently no longer afraid

completed their educations. That will be all, Mrs. Willoughby."

She slammed out of the office, leaving me alone with my thoughts. I was thirty-one. Unmarried. No hobbies. I was not unhappy, but on the other hand I had the vague feeling that I was missing something in life. It occurred to me that perhaps I really did need a vacation.

A week later I left Los Angeles and drove to the Hotel Esplanade in Palm Springs. A bellboy carried my luggage into the rather ornate lobby, and I approached the plumpish desk clerk, who was deep in conversation with a young woman. "I'm Peter Waite," I informed the clerk.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Waite," he murmured, favoring me with a wide smile. "We've saved you a very nice cottage."

"It *ought* to be nice," I remarked, bending over to sign the register. "Eighty-four dollars a day!"

When I straightened up, the smile was still on his face, apparently frozen there. "If you'd rather have something less expensive . . ." he began uncertainly.

"The expense is important only as a matter of principle," I said. "I'm one of the richest men in America."

I followed the direction of his gaze as it floated dazedly away from me and came to rest upon the young woman I had noticed previously. "How much are they charging *you?*" I asked her.

"N-nothing," she said. She was a remarkably attractive girl. About twenty-five. Dark hair and very soft brown eyes. The nervousness in her tone was undoubtedly brought about by my own crisp, authoritative manner, which has a way of unsettling people. "I work here," she went on. "I'm Linda Bonner, the social directress."

"What's that?"

The girl and the desk clerk exchanged

another look. "What's what?" she asked.

"A social directress," I said. "I have never before had time for a vacation, and hence I am unfamiliar with a resort hotel's table of organization."

"Well," she said, looking down at the carpet, "it's—it's really not much of a job." The note of apology in her tone seemed to make her mad at herself. "I'm in charge of all the doings here at the hotel—games, dances, organized activities, and so forth," she went on more firmly. "I hope you'll take advantage of our doings, Mr. Waite."

"I intend to," I replied. I nodded to the bellboy who stepped forward and removed the key to my cottage from the desktop. "I intend to take advantage of everything I'm entitled to," I added as I turned to follow the bellboy. "Eighty-four dollars a day!"

The bellboy escorted me to my private cottage which, I must admit, was a miniature palace. The boy deposited my bags, opened the windows, and adjusted the blinds. Then he started for the door.

"Just a moment," I called, and he stiffened, his hand on the knob.

"Y-yes, sir?" As he turned slowly, I saw that his face had gone pale. "Anything wrong, sir?"

"Isn't it customary for the guest to tip you?" I inquired.

"Well, sure, but . . ." He swallowed hard. "Well, like you say, eighty-four dollars a day is a lot of money."

"It's highway robbery," I said. "Here."

He looked blankly at the five-dollar bill I handed him. Then he looked blankly at me. When I finished my brief explanation of the difference between niggardliness and thrift, he was still looking blankly at me. "Well, thanks," he said, and walked blankly out the door.

It was already quite late in the day, so I refreshed myself with a shower, then donned the black-tie dinner clothes I had had tailored specially for this vacation. As I crossed the beautifully landscaped terrace toward the dining room, I heard the social directress calling to me.

"I should have warned you, Mr. Waite," she said as she approached. "We're very informal here. No one bothers to dress for dinner."

I frowned. "You mean they won't let me into the dining room in these clothes?"

"Of course they will," she replied. "It's—it's just that I thought you might feel uncomfortable. . . ."

"Why should I feel uncomfortable?" I asked in puzzlement.

"No reason." Hands behind her back, she stared down at her right toe, which was making little circles in the graveled path. "I—I just thought—"

"I spent an enormous amount of money for a complete new wardrobe, and I certainly intend to get some use out of it. At eighty-four dollars a day, I think I should be allowed to wear whatever I feel like wearing, formal or informal."

"Of course," she murmured. "Sure. Whatever you say." She edged away tentatively. "Well . . ."

"Where are you going?"

"To the cocktail lounge," she said, and immediately flushed. "It's not that I'm a drunkard. It's just—just that—" She broke off, bit her lip in self-annoyance, then continued less hesitantly. "Many of the guests like a cocktail before dinner," she explained. "It's part of my job to mingle with them and see that they have a good time."

"May I accompany you?"

"Delighted," she said in what seemed to me a somewhat hollow tone.

Once in the lounge, she introduced me to a gay group in a booth and then left to circulate among the other guests. Small talk invariably bores me, and I therefore adroitly channeled the conversation into a discussion of business conditions. We were still thus engaged when Miss Bonner returned.

She appraised our group with a professional eye. "Where's the funeral?" she asked brightly.

"You ought to know, Linda," replied a particularly obnoxious young man in tweeds. "You brought the body."

The inference was obvious, but years of self-discipline have taught me to keep a tight rein on my temper. I merely stared at the tweedy man in cold silence until at last his fidgeting overturned a cocktail glass. Then I excused myself.

It wasn't until I had entered the dining room that I realized Miss Bonner had followed. I invited her to join me, and she accepted at once. "Tom Dexter is an ill-mannered lout," she said after the waiter had taken our order. Tom Dexter was the tweedy young man. "Don't let him get under your skin."

"He didn't get under my skin," I replied in all truthfulness. "I could buy and sell a dozen like him. However, I've decided to cut my vacation short."

"But why?"

"I don't belong here," I said. "I'm a fish out of water."

Miss Bonner frowned. "You haven't given these people a chance yet," she said. "Most of them are very nice."

She had misunderstood me. "I'm not blaming *them*," I explained. "It's hardly *their* fault that I have such an objectionable personality."

Our waiter, who had approached unnoticed, very nearly emptied the contents of a soup plate into Miss Bonner's lap. We waited in silence until he had pulled himself together and departed. Miss Bonner's eyes, meanwhile, had somehow become bigger, browner, and softer than ever. "What makes you so sure you're objectionable?" she asked.

"Because no one has ever liked me," I said simply.

"Nonsense," she scoffed.

"No, it isn't," I said. To prove my point, I asked her if *she* liked me. She opened her mouth to reply immediately, but I held up my hand. "Give it some thought," I requested.

She was quiet for a long moment. "I—I *think* I like you," she said finally, speaking slowly, as if weighing every word. "You—you scare hell out of me but . . . but, yes, I'm *sure* I like you."

"Thank you," I said. "Perhaps I'll stay on after all."

"Try acting a little friendlier," she suggested. "People will like you if you only give them the chance."

After dinner, I accepted Miss Bonner's invitation to join her and two elderly ladies in a game of canasta. When we had seated ourselves at a card table in the corner of the lobby, I mentioned that I had never played the game. The faces of my new acquaintances fell.

"Canasta is really very simple," Miss Bonner put in quickly. "Just a variation of gin rummy."

"I don't know how to play gin rummy, either," I confessed.

From the bitter looks of the other two players, I gathered that they took their canasta very seriously, so I concentrated my utmost attention on the rules as laid down by Miss Bonner. The game itself proved to be little more than a memory test, and inasmuch as my own memory is considered phenomenal, I found myself on the winning side at the end of every hand. When finally we put away the cards, I offered to give the old ladies a few suggestions that would improve their game, but they did not linger to listen. They tottered off in steamy silence.

"You see?" I said to Miss Bonner. "They didn't like me."

"Nonsense," she said.

The next morning in the hotel's swimming pool, I made another attempt to be congenial. Never having learned to swim, I remained at the shallow end where a number of youngsters were splashing and playing. Although never very much at ease with children, I forced myself to enter into their activities wholeheartedly, but desisted when I overheard a small boy offer to lure me down to deeper water so the rest of the group could throw rocks at me.

Miss Bonner was waiting at the side of the pool as I climbed out. "You're doing fine," she said. "Don't forget the hike this afternoon."

The hike was one of Miss Bonner's Organized Activities. She led about ten of us on a blistering walk beneath the desert sun—and for no apparent reason that I could see, unless it was to provide several cactus rips in my brand-new flannel slacks. "Now that we're here, what do we do?" I inquired of Miss Bonner, when at last we reached Tahquitz Canyon, our destination.

She indicated the other members of

$84 a Day (continued)

our hiking party, who were already engaged in various pursuits. "Some people stand and admire the waterfalls," she said. "Others take off their shoes and socks and dangle their feet in the stream. Still others chase the tiny lizards."

Since our conversation at dinner, she seemed to have lost her fear of me, and my impatience with the entire hiking project—which had apparently alienated the rest of the group—succeeded only in amusing her. I wasn't entirely sure that I liked the change in her attitude, but on the other hand I wasn't entirely sure that I *dis*liked it.

I spent the next several minutes admiring the scenery; then I sat down beside the stream and removed my shoes and socks. I dangled my feet in the water.

Miss Bonner watched me interestedly. "How is it?"

"Cold," I replied.

"Would you like to chase lizards now?"

"No," I said. "It's not working," I said after a while.

"What isn't?"

"The vacation," I explained. "As far as I am concerned, the Hotel Esplanade is nothing more than an efficiently organized torture chamber that is charging me eighty-four dollars per diem."

The obvious sincerity of my statement caused the amusement to disappear from her magnificent eyes. In its place came sympathy, and for the first time in my life I found myself avoiding someone else's glance. "Is that a rattlesnake over there?" I inquired.

I felt, rather than saw, her solicitous gaze leave my face. "No," she said. "That's one of those tiny lizards I was telling you about—perfectly harmless."

"That over there is a lizard," I said. "But that over there is a rattlesnake."

She looked in the direction indicated. "*Sweet Bedelia!*" she whispered in terror. "What'll we do?"

"Remain perfectly still."

My words were superfluous, because she was by now incapable of movement. The others in the hiking party were too far away to be of any assistance, and so it was up to me, who knew nothing of reptilian habits, to act. I slowly withdrew my feet from the stream and inched forward until I had attained a position between Miss Bonner and the rattlesnake. The reptile raised its head and stared back at me. "Go away," I said sternly.

The snake turned and slithered off into the brush. "It *obeyed* you," Miss Bonner exclaimed in an awed voice.

I shrugged. "It was probably just as scared as we were."

"It wasn't as scared as I was," Miss Bonner murmured weakly. "*That* I'll guarantee you." I was helping her to her feet. "You deliberately moved between me and the snake," she went on. "You risked your life for me." Raising herself on tiptoe, she kissed me. I suspect she meant the embrace only as a display of gratitude, but all at once it got out of hand. "Well!" she said in astonishment when finally we broke apart.

I moved forward to take her in my arms again. "No!" she said.

I'm afraid I tend to irritability when I run into opposition. "Why not?" I demanded.

"A social directress," she said, retreating further, "just can't go around necking with the guests."

I was in no mood for pointless quibbling. "I'm not just any guest," I said firmly. "I'm your future husband."

"*What?*"

"I'm your future husband," I repeated. This was not a snap decision; to the contrary, my remark was the result of a prolonged mental debate that had been taking place in my mind ever since I first set eyes on Linda Bonner. I had even worked out some of the details. She could quit her job as soon as we returned to the hotel, I informed her, and then we'd leave at once for Las Vegas.

She listened, her eyes ever widening. "But I *can't* elope with a man I hardly know," she said wildly.

I remembered the maxim that adorns one wall of my office. " 'There's no such word as *can't*,' " I quoted, and moved toward her purposefully.

She eluded my embrace. "Gather round, everyone," she shouted, thereby drawing the attention of the other hikers. "Time we went back to the hotel." She must have noted my natural indignation. "Please don't glare at me that way," she begged in a shaken undertone. "All I want is time to think things over."

One of the most important lessons I have learned from my experience in the world of finance is to press forward, constantly and unyieldingly, like a perpetual-motion steam roller, until at last the objective is attained. As soon as we returned to the hotel, therefore, I changed into unripped sports clothes and repaired at once to the lobby to await the appearance of Linda Bonner.

After fifteen minutes, I walked up to the desk and inquired as to her whereabouts. "This is Wednesday," the clerk informed me, his gaze resting nervously on the desk blotter. "Linda is off from Wednesday afternoon until Friday morning."

"Where does she usually go?" I snapped.

"I—ah—I don't know."

"In that case," I said, "you'd better get me Mr. Frederick Kinderman on the long-distance phone."

"Kinderman?" he echoed. "The chairman of the outfit that owns this hotel?" When I nodded, the clerk looked unhappier than ever. "Why—why do you want to talk to Mr. Kinderman?"

"I intend to make him an offer for the Esplanade, an offer so attractive he cannot refuse. Then I mean to fire the present desk clerk and put in his place a man who will answer me honestly."

It took the clerk several moments to recover the power of speech. "Look," he said at last, "wouldn't it be less complicated all around if I simply told you where Linda went?"

"Of course," I said coldly.

Linda, it appeared, had made him promise not to tell me where she had gone, but now he revealed everything; she had entrained for Los Angeles to spend her day off with her ailing mother, as was her weekly custom. The clerk also supplied me with the address of the boardinghouse for invalids where Linda's mother resided, and he further made himself useful by arranging for a chartered plane to fly me to Los Angeles.

I had meanwhile telephoned Mrs. Willoughby, my secretary, so a chauffeured limousine was waiting at the Los Angeles airport to whisk me to the railroad station. I was standing on the platform when Linda's train arrived.

"That clerk!" she said when she saw me. "I'll kill him."

I led her to the car explaining the circumstances under which I had exacted information from the clerk. Linda made no comment but maintained a stony silence until the limousine came to a halt in front of the hospital. "Where are we?" she wanted to know. "I thought you said you were taking me to my mother."

"I am," I said.

My secretary had carried out my instructions perfectly. Mrs. Bonner, Linda's mother, who was suffering from a broken hip that had so far refused to knit properly, had been moved from the boardinghouse to the most magnificent room in the plushiest private hospital in the area. Arrangements had been made to keep two nurses in attendance at all times, and the world's greatest bone specialist was at the moment en route from New York City.

"What goes on here?" Linda asked, as she approached her mother's bed.

"I don't know," Mrs. Bonner replied in equal bafflement. "I like it, though."

"It's sort of a surprise," I explained.

Linda shook her head. "I—I can't let you do this," she told me.

"Why not?"

"Don't you see?" she said unhappily. "It puts me under obligation to you."

"Of course," I said. "That's why I arranged it."

There were five women in the room—including the two nurses—and all five stared at me. "It's my guess," my secretary said finally, "that this is his way of courting." She sighed. "Trust him

to go about it like he was foreclosing a mortgage."

"Do be quiet, Mrs. Willoughby," I requested. I turned to Linda. "I have a plane waiting at the airport to fly us to Las Vegas. If we leave immediately—"

"No!" she said. "No!" And she began to cry. I had no notion as to how to proceed, and I looked to Linda's mother for assistance. "You'd better leave Linda and me alone for a few minutes," Mrs. Bonner said worriedly. "Perhaps I can find out what's troubling her."

The rest of us filed out into the corridor. Mrs. Willoughby and the two nurses stood a little apart from me and discussed my character in vituperative whispers. After what seemed to me a decade, the door of Mrs. Bonner's room opened and Linda reappeared. "I can't marry you," she informed me, struggling to control the quivering of her lower lip. "I—I—"

She dissolved in tears. Mrs. Willoughby stepped forward to comfort her, and the two nurses clucked sympathetically. I walked into Mrs. Bonner's room and closed the door behind me. "I don't understand your daughter's attitude," I told Mrs. Bonner flatly.

"It's this way," she said kindly. "Linda is afraid that if she marries you, she'll always be afraid that she did it because of your money."

I studied her curiously. "Why else would anyone marry me?"

"Linda warned me you'd be like this," Mrs. Bonner said, her tone an odd mixture of vexation and helplessness. "The funny thing is, I think Linda is really in love with you. It's her theory that you've unconsciously developed this exasperating shell to protect yourself from hurt. She kept telling me that deep down you're really very sweet."

"Me sweet?" I said. "Don't be absurd." Linda's refusal was the first setback I had had in years, which was perhaps why I was taking it so hard. "You will, of course, stay on here at the hospital, Mrs. Bonner," I went on, and was dismayed to note that my voice was trembling. "When Dr. Coffelt arrives from New York, I'm sure he'll manage to get you back on your feet."

Mrs. Bonner was tracing a design on the bed sheet with her forefinger. "You mean," she asked casually, "that you're not going to foreclose the mortgage?"

There ensued a long moment during which we eyed each other in understanding silence. Then I stepped out into the corridor. "Get an ambulance here at once," I said to the two nurses. "Mrs. Bonner is going back to the boardinghouse." I turned to my secretary. "Wire Dr. Coffelt's plane. Inform him his services will not be required."

Mrs. Willoughby blinked incredulously. "Dr. Coffelt is the only man in the world who can help that poor woman. Even *you* wouldn't—"

"One more word from you, Mrs. Willoughby," I interrupted bitingly, "and your husband won't have a tooth left in his head."

My secretary lapsed into petulant silence, and the nurses continued to regard me with fascinated horror. To my dismay, however, Linda was not subdued.

"This is just a bluff," she said, "and I don't for one moment believe you'd carry it through." I could feel the ice in my glance melting before her warm brown eyes. "However," she went on quickly, just as my face was about to fall in disappointment, "for Mother's sake, I cannot afford to chance it."

"Then you'll marry me?" I asked, my spirits rising like the profit line in our office financial chart. "At once?"

She nodded demurely. I very much wanted to take her in my arms, but we were not alone. My secretary had evidently taken root in the stone floor of the corridor, and the nurses showed an inclination to stay for the second feature. "If they don't leave at once, dear," Linda murmured, "you could buy this hospital and have them all turned out into the streets."

"An excellent suggestion," I said, and our unwanted audience promptly melted from view.

"Now, then," Linda said gently, "what's next on the agenda?" I made it all very clear to her, and without wasting a deal of time on needless verbiage. THE END

for what counts

Sketches United Nations Girls

The windows are blue glass and the air is scientifically cooled. If you have the stamina, you might enjoy prowling all thirty-nine floors of one of the world's most beautiful buildings—the United Nations' ultramodern Secretariat.

Millions have been poured into the architecture, but the real opulence of this establishment for peace lies in the shining faces of hundreds of youngsters from abroad who work there. They may not make the speeches, but they take them down in shorthand, translate them into dozens of languages, decode messages, answer telephones, set up type, and help oil the gears of this city of 3,500 people.

It's not often easy to tell who's from Brooklyn and who isn't; imports blend imperceptibly with natives. Afternoons, crowds of young girls pour into the UN cafeteria for coffee, and you find it hard to realize that many of them have homes thousands of miles away. Some speak flawless English, some have trouble with their verbs and tee-aitches, but all of them can muster up enough words for coffee and doughnuts. Only the Indian and Chinese girls stick to native robes, proudly wearing thin saris and *chipaos*. All the rest disguise their origins behind American fashions. I asked one young Lorelei from South America if there weren't a couple of subequatorial styles she could introduce to the U.S. She shook her head. "When I come here," she said, "I get American-looking as quick as I can."

You might judge for yourself how far this merger has gone by inspecting the seven young ladies presented here, all of them young, exotic, and happily adjusted to the local scene.

China—Marjorie Chien. *Her name (the last one is pronounced "chin") means Marjorie Money in Chinese. Born some twenty-nine years ago, in Shanghai, she is five-feet-four, built like an ivory doll, and speaks pure American. I helped the photographer pry her loose from a card file, then asked her to pose for* COSMOPOLITAN. *She was distressed. "But I look lousy today," she protested in the tones of an upset water lily. We reassured her. You see her here after a quick repair job.*

Greek-American—Andromache Geanacopoulos. *Everybody calls her Maggie. "Closest anybody can come to Andromache," she says. Maggie is tour supervisor for sixty-five uniformed girls who escort the public through the UN, answering questions and explaining delegates and architecture to eager out-of-towners. She has a deep, vibrant voice pitched in the range of Tallulah Bankhead, and dark good looks that came originally from Athens. Maggie, however, was born twenty-six years ago in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts. When I saw her at the end of a hard day, she looked fresh and unwrinkled in her navy-blue uniform, her close-cropped hair polished and gleaming as if she were just arriving for duty. She was such fun to look at, I forgot most of the things she told me about her work and the system for circulating platoons of people through this luxurious laboratory for a troubled world. Maggie's I.Q. undoubtedly rates mention, but the only personal detail I recall is her shade of lipstick. Pink Taffy.*

(continued)

Peru—Luz Arias. *The owner of this creamy complexion types Spanish into English and back again. She was born in Lima in 1928. Five years ago, Miss Arias came here as one of six winners in a Peruvian competition for secretaries to the UN delegation. Now she is one of three, the others having departed for matrimony. It seems unlikely that she can stay single much longer, or have much time free to pursue her three principal private interests—cooking, tennis, and riding. "Any Peruvian boys in the running?" I asked. She was frank on this point. "They're around," she said, "but I avoid them. I like American men."*

France—Paule Arauzo. *After nine months in New York, Miss Arauzo remains as thoroughly French as the Place de la Concorde. Neither her English nor my French got us very far when I met her at her desk, flanked by an electric typewriter, a transcribing machine, and earphones. When asked her age, she consulted in rapid French with her neighbors. After much giggling, she said, "Ze age of andeescretion." After the photographer produced his Spanish, this was established as twenty-eight. With some difficulty, I ascertained that she likes New York, commutes from Flushing ("Floosheeng," that is), and lives with a "frand."*

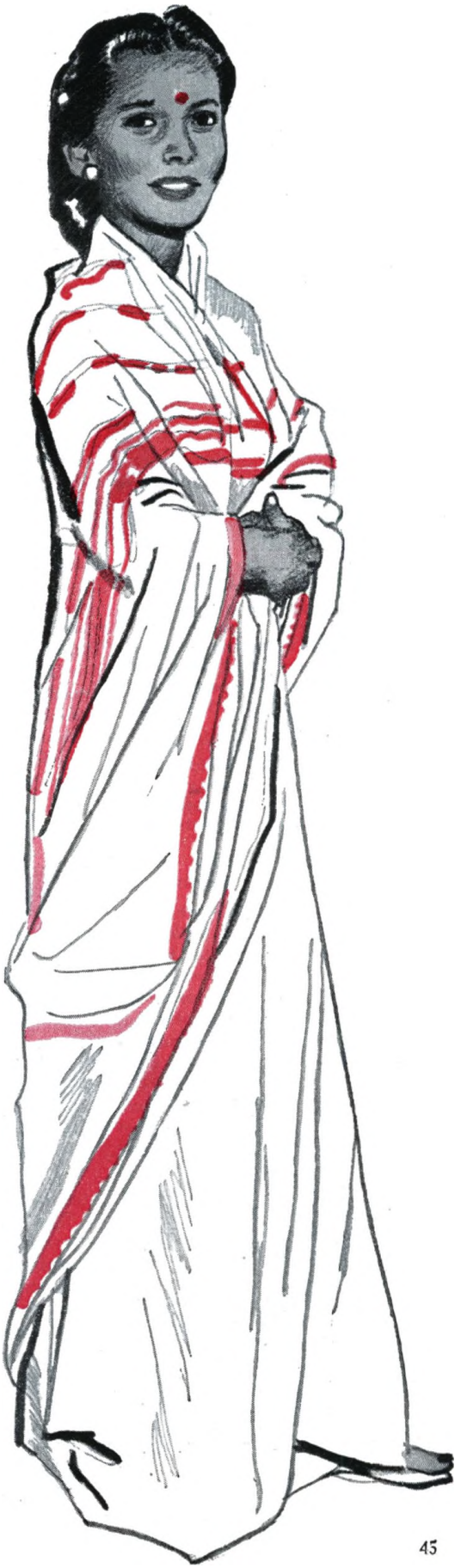
(continued)

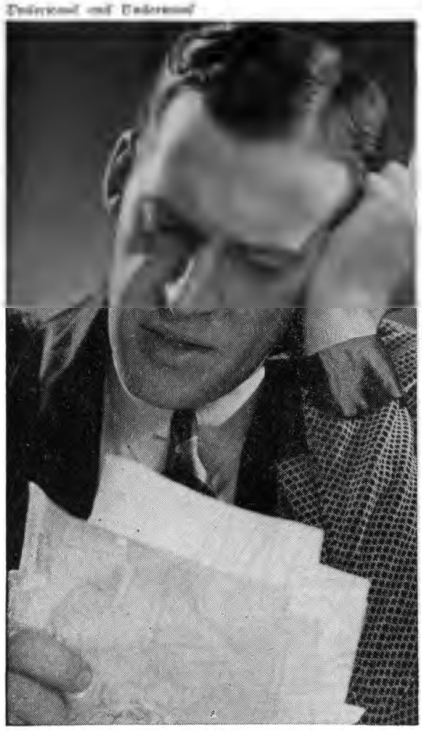
Argentina—Angela Saavedra. *Although she's a twenty-five-year-old from Buenos Aires, she looks like a teen-ager from Ireland. She has sea-green eyes that turn up at the outside corners, an inviting grin, and a mane of black hair. After one year in the U.S., her English is what you might term piquant. She describes herself now as a South American chatterbox. "You learn a lot of English fast," she said, "when you talk as much as I do." Her hobby is "sculptor," and after meeting Miss Saavedra I can easily picture her being busier with sculptors than with sculpture. She looks to me like a* femme fatale, *fun-and-frolic division.*

Philippine Islands—Isabel Sevilla. *She says she's thirty, but she looks a mere twenty, with huge brown eyes and short blue-black hair. She's five-feet-six-and-a-half, and slim as a stalk of sugar cane. "I'm simple and conservative," she said, "and I hope you won't print anything like my last interview." She frowned. "They asked me what my big ambition was. I told them, and when it came out in the newspaper, it said that my big ambition was to get married and have ten children." There was a pained silence. I asked, "Well, what is your big ambition?" She smiled. "Get married and have ten children," she said.*

India—Lyra Srinivasan. *This tiny girl is a Social Affairs Officer with the United Nations Social Welfare Department. Though she can't quite reach five feet on tiptoe, her flowing sari made her look taller than the full-sized ladies nearby. She weighs just eighty-eight pounds, not counting a few ounces for the sari. She is a Harvard graduate, and has the poise of an Amazon. I told her I had always supposed the red dot just north of Indian eyebrows to be a sign of caste. "Not at all," she said. "A dab of* kum-kum *is a sign of happiness. Any woman can put it on." When we parted, she gave me the firm handshake of a Harvard man.*

THE END





. . . Before the

You can have a rare old time ducking him. Of course, he'll win in the end

BY DICK REDDY

Dear Customer:
We haven't seen you for quite a while and can't help but wonder if we have failed to give you the full satisfaction that is the watchword at Schmaltz's.

Remember, we at Schmaltz's pride ourselves on courtesy, service, and dependability. Our savings to you, we sincerely believe, are unmatched. We extend to you a cordial invitation to come in and compare.

Yours for value,
SCHMALTZ BROTHERS

This could be an ordinary sales-promotion letter, but the seasoned installment buyer instantly recognizes it for what it is: a collection letter. It doesn't say, "Get in here and pay up that overdue account." It's just a casual reminder that the old firm is still in business and that you haven't been forgotten, you tardy rascal, you!

Note the artistry of the thing. No mention of money, no crude reference to payments due or overdue. Even the signature is guileless, free of the slightest hint of a credit department. But the veteran bill-dodger recognizes this as only the first in a series of letters that will finally resort to harsh phrases like "unavoidable legal action."

The unskilled layman is usually stymied by the bare-faced collection letter that follows this gentle opener. He naïvely believes there is only one solution: to pay up. His reaction to the letter depends upon his mental and emotional patterns.

The "debtophobe" (common cash-payer) is so terrified at the sight of a bill that he slips all envelopes bearing a creditor's name into a far corner of the letter basket. He may even try to lose them in his desk.

The "let-'em-wait" (morbid desk-pounder) type, on the other hand, immediately takes offense and thunders about "exorbitant profits" and "poor service." It was undoubtedly one of this type who wrote this classic:

Gentlemen:

Every month my wife and I put all of our unpaid bills in a hat. I then blindfold my wife and she draws out one bill. This bill we pay. If you do not cease your dunning letters, we will stop putting your bills in the hat.

There is a third, case-hardened type, who resolutely ignores all unpleasant mail. This requires a self-control far beyond the ordinary defaulter, so we can safely skip over this type.

The correct technique for dealing with collection letters is to devise a series of polite replies that will play for time. If well done, these replies may gain as much as eight months before the writer is finally treed. They will also stir respect in professional credit circles.

The first collection letter, the "We haven't seen you, etc." type, can be safely ignored. This, however, is not true of the second letter, which may vary from firm to firm but usually runs something like this:

Dear Customer:

We appreciate how easy it is to overlook things these days when all of us are so busy, and it occurred to us that you may have forgotten the small balance still due on your account.

We should appreciate hearing from you. Perhaps we can work out some arrangement that will be helpful to you.

Very truly yours,
J. M. GOOCH
Schmaltz Brothers

Observe the subtle change here. Both the words "balance" and "account" are used. True, there is no implied threat, but there is an invitation to at least open negotiations. It still isn't signed by the credit manager, but before long you will find that J. M. Gooch *is* the credit manager.

The unprofessional might be tempted to ignore this letter, since Schmaltz's hasn't gotten really tough. This, however, would be a grave tactical error, since an answer provides a valuable opportunity to stall for several weeks. If you don't answer, you'll get Letter No. 3 that much sooner.

This sort of reply is in order:

Gentlemen:

I was surprised to learn that my account is overdue. Dealing with Schmaltz's has been such a habit with me and my family that we have apparently come to take our little account for granted.

My household budget is arranged to cover regular expenditures on the thirty-first of the month. You will receive my check at that time.

Now, observe the part about the thirty-first of the month. This is significant. The idea is to delay writing this letter until immediately *after* the first. This way, you achieve a whole month's reprieve, plus the time it takes afterward for Schmaltz's to catch up with the fact that your little account is still unaccounted for.

Unfortunately, the end of the month will come. At this point, three courses

Bill Collector Shows Up

are open to you: (1) Wait for another letter. (2) Send a small check. (3) Pay up.

The second choice, a small check, is wisest. It reassures Schmaltz's, but more important, it gives you a breathing spell that may last another month.

If you take the first choice and decide to wait for another letter, you won't have long to wait. This is the real opener in the collection-letter barrage. It is known as the Regretful Letter.

Dear Sir:

At the present date we have not received your check to cover your overdue account, although your letter of the second indicated your intention to remit.

It would be regrettable if this matter were to imperil our hitherto satisfactory relationship. However, it will be impossible for us to further delay settling the account, and we should appreciate hearing from you no later than Monday next, at which date we shall expect payment in full.

Very truly yours,
H. G. RADISH
Credit Department
Schmaltz Brothers

Two things are immediately apparent. An ultimatum has been delivered and the signature is new. The signature is interesting from the point of view of retail psychological warfare. Even the most unresponsive delinquent senses at once that Schmaltz's has put a special man on his case. But don't be rattled. It may only be our old friend Gooch.

An answer is unavoidable. And, even worse, so is a small check. This will bring Schmaltz's accounting department into the picture and that will add days, even weeks, to the contest. It will also establish the fact that it *is* possible to get money out of you. This heartens the credit department. The letter should be brief but well planned:

Dear Mr. Radish:

I must apologize for the delay in settling my account. It was my hope that it would be possible for me to close it out long before this very late date. Unfortunately, a domestic crisis has temporarily tied my hands.

Your concern is understandable, and I shall make every effort to see to it that you receive my check for payment in full by the thirty-first. If this proves impossible, I shall remit a substantial portion of the total at that time. I am enclosing a small check as an immediate token of my desire to settle my account.

I shall be grateful for any help you can give me in satisfactorily clearing up this painful matter.

You're losing ground now, but you're not ready to surrender yet. You can figure on a few weeks more, though, before the switch is thrown.

Radish, especially if your last paragraph had a sufficiently plaintive tone, will probably hold off the dogs until the thirty-first. Again, of course, you must take pains to send the letter *after* the thirty-first. Radish probably won't reply, but he will await the thirty-first with keen interest.

It's been a good fight, but make your plans for the thirty-first. You have three choices: (1) Pay up in full. (2) Pay a substantial portion of the total. (3) Brace yourself.

Since you have succeeded in stalling Schmaltz's for about six months, paying in full will not cause you any serious loss of face. Paying a substantial portion will not really damage your reputation in professional credit circles, either, but it will keep your morning mail cluttered until some sort of truce is reached.

The third choice, waiting for action, is an exhilarating experience for those fond of dangerous living, but it is not recommended for the faint-hearted. It calls for steely nerves, the ability to ignore ringing telephones, and a rudimentary knowledge of simple disguises, plus children wise beyond their years. At this stage, you don't know whether to expect another letter or a Call, by telephone or In Person.

A Call may terrify in prospect, but if your children are fond of pretending and your skill at dialect is good, you can always be the new tenant who "yus don't know." You have a wide choice of accents, but once you've picked one, it's wisest to stick to it.

Since we are chiefly concerned here with the art of replying to collection letters, let us suppose that Schmaltz decides to take a sporting chance on one more letter before finalizing the thing. This is about what they'll have to say:

Dear Sir:

Since you have shown no disposition to settle your delinquent account, we have no choice but to turn to legal procedure. This is to notify you that we have instituted court proceedings.

Very truly yours,
SNAPPER, SNAPPER, SNAPPER
AND PARCH
Attorneys at Law

This last letter calls for a good deal of aplomb on your part. You can assume that Snapper, Snapper, Snapper, and Parch are (a) under a retainership from Schmaltz's, (b) hired for your benefit, or (c) a fiction of the credit department. If you can't find Snapper, Snapper, Snapper, and Parch in the phone book, you can assume that (c) is true, and you've got at least an additional week's time.

But whether S. S. S. and P. are fact or fiction, you can consider that, regrettably, the time to cough up has finally come. Of course, if you just *can't*, you might refer back to Schmaltz's original letter and ask for further amplification, but this is almost entirely the specialty of professionals and is risky for amateurs.

Let's assume that you manage to scrape together enough money to pay up the account. You write the check with a sigh of relief, carry it around a few days, then finally remember to mail it. You feel like a new man. It's all over!

Just one moment. There's one more letter on the way, the first of many. It comes about a week after you settle up.

Dear Customer:

Perhaps you haven't been watching Schmaltz's ads, but unparalleled bargains are now within your reach. We wouldn't like to think that you had missed this golden opportunity.

Since you are one of our most valued customers, may we offer you the special inducement of No Down Payment and many, *many* weeks to pay. Just a few cents a day can mean ownership of any of the amazing bargains now featured at Schmaltz's.

Yours for value,
J. M. GOOCH
Credit Manager
Schmaltz Brothers

THE END

British Travel Association

THE LUEDICKES ENJOY attending clan gatherings and watching the intricate steps of the Highland fling. Horseback riding, music festivals, and sightseeing are highlights of their leisure time.

AMERICAN FAMILY ABROAD

The Luedickes of Scotland

No stingy-Scotchman jokes for them! They're amazed by the Scots' generosity—and their passion for football

BY IRENE CORBALLY KUHN

If you're an American construction engineer weary of yanking up your family by the roots every year and moving on to the next project, the Clare Alexander Luedickes have discovered a wonderful solution for you—go abroad. Until Clare's company sent him to Scotland three years ago, the Luedickes had spent their whole married life in a gypsy-like trek from one booming town to the next in the South and Southwest. In ten years they moved in and out of eleven cities and towns.

When the Luedickes—Clare, who is forty-five; his wife, Dorothy; twelve-year-old Ruthann; and three-year-old Connie—arrived in Scotland, their first home was a middle-class family hotel in the heart of Edinburgh. Soon, however, they happily moved into their own place, a lovely cottage in Juniper Green, a handsome suburb some five miles outside of Edinburgh, within easy reach of the city.

"It really was marvelous at first," Mrs. Luedicke recalls. "For a hundred dollars a month we had the place completely furnished—with such unusual (for Scotland) features as a refrigerator and wall-to-wall carpeting. And the space was everything we could ask for. We had two bedrooms, a good bath, a lovely lounge—that's a living room—a dining room, and a big kitchen with plenty of cupboard space. But in the kitchen was a thing called an Esse cooker, which I loathed. It's a stove that burns only anthracite coal, and I was always shaking it or kicking it. I could never regulate it, and I don't know how many meals I ruined."

A Losing Struggle to Keep Warm

Apart from the erratic Esse cooker, the Luedickes lived comfortably in the cottage through that first spring and summer. But when fall came, and with it, the bitter damp cold that Scotland is known for, the absence of central heating and storm doors and windows made living in the cottage a constant—and losing—struggle to keep warm. Since the elements obviously had the upper hand, Dorothy Luedicke started house hunting again, and landed the five-room furnished apartment they now occupy. Their rent here is twenty-two pounds ($61.60) a month, and though the rooms are small and boxy, each has its own electric heater. The flat's central location—it's only a few minutes' walk from Princes Street, Edinburgh's fashionable shopping center—is ideal for the Luedickes, who love to entertain.

The Luedickes, informal and easy-going, began making friends as soon as they arrived in Scotland. The letters of introduction they brought with them to

several well-known Scottish engineers and government officials began an active, interesting social life for them.

They Met Queen Elizabeth

"I guess our most exciting social event was the garden party at Holyrood House for Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip," Dorothy says. "There were seven thousand Scotsmen there and us—all dressed to the teeth. We got to shake hands with the queen. She's really lovely—so much prettier than her pictures and so tiny! The next day I was shown through Holyrood House and saw the apartment the queen had stayed in. Not a speck of plumbing. She might just as well have been the first Queen Elizabeth for all the comforts she had there."

Hospitality in their small flat had its limitations until the Luedickes hit on the perfect solution. "We have some Scottish friends with big old rambling houses, and whenever we want to give a large dinner party, one of them lends us his house. Naturally, we supply the food and the drinks, and it's fun all around, especially since we can all forget about the food ration for a while. When we give a party, we break down and send home to the States for a couple of hams and canned butter and luxuries like that. Of course, the Scots aren't permitted to do that, and we only do it to celebrate once in a while."

Since Clare is an American civilian working for a private American company—the Lummus Company, a firm specializing in building chemical and petroleum plants—the Luedickes can't buy American foods, cigarettes, and other luxuries from the Post Exchange. "We get by on sixteen ounces of butter and ten ounces of sugar a week, and a tiny roast, which is our whole meat ration for the week. It's never enough, but we have to be satisfied. The Scots have been on rations for years, so when I get food packages from home, I like to share them with the folks here. The Scots will share anything they've got, but I have to fight to make them take anything. I don't know where those jokes about stingy Scots ever originated. I've never known more generous people."

The Luedicke family's daily routine is geared to Clare's schedule, which is long and rigorous. This is because of the urgency of the project he heads—the construction of a giant chemical plant. His job is a responsible one, and he's paid over $10,000 a year. Everyone gets up by six o'clock, and after an early breakfast, Clare drives the twenty-five miles to Grangemouth, the construction site, in a small British-made company car. He usually lunches in a nearby pub with a few of the men, so it is evening before he sees his family again.

Clare is lean and compact, as befits a man who spends all his time outdoors, climbing rigging, towers, and structural steel, and his face is very brown and

(continued)

A. G. Ingram, Ltd.

OLD CASTLES attract engineer Clare; Dorothy and the girls enjoy the colorful uniforms of the guards. Fortunately, in Scotland, they're found together.

A. G. Ingram, Ltd.

AMERICAN MAGAZINES are sorely missed by the Luedickes, who feast upon them whenever they can. Their apartment has a central location but no central heat.

They long for supermarkets, mass-produced clothes

deeply marked with a crisscross of fine lines etched by sun and wind.

This is his first experience working abroad, and he has had to get used to the Scottish way of doing things—for example, the Saturday shutdown. The 400 Scots he supervises work uncomplainingly a six-day week outdoors from early in the morning until evening, for the union-scale 41 to 75 cents an hour, but they would all quit if they had to work Saturdays. For Saturday is football day—the Scots are vigorous rugby-football fans—and thus practically sacred to the Scottish workingman. So Luedicke had to give up his Sundays with his family and resign himself to working instead.

"Besides that," he says, "I had to learn a whole new vocabulary. There are a lot of special phrases and different names for things that I had a hard time remembering at first—like calling a wrench a 'spanner' and a funnel a 'tundish.' "

Dorothy Luedicke's days are as active and busy as her husband's. A wiry, quick-moving woman, she laughs easily and has a friendly nature and a lively curiosity. She met Clare at the University of Wisconsin, where she was taking summer classes in journalism. He already had a bachelor's degree in engineering from the university. After they were married in 1940, she gave up her career ideas, although she has written a column called "Make Mine Scotch" for the *Sentinel-Record* in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

The Gathering of the Clan

"If I had to list the things about Scotland that have impressed us most," she says, "I'd put down Loch Lomond—its water is the most wonderful pure blue; the fox hunts and the point-to-point steeplechase; the 'ceilidh'—gathering of the clan—we went to. It was the Clan MacLeod, and MacLeods came from eleven countries to pay tribute to Flora MacLeod, who was seventy-two and head of the clan. She lives in the Castle Dunvegan on the Isle of Skye, the oldest inhabited house in Scotland. And, of course, there's St. Andrew's golf course and all the magnificent churches and abbeys and palaces we've visited."

There are, however, a few things about Scotland that the family thoroughly dislikes—coal fires, cold pancakes and biscuits (called scones), the prices of cigarettes (56 cents a pack), cold, damp houses, and socialized medicine.

Dorothy Luedicke's day begins with seeing her husband off to work. Then it's time to send Ruthann, the elder girl, to school. Ruthie attends a private school within walking distance of the apartment. Her parents pay about $358 a year for her school, and are well pleased with the education she's getting. She's taking algebra, French, Latin, and geometry, the equivalent of ninth-grade work in the States.

"Ruthie spends almost as much time on horseback as she does in school," her mother related ruefully. "She's simply crazy about horses. We never had anything like that at home. We couldn't afford it."

Ruthie rides "Mousy" and "Roanoke," a neighbor's mounts, and she's out on them two or three times a week. "Last summer she took a special training course doing all the hard dirty jobs like 'mucking out'—that's cleaning—the stable, grooming the horses, and polishing tack. We didn't think she'd stick to it, but she did, all summer long. We had to pay three pounds ($8.40) for that dubious privilege," her mother said, smiling.

"Ruthie knows all the horsy lingo, even if we don't," her mother went on. "The first time she rode with the hunt, her father and I were terribly excited and went out to watch. We asked someone if the fox had been released yet. After all, that's the way they do it in Virginia. Well, the man was insulted. The idea of releasing a fox! That was for sissies. Scots hunt the fox, he told me. The hounds seek it out, and then the riders come chasing after. Well, we stood there waiting, and all of a sudden the fox came along. We didn't know then that as spectators we were supposed to drop to the ground. We just stood there, cheering our child, and naturally, when the fox saw us, he veered. The hunters were all very annoyed, because the fox jumped the fence and disappeared into the woods and they had to start chasing him all over again. But we didn't find this out till later. We were too busy watching Ruthie."

While Ruthann is at school, Dorothy Luedicke devotes herself to three-year-old Connie and to running her house. She does most of the cooking, all her own marketing, and a good share of the housework. "Shopping takes an enormous amount of time here," she says. "Because of rationing, there are lines in all the stores."

Shopping for clothes in Edinburgh will soon be a problem for Dorothy. The two-year supply she brought for herself is running out. The children, of course, have long since outgrown their American clothes. Clothing is expensive in Scotland, and there's a heavy purchase tax on almost every item. Cashmere sweaters, for instance, for which Scotland is world-famous, cost from 5 to 7 pounds ($14 to $19.60). And since mass production of clothes is limited in the British Isles, much clothing is hand-tailored. A dressmaker may charge 14 to 18 guineas ($41.16 to $52.92) to make a dress. Fine tweeds for coats or suits cost $5 to $8 a yard.

No Teen-age Baby Sitters

Dorothy Luedicke has two part-time servants—Mrs. Thompson, who is paid two shillings (28 cents) an hour and comes in four days a week to help clean the house, prepare Connie's food when Mrs. Luedicke is out, and help with the personal laundry, and Mrs. Macready, the nanny (the Scots don't have teen-age sitters), who comes in to stay with Ruthann and Connie whenever the Luedickes go out.

The Luedickes' outings are usually simple affairs. They enjoy visiting and sightseeing, and they manage to get to the theatre frequently. Every play booked to open in London's West End tours the provinces first with the original cast.

The Luedickes seldom eat out. Edinburgh is not a city of great restaurants, and most entertaining is done at home. If they do dine out, however, there are a few good places where a meal costs somewhere between 30 and 35 shillings ($4.20 and $4.90).

They are now looking forward to spending a two-week vacation on the Continent and then returning to finish the job in Edinburgh. After that—well, "You can't plan too far ahead in this business," Clare Luedicke says with a smile. "You never know whether your next job will take you to Saudi Arabia or Texas. We'd like to stay abroad a while longer. But in another few years, when Ruthie is ready for high school, we'll have to think about settling back home so she can have some roots."

Mrs. Luedicke nodded in agreement. "But," she said thoughtfully, "she'll miss the horses terribly." THE END

TWEEDS AND WOOLENS, which make up the colorful regalia of the bagpiper, are plentiful in Scotland, but the Luedickes find the price stiff—$5 to $8 a yard.

British Travel Association

Someday I'll Kill You

Love was something she cornered, like an animal at bay. "Do you love me? Always? How much?" Finally, shockingly, she got her answer

BY FAITH BALDWIN ILLUSTRATED BY COBY WHITMORE

Monica Marvin died early this year, at the age of seventy-five. At least that's what the record reads. I know better. I know that she was fifty-six at the time of her death, a vital, beautiful woman, and that she died as she had lived, playing to an audience, in evening dress.

My name before I married was Alice Simons. I was fourteen years Monica's junior, and came to live with her as secretary-companion when I was about twenty-four.

You will have read in the newspaper that she was one of the great dramatic actresses of her time, but you will probably not remember her, because shortly after that first death, nearly twenty years ago, she retired from the stage and went to live in seclusion in a small northern New York village. I went there to live with her a dozen years ago, following the death of my husband. Her letter asking me to do so ended a long estrangement between us. She pointed out that she needed me and that we were both alone.

Monica, however, had one child, an adopted daughter, Jenifer, and at the time of her official death, the papers mentioned the fact that Jenifer, Lady Carstairs, was with her husband and children in South Africa and could not return in time for the services. The more sensational press excavated considerable ancient history: Jenifer's elopement at eighteen, which completely alienated mother and child, and her subsequent divorce and remarriage. Monica's fortune was sizable, and when her will was probated, it was noticed that "for good and sufficient reasons" she left a token dollar to Lady Carstairs, who did not dispute the will.

I suppose I must begin at the beginning, a great many years ago. Monica Marvin was born Emily Janet Dawes, in an Iowa town, where I was born fourteen years later, her distant cousin. I do not remember her, but she was a legend in the family. The daughter of a pharmacist, the granddaughter of a clergyman, she ran away when she was eighteen, with the publicity man of a third-rate road company that gave six performances

She turned from his amused face to the girl. "You!" she cried.

in the ancient opera house in our town.

He could not marry her. And her family made no effort to trace her and bring her home, nor did they notify the police and swear out a warrant against the man, whose name I have forgotten, although Monica probably told it to me.

When I was growing up, Monica, under her stage name, was creating a furor in New York. Her mother had died, her father remarried. Now and then I overheard my parents discussing Monica. Their attitudes were dissimilar and typical. My mother said something about the wicked flourishing as the green bay tree, and my father said, "Poor child."

Of course, word came back of her great triumph, a star at twenty. This was just a year after her marriage to a well-known producer greatly her senior. Then came news of her divorce from him in 1900 when she was twenty-two. By the time I was old enough to be interested, she was married to her second husband.

Everyone knew the little girl was adopted. It made Monica's actions even more admirable

After I graduated from college, I went to work as a secretary. I had no special talents, but I was attractive enough and moderately ambitious, so when I was twenty-three, I left home and went to New York. My family, of course, was opposed to my leaving, but as I had a little money of my own, a legacy from an aunt, they could do nothing about it.

Not long after my arrival in New York, where I lived in a very respectable boardinghouse, I went to the theatre with two girls, both, like myself, from small towns, and we sat in the gallery and watched Monica. She was of the old school of acting, no shred of passion left unuttered.

After the matinee, my friends raved about Monica. "I wish I had her figure," Cecily said, sighing. Monica's figure was famous, and she kept it, or practically so, to the end of her days. But in 1916 she had, of course, no figure discernible to the naked eye. In the play, an English drawing-room drama of adultery and repentance, Monica's most discussed frock was a chemise, then high fashion. It effectually masked her beautiful bust, incredibly small waist, and slender hips, hips that must have been something of a drawback in the early years of the century but that, she afterward told me, then were brought to standard by padding.

Cecily said, "She must be a million years old. It's wonderful what they can do with make-up."

"She's about thirty-eight," I said.

The two girls looked at me, startled.

"You couldn't possibly know," said Cecily.

I answered, as carelessly as possible, "She's sort of a cousin."

They screamed in unison, and Cecily said reproachfully, "You might have told me; you could have taken us backstage."

I shook my head. "She doesn't know I'm alive. I was four years old when she left home. Besides, I wouldn't think of it."

But afterward, I kept thinking about going backstage. It would be so exciting. But maybe Monica Marvin would hate seeing anyone from home, not that the old scandal wasn't over and done with. To me, at twenty-three, that scandal was merely a romantic, remote episode.

Eventually I wrote her, at the theatre, and had an immediate reply, in her own large but clear hand, on the thickest, creamiest paper I'd ever seen. She said she was enchanted to hear from me and would I care to come to her house on the following Sunday afternoon.

I was in a fever of excitement. I wore my best hat, white straw with great wired ruby velvet loops, ornamented with pearl-headed pins and a veil. My little face must have looked entirely lost; it was a hat for a tall, stately woman. My dress was of taffeta and, I thought, daringly short.

The house in which Monica Marvin lived alone, following the death of her third husband, was small, narrow, built of stone, and on upper Fifth Avenue. I was kept waiting in a marble-paved foyer for a time while the manservant, the first I had ever encountered, went to announce me. The foyer was furnished in what, even to my ignorance, appeared priceless antiques. Finally I was shown into a large, ornate drawing room.

Monica, even offstage, looked much younger than she was. She had a way of walking that was triumphant youth itself. Her long reddish-brown hair was wrapped around and around her head. She wore considerable make-up, the beautiful mouth heavily rouged, the great dark eyes emphasized. She had on a trailing tea gown of lace over pale green silk, with fresh violets caught at the breast.

She held me at arm's length, looking, smiling. At close range, her skin was as a girl's, and if she had lines, they were not discernible.

She said, "Is it really Alice? The last time I saw you, you were in a gocart."

She made me sit beside her on a little French sofa. The butler brought tea and sherry, little cakes and sandwiches. Monica asked, "Tea or sherry?" Then she smiled. "How about both?" she asked. "Or, perhaps you do not drink?"

I looked, I hoped, sophisticated. I said, "Well, they wouldn't like it at home, but sometimes I have wine with dinner."

So, I had tea, sherry, and too much to eat, and talked a great deal because she seemed to want me to. She had the gift for drawing you out, for behaving as if you were the only person in the world. I told her all about our town, the changes, the marriages, births, and deaths, and about my parents who hadn't wished me to come to New York but who faithfully wrote me, with loving anxiety.

She said, "Mine are dead now"—she slanted a quick look—"except my stepmother, whom I never saw."

And then she asked, "Did they talk much about . . .? Oh, but you wouldn't remember."

I replied eagerly that of course they talked, that they were proud of her. Everyone knew when she had a new play, when she went to London to act, when royalty came to applaud.

She flushed a little, her eyes shone. Then she said, "You're quite a pretty girl, Alice. I suppose you have lots of beaux?"

It was my turn to color. I said, honestly, that I knew a few boys, mostly from home.

"Not thinking of getting married?" she asked.

I shook my head, not meaning it. Every girl thinks of getting married, and I was twenty-three.

She said, in that vibrant, velvet voice, "I've been married three times." She waved her hand toward a small table on which stood three photographs, all of men. "I suppose you knew about that?"

I said I did.

"When I ran away with Frank," she said dispassionately, "I didn't know he was married. When I found out, I left him, and by that time I had a little part

in a new play, two entrances, as many exits, two lines. I was grateful to Frank for foisting me on a producer who was under obligation to him. The show closed in about three months, but then I had another part, a better one. I married that producer," she said. She looked at the picture of a dark, fat man with kind eyes. "He was good to me, fifteen years older and a relentless taskmaster. He overworked me, but he made me a star. When I was twenty-two, I needed him no more than he me. He had been married and divorced. He was crazy mad about his children. I had no time to have a child. Besides, I had met Amos. . . ."

Amos Weatherly. I looked at his picture: a handsome man, lean and gray.

"He was forty," she said, "a childless widower. He was immensely rich and a collector. He collected me, and gave me, among other things, this house."

I asked, hardly daring, "He didn't mind your being on the stage?"

"Why, no," she said smiling. "He liked it very much. It isn't sensible to collect something and then hide it, is it? After he died—"

Monica looked at me sharply. She knew I knew that Amos had committed suicide. After a moment, she went on smoothly, "—I was, of course, prostrate." Her mouth drooped, her eyes filled, I wanted to take her in my thin young arms and comfort her. Then she said, "Three years later I met Jack, and we were married." She added, as if it didn't matter, "He was a good deal younger than I."

Eight years, to be exact, with no money, but from his photograph—which I had seen in the paper a year ago—extraordinarily handsome. He had enlisted in Canada in 1914, a year after their marriage, and been killed a year later, flying in France.

I don't remember much more of that day. She said I must come to the theatre and dine in her dressing room and that she would write me. When I left, she kissed my cheek. She said, "You're so terribly *young*."

I didn't, of course, hear from her. I had my little hour in the boardinghouse, and then people forgot, and after my first disappointment, I, too.

Then the following winter I had a letter from Monica asking me to dine with her one evening. She was rehearsing for a new play.

We dined in a paneled room, the dark polished table in a pool of light from a crystal chandelier, more silver, crystal, and porcelain than I had ever seen, with a man and a maid to wait upon us. She ate little, and her wine glass was not refilled. During dinner she told me about a trip to Europe she had made and the new play. "Old stuff," she said. "One tires of it, really, but it will be popular." She gave me her enchanting smile. "I have a new leading man, talented and extremely good-looking."

Later we went upstairs to what she called her boudoir. The bedroom was large, the paneling white-carved in loops and garlands. I remember her dressing table, loaded with gold-topped jars and bottles, the mirror set in pitiless light. The boudoir was full of pictures of Monica, and of no one else. And I'd never seen such costly clutter, the little tables burdened with jade, silver, and ivory.

She said, "I asked you to come, Alice, because you seem to me such a sensible girl. Also, I remember you told me you worked as secretary to someone in a social agency. I think you can help me."

I couldn't believe that, of course.

She said, "I want to adopt a baby."

I suppose my face showed my utter astonishment, for she smiled a little. Then she said, "I'll try to explain."

She lighted a cigarette and offered me one. I had begun to smoke some months before but was still a little afraid of it. But now I took one and let it smolder between my fingers, listening to the lovely voice which could one moment be dark with tragedy and the next be gaiety itself. It wasn't gay now.

She said a curious thing. She said, as harshly as she could, "I must have an exclusive love." She looked at me. "You don't understand that, do you?"

After a while I said, "I think so."

"No. You are thinking, a man's love." She shrugged her superb shoulders. "Dismiss that from your mind. I've been married three times; all three men were crazily, jealously, in love with me. But I was not that unique love, Alice. Frank, to whom I wasn't married, also loved his wife and children, but more than anything else, himself. Then I married David, who couldn't bear me out of his sight and yet whose sons were the real sum total of his existence. After that, Amos, who killed himself because I wasn't faithful to him." She lifted a dark, winged eyebrow, and commented, "You're scarlet. I haven't been faithful to anyone, Alice, once I knew that they couldn't give me what I had to have. After Amos, Jack. But he loved something else, too: flying, danger, man talk, war. . . ."

She stopped to put out the cigarette and light another. "I've had no children. I was too excited over my career when David and I were married. Amos wished none. He was more interested in the preservation of my figure than the perpetuation of his name. And before Jack and I married, I underwent an operation." She paused, then went on. "I won't marry again. I daresay I'll go on acting until I die. I am not domestic by nature. I am not interested in fetching a man his slippers. I don't have to be married to have a man fetch mine. I have all the money I'll ever need. I can earn more—the motion pictures offer me fabulous salaries—but I refuse. The method is too crude, and there is no audience, none you can hear laugh and cry, none from which you feel the great warm wave rising to crash over you. I live my own life, Alice, and harm no one," she said quite grandly. "I am even discreet in a time that is, according to earlier standards, very indiscreet indeed. How much they lost, not knowing secrecy," she added, as if to herself.

"I'll—call it, fall in love again," she went on, and her eyes flashed over me. "I have, in fact, recently done so. But neither in lover nor husband do you obtain what a woman—what I, at any rate—must have. I believe that given a chance to—to produce it, you can have it from a child. Do you understand?"

I said humbly, "I'm trying." I didn't.

She said, "In your agency, you must have ways—there are so many waifs. I want an infant. There should be no difficulty. I can provide everything for him."

"Him?" I repeated.

She said, "I think, yes, a boy."

I had been thinking, too. Now I took my courage in both hands. "There is a good deal of red tape and investigation—" I stumbled over the name by which she bade me call her—"Monica."

"What of it?" she asked imperiously.

I said miserably, "They're strict sometimes. I mean, your being on the stage, and all . . ."

"By 'all,' you mean gossip," she interpreted lightly. "Still there is no proof."

"Even so," I told her truthfully, "there would be delays, and perhaps you would have to take an older child, if any."

"No. I want him to be conscious of me from practically the first breath he draws," she said stubbornly.

I thought then of the boardinghouse and a girl who cried nights into her pillow, a desperate girl.

I said, "Monica, I know a girl who is going to have a baby in about seven months. She isn't married and doesn't dare tell her people. She hasn't any money except what she earns."

Her eyes were big. She asked, "Could I see her? Tell her, for me, that the child shall have everything, everything. But she must relinquish all claim. And she'll be paid, Alice, well paid. Tell me about her quickly."

I told her.

So it was arranged. A girl left the boardinghouse, went quietly away, and stayed in a little town on Long Island. Her baby was born, and was brought to

"Darling," she said, "I've never found it necessary to be faithful to any of my husbands."

Monica's house in the arms of a nurse. But it wasn't a boy. It was a girl. Jenifer.

She'd been there just a little while when Monica sent for me. Would I come to live with her, she asked, on a salary, as Jill-of-all-trades—social secretary, companion, executive housekeeper—and, as Monica added, "My respectability." She looked at me deeply. "I must have that," she said, "a cloak, a—shelter."

So I moved into the gray stone house, where I had a suite, as the trained nurse, and later the baby nurse, and still later the governess, had theirs. We were all there, I suppose, to wait not on Monica but on Jenifer, but under orders.

Monica's orders. She took care of Jenifer from the first. Her rooms connected with the baby's. If Jenifer woke at night, it was Monica, if she were home, who went to her. When she was ill, however many nurses, it was Monica who nursed her. Everyone knew, naturally, that Jenifer was adopted. But had she borne her, Monica could not have agonized nor sacrificed more, they said.

Not everything, of course. She no longer vanished discreetly between stage activities but took other methods, because Jenifer could not go with her. She trusted her to none of us, except when she had to, physically. No one reprimanded Jenifer or gave her orders, except Monica, unless Monica was away.

It was quite a while before I began to be frightened.

Monica never mentioned her disappointment that Jenifer was a girl. Nor did she seem disappointed when Jenifer gave no promise of beauty. This amazed me a little.

We were together in the boudoir one day, and Jenifer was modeling her new frocks. Plain, costly, charming. She was three years old, an olive-skinned child with curiously slanted, rather light blue eyes, straight heavy black hair, and a small, sulky mouth.

Monica spoke to me. She said, "She will never be pretty, Alice, but she can become interesting and distinguished."

The baby came to put her hand on Monica's knee. She said, in her birdlike voice, "Pretty."

"Who is pretty?" asked Monica.

Jenifer said, "Mama." She looked with worship into the dark eyes, and Monica caught and kissed her.

Jenifer was even younger when she learned the little trick that so amused and touched Monica's friends, even her lovers. "How much do you love me, darling?" Monica would ask, and the baby arms would go straight up as high as they could reach and make the biggest circle they could.

Monica's affair with her leading man, Philip Stone, lasted quite a long time. I think Jenifer must have been four when it ended. And Monica, who talked to me by now as if I were herself, said frankly, "It was too long. I was as bored as he. Once the first raptures were over, he was using me. . . . Besides there was a girl, quite young. At one time, I thought he was interested in you."

I laughed. "If you did, you behaved well about it. But he wasn't. He tried to use me, too. To learn where you went, whom you met, what you did. I thought it was jealousy."

"Only in a sense."

We were sitting in the boudoir waiting for teatime, as it was not a matinee day, and for Jenifer to come in from her walk. Monica said angrily, "I wish to heaven there'd be an end to it—but I am only forty-two." She looked at me obliquely. "Still waiting for the knight on the white horse?" she asked.

I answered, "Perhaps."

"How old are you now?"

"Twenty-eight."

"I wouldn't be twenty-eight again for anything in the world," she said. Then she struck her hand on the table, and the clutter jumped and rattled. She said, "When does the hunger die, the meaningless hunger?"

I thought, For you, never. For hers was rooted in vanity. To be wanted, to be necessary, that was her hunger. She

could respond, she could ease herself into a love affair as into the hot, scented water in the black marble tub, she could see her reflection in her love affair as she saw it in her many mirrors, but in a softer light. No man, I suppose, could ever complain that she lacked ardor. And if one thought he seduced her, he erred. But when she discovered her rival, her ardor cooled. And she had many rivals, rarely another woman: ambition, wars, a vanity to match her own.

When Jenifer was eleven Monica gave in to Hollywood. The lighting and camerawork were better, she said, and one could use one's voice. She was fifty and looked less than forty, thanks to incessant care, delicate remedial plastic surgery, and her masseuse, who had been with her longer than I. She drank little and now smoked less, and was abstemious in her diet.

I did not accompany her and Jenifer to Hollywood, because shortly before their departure I was married.

I was thirty-six and Jim Drake in his middle forties. I had met him when I returned home to be with my father in his last illness—my mother had died a year before. Jim was visiting an uncle. He was a physician, a general practitioner, a widower without children. My father's doctor asked if he would come in on consultation, and he came. I looked at him across the sick man, restless on the bed. The nurse moved softly in the background. She saw a stocky middle-aged man, with graying hair, gentle eyes, and a stubborn jaw; she also saw a woman approaching forty with a settled figure, wearing glasses. I saw a knight on a white horse and Jim, his love.

Jim offered to wait until Monica came back from Hollywood. "I know how she depends on you," he said.

I said, "I can't afford to wait, Jim, however patient you are!"

"But I'm not," he denied, and kissed me, hard and long.

After a while I said, "I'd rather not go to Hollywood. I can't endure seeing what she is creating with her own hands."

"Jenifer?" he asked.

"Jenifer," I answered.

He said, "You're hipped on the subject, Allie. If ever I saw a devoted mother—"

She had him fooled, too, my good, wonderful Jim.

Jenifer at fifteen was leggy and wore braces on her teeth. She was going to be very tall, so now she was stooped. Her hair was thick, almost unmanageable, and Monica wouldn't permit a permanent. "Maybe later," she said, when Jenifer begged her, "just at the ends." She was old for her age, and young, too, sulky, given to tempers and to passionate self-reproach. "I didn't mean to hurt you," she would cry. "Mother, please forgive me, please."

Monica always forgave her, after a while.

Jenifer was rigorously brought up, her manners perfection, and once she outgrew the coltish stage, her social demeanor would be gracious and charming. Monica would see to that. Now she was old enough, Jenifer went everywhere with Monica. Of course, her proper bedtime must be observed, but, her mother told her, when she was old enough, she would, of course, go with her to evening parties. "My big girl," Monica would say, smiling at her, and adding carelessly, "Alice, in another few years, when she breaks out of this plain, solemn little chrysalis, she may be quite pretty."

In those days Jenifer used to blush a dark, unbecoming red.

Hollywood was probably exciting. I was on my wedding trip, but occasionally I wondered how Jenifer fared. The picture was a critical success and a box-office failure. I thought Monica photographed very well and her acting left nothing to be desired, but the script was somewhat wooden and overstrained. Monica, however, made a great deal of money, even in those Depression years.

When they came home, Jim and I were living on Park Avenue, a few blocks

away, and I went often to the gray stone house. I was, Monica told me, greatly missed. "How could I let you go so easily?" she sighed.

I said, "You had no choice."

"I suppose not." She was silent a moment. Then she said, "Well, you're happy, I can see that. And you deserve it. I think I envy you a little."

I said, "You don't, for I'm not, you know, Jim's exclusive love."

That made her color. She said, "Fancy your remembering that all these years. But why aren't you?"

I said, "He had a happy first marriage, Monica. And above everything else, there is his profession."

Jenifer came in at that point. I looked at her, startled. There was something a little different. A—I cannot express it. . . . Perhaps, sparkle.

After we had talked, Monica said, "You must excuse Jenifer, Alice. She's daydreaming most of the time now."

"Mother!" cried Jenifer.

"Don't shout at me, darling," said Monica. "Always keep your voice down. Shouting is so ugly." She turned to me, smiling. She said, "There was a young man in my picture, a bit player. Perhaps you remember him."

I said, "Oh, Cam Ellis? I thought he was very good."

"Jenifer," said her mother, "thinks he is wonderful. She sleeps with his picture under her pillow."

Jenifer burst into tears. She stammered, "How can you, how *can* you?" and ran from the room.

I said, "You shouldn't, Monica. It's a very sensitive age."

"She'll get over it," said her mother, "and it won't hurt her. She'll forget it soon enough. Ridicule's a good way. Cam is over thirty, although he looks such a baby. And I dislike her becoming so impressionable at this age. I shudder to think of all I must go through to eradicate it."

I said, "It's a good sign, really. She's never noticed boys before."

"Cam isn't a boy. He's been married, for one thing. He knows his way around."

I said, "Jenifer's emotional, Monica." I felt very brave. Being married to Jim gave me a great deal of courage. "And you have made her so."

"I?" She raised her eyebrows. "Oh, you mean her feeling for me."

"Exactly."

For Monica was still asking, in effect, How much do you love me? It was all based on that. Every reprimand, every reproach, every command. If you love me, darling; *because* you love me, Jenny; or, am I to believe you do *not* love me? She never tired of hearing it. How much, how much, more than the whole world?

She said, "That's natural. I'm her mother, not that frightened girl, fifteen years ago." She shrugged. "Jenifer will get over Cam, and quickly."

I rose to go. Jim would soon be home from the office. I said, "Monica, does it ever occur to you that this is just the beginning? For she will grow up, she will fall truly in love, she will marry and leave you."

She looked at me with such anger that I shrank. She said, "Don't say that, don't dare to say it. She will never leave me, Alice. She is *mine!*"

A year or more later, when Jim and I came back from Europe where he'd been at a medical conference, I was at Monica's. Jenifer was at school, and Monica, pouring tea, was telling me, "Cam Ellis was in town last week. He called me. I wouldn't see him, of course, because if I did, Jenifer would. And I am not going through *that* again!"

I'd forgotten Cam Ellis and was trying to remember, when Jenifer burst into the room. The door between it and her rooms had been ajar. Her black hair fell across her blazing eyes, and she was white as ashes. She cried at her mother, "Cam was *here*. Here in New York, and you wouldn't let me see him!"

Her mother said coldly, "Go back into your room and enter properly, Jenifer. Knock and then ask if you may come in."

"I won't!" said Jenifer.

I started to speak, and Monica raised her hand to silence me. She said, "If you love me, you will obey me. This instant."

The child turned and left the room. After quite a long time, she knocked and spoke. She said, "Mother, may I come in?"

"Darling, of course," said Monica. "Come, have your tea."

Jenifer sat down. The braces had gone, and she had acquired the lean young grace Monica had worked for. She was going to be a very striking girl someday.

Jenifer took her cup. Her mother asked her about her schoolwork. Then she said, "I didn't hear you come in," and added, "and I do not like an eavesdropper."

Jenifer's voice shook. She said, "I didn't mean to. I heard you say Cam's name."

Monica smiled. "He's forgotten you, Jenifer."

"I don't believe it," Jenifer said. "He was so wonderful to me."

"Oh, he did ask," said Monica, " 'How's the little girl?' he said." She looked at me, and laughed.

Jenifer leaped up, the Spode cup shattered on the floor, the tea spilled. She looked at her mother with a hatred I had never seen. And when she spoke, it was in the voice of an old woman. She said, *"Someday I'll kill you!"* and ran from the room, slamming the door.

I half rose. I was shaking. Monica said, sharply, "Sit down, Alice."

I said, "The poor child."

Monica said, "It is nothing to fret about. You always hate people you love intensely, don't you know that? I shall go in and talk to her presently."

I wanted to go home. I couldn't. I had to know what was to happen. After a while Monica excused herself and went to Jenifer's room. She left the door open. I could hear the child crying. I could hear Monica crying. I could even hear, toward the end, Jenifer's exhausted whisper. "Forgive me, Mother darling, forgive me, please."

I got up and went home to Jim and sanity.

When Jenifer was eighteen Cam Ellis came to New York again, to appear in a stage play—Monica's. He was then thirty-five. He had a secondary part but received great critical acclaim. And he was, of course, in and out of the gray stone house, and I encountered him there occasionally. I remember going with Jim to the first night. I remember that Jenifer wore white, and that she paid no attention to Cam whatsoever and her mother whispered to me, "You see, I was right!"

But Monica paid attention to him. I was accustomed to the symptoms. In Hollywood he had not mattered. She was interested only in her debut on the screen. Later she had seen him only in relation to Jenifer's childish crush. Now she saw him, alone, the man himself.

She was still a very beautiful woman, but also fifty-six.

The critics were kind to her, they always were, although they said she had become somewhat mannered. To watch her was like watching an exercise in precision dancing. You were familiar with every shade of emotion, every tone. There was nothing to startle you, simply a fine, polished performance. But Cam was a remarkable new talent, they said.

Still, he might have fallen in love with Monica, during the excitement and new adulation, for as long as it lasted.

Monica telephoned one night, past midnight. I thought that the call was for Jim, that an ill woman spoke over the wire, for the voice was unrecognizable. She said, "Alice, come please. Please come. Something terrible has happened."

Jim woke, and I told him. I dressed, and he offered to drive me. I said, "No, you might be needed here. I'll get a cab, dear. I'll phone if it's—" I looked at him and shuddered. "It *must* be Jenifer."

When I reached the house, a cab stood before it, and as I went up the steps, the door opened and Jenifer stood there, smiling. She wore a tailored suit and no hat.

She said, "Come in, Aunt Alice."

I pushed past her. Monica was standing in the middle of the drawing room. She was wearing the last-act costume, the sea-green evening dress.

Cam Ellis was standing behind her at the window. He looked, if anything, a little amused, and turned only when Jenifer passed me and went to stand beside him.

Monica stared at me. "They're married, Alice," she said. "They've been married for a week."

I began stupidly, "But how could they—?"

"In Connecticut. They didn't know him under his real name, nor Jenifer. They told me tonight."

Now she looked at Cam. I haven't seen such eyes. I turned away, ashamed for her. I thought, She tried and failed, but she wouldn't recognize failure. Up until tonight, she thought—

I said gently, "Monica . . ."

But she turned on Jenifer. She was like a mad woman, the voice, so trained, tearing undisciplined from her throat. She screamed, "You! After all I have done for you!" She spoke words I had never heard her utter, words that made me shrinking sick. Then she sat down, as if her strength had gone. She said dully, "You have killed me, Jenifer."

And Jenifer said softly, "I said I would. Remember?" She put her hand on Cam's arm. She said, "Let's go now, Cam."

They went out, walking side by side. She was eighteen, and, I could see, terribly exciting to Cam Ellis, who was thirty-five and who had had a choice. And then Monica screamed, "*Jenifer!*"

"Go on," said Jenifer to her husband, and when he had done so, she came back and stood at the door. And Monica asked painfully, "You—you love him?"

I remember Jenifer's answer, every word of it. She said, "No, of course not. Not now. But *you* did, didn't you?" And then she laughed, and I ran to her quickly and took her in my arms and said, "Jenny, good luck, oh, Jenny, I do wish—"

But she pushed me away and went out to the cab and to Cam Ellis.

I went out, too, and I never returned to the gray stone house. I never saw Monica again until after Jim died, when I went upstate to live with her. I was lonely, and in a way she needed me.

Cam doesn't matter. He went to England and made a great success there, and Jenifer came home to divorce him and returned to England to remarry.

Monica never forgave me, even after I went to live with her, for that night that Jenifer walked out of the gray stone house and I ran to wish her luck.

THE END

Every Minute a Mermaid

Pawnbrokers get to know almost all there is to life—but even Papa could be fooled

BY WILLIAM IVERSON ILLUSTRATED BY THORNTON UTZ

Mama was busy taking a quick stitch in the bridal gown that had just come back that morning with a sprung seam. Also, it had a long gray dribble of stain running down the skirt. Champagne, Mama imagined. Today everybody, no matter they didn't have a pot to boil an egg, when they got married: champagne. Better they should lay by for a rainy day. Living, she could tell them, was all the time a steady drizzle.

Her eyes narrowed to the intensity of the dozens of pinholes staggered across the bodice, each attesting to the further extravagance of a corsage. But she showed nothing. Her feelings were all inside with the shades down, sweltering like she was sweltering. Her upper lip was set with rhinestones of sweat.

"When will you ever think to examine when the customer returns something?" she asked. And her voice was as flat as the top of the showcase that ran down the store from where she was sitting in the rear to where Papa was standing in the front, fiddling with the ends of his mustache and planning how he would rearrange the window.

When the weather was fair with sunshine, like today, Papa would rearrange the window half a dozen times in an afternoon. The idea being to keep the jewelry in the sun where it would sparkle, and the clothing in the shade so it wouldn't fade. Being under the el, Papa always figured, why buy an awning? He pulled open the door in the low partition and unbuttoned his vest slowly, speculatively: lady's fall ensemble down a little, gent's herringbone more this way, ring display over to the left, electric irons and radio just reverse —leaving where for the kiddie togs, the camera with tripod, the pop-up toaster, and the all-purpose mixer?

"You hear what I said?" Mama huffed.

"Hear what?" Papa frowned. "I'm thinking."

"He's thinking. Too bad you couldn't use a little brains to remember to examine when the customer returns something."

"The men's I examine, the ladies' I leave to you."

Mama fished a crumple of soggy handkerchief from inside her neckline and

Every Minute a Mermaid (continued)

patted her face. She raised her head to catch the wipe of breeze that the swinging fan pushed from the shelf.

"Ladies . . ." she said, but her comments were lost in the soft babble of the portable radio that day after day murmured such troubles you couldn't imagine personally in her ear, with every few minutes a heart-rending organ wail.

Papa slipped off his shoes and climbed into the window. Squeezing past the herringbone torso, he knelt in the center and reached over the toaster for the tray of rings. But just as he picked it up to move it, he noticed for the first time the faded blue knees of a man in dungarees standing on the other side of the glass looking in at him.

He smiled delightedly into the man's thin face—pointy and bony, with thin hair, all the muscles and nerves bunching together between two bright eyes that jabbed their glints into the plush tray, making it somehow so heavy that Papa had to put it down.

He busied himself with the irons, winding and rewinding their cords, observing meantime from the corner of one eye a purple fishtail curving down below the rolled cuff of the man's sleeve. A tattoo, he thought, means a sailor, and a sailor means a spender. So, bending his arm around the lady's frock, he gently lifted the edge of the tray and propped it against the dummy's foot, very careful he shouldn't spill the man's look.

The man entered, and Papa quickly scrambled from the window. "Yes, sir," he sang, tiptoeing in his stocking feet. "You see something you like?"

The man sauntered along the showcase, looking vaguely in. "Yeah. How much you getting for them rings in the window?"

"Rings?" Papa chuckled. "All prices, rings. Which?"

"A diamond," he mumbled, drawing a three-carat circle on his finger, "—like for an engagement."

"Engagement rings I got all kinds, all prices."

"Yeah. Well, I'd like to get some idea."

Papa got the tray and set it on the counter. He switched on the green-shaded bulb to bring out the brilliance in the stones. "Which?"

The man squinted up and down the rows. Their heads almost touched in the cone of light, in the hot breathing quiet.

"This one here. How much?"

Papa ran the tip of his tongue over his lower lip, smiling. "You're a good picker—only two hundred and fifty, tax included. Guaranteed perfect center stone with four matched side stones. Genuine white-gold setting. A beautiful value."

The flesh between the man's eyes tightened as he followed the lights dancing through the facets. He pressed his cheek against his shoulder to blot a trickle of perspiration. "It's more than I was thinking to spend just now."

Tattoos aside, this was no sailor, Papa concluded. "A beautiful value," he repeated. "Sworn perfect. I couldn't offer another value like that. Believe me."

The man hesitated. Then he pushed the ring back into its worn velvet slot and straightened up. "It's too much."

"Too much?" Papa gasped. "On Fifth Avenue you pay double for this same identical ring. Ask Tiffany how much, and you'll see. Tiffany couldn't let you touch it for under five hundred. I can do it. I got low overhead. I got an established trade. This ain't no fly-by-night thing here, you know. This ain't no push-cart where it's hello, give me your money, good-by, go to hell. I been here twenty-eight years. I stand by everything I sell."

The man pulled a limp cigarette from his shirt pocket and nodded. "Sure, I know. All I'm saying is—"

Papa reached out and plucked him by the sleeve. "Come here," he said confidentially, bending close. "You could afford to lay out twenty-five dollars?"

"I guess I could."

"You're working steady?"

The man nodded.

"You like this ring, don't you? If you had two hundred and fifty saved up, you'd buy it, wouldn't you?"

"Probably I might."

"So what's the difference if you save before you buy or save as you go along?"

"You mean on credit?"

"Certainly on credit. Credit is what makes the world go round." He slipped the ring on the man's pinky. "Take it, and someday you'll thank me. The young lady is going to be crazy about it."

The man slid the ring up and down over his knuckle. "She's not so young."

"Who is anymore?" Papa chortled and selected a new credit card from the pack in his pocket. "All the more reason why we should make the most of life while we got it." He screwed the cap off his pen. "What's the name, please?"

"Arthur Lotthammer."

"Lot . . . Two t's?"

"Two."

"Hammer . . . Arthur," Papa printed. "Now just fill out the rest—occupation, salary, place of business, home address, and what it says there—and sign."

Papa's eyes rolled back and forth carefully absorbing the lettered information: shipping clerk, $37.50 per wk., K&Y Products Inc., and so forth. He examined the man's identification: a Social Security card, a lapsed driver's license, and a worn company pass with a photograph that had a cowlick and a crooked tie.

"Very good," he said, beaming. "If you want to drop in tomorrow this time, Mr. Lotthammer, I'll have it ready for you."

Lotthammer gave a look of surprise. "—Tomorrow?" Then he smiled. "Oh, you got to check up on me, huh?"

Papa was flustered. "A regular formality," he stammered. "Just to make sure you're employed where you say."

Lotthammer glanced at the clock. "If that's all, you could call up now while I'm here and save me an extra trip." He had two tens and a five all counted out.

Papa ached to oblige. Perhaps the man would change his mind, thinking about it overnight. "Yes," he decided, "I could do that."

So Papa phoned and found the stated facts were in all respects correct: Mr. Lotthammer was a fine, upstanding employee with four years' service. Yes, he lived at that address and had two children, and, so far as K&Y knew, he always paid his bills.

Papa came buoyantly back and collected the down payment. He put the ring in a gift box, issued an account book, noted that the first payment was due in a week, and cheerfully bade the man well as he left the store.

Mama sighed. The sound ploshed on Papa's ears. "What's the matter with you?" he said, scowling. "You're sad I made a sale? This is something to cry about?"

"A sale." Mama sighed again. "I'm sad for your brains."

"Why is it my brains now? He bought, didn't he?"

"He bought."

"So?"

"So you could afford to sell this ring for twenty-five dollars?"

"Who's selling for twenty-five dollars? —Two hundred fifty!"

"Twenty-five. Mark my words, you won't smell another penny."

Papa came pounding around the counter, shaking the card. "Why not? He's making a steady salary."

"Be careful the splinters, you'll get a hole in the sock."

"Thirty-seven-fifty a week, every week."

"Put on your shoes."

"K&Y Products he works, right over here on the waterfront."

"So what's all the rush he couldn't wait until tomorrow like anybody else? Why the special privileges?"

"Special privileges?" Papa was dumbfounded. "What's so special that I call up now instead of later? To me it makes no difference, and him it saves a trip."

"Sure, what's the difference? The rest of the trips he'll save himself anyway. That's the last you'll ever see of him."

"So I got where he works. I got his name and address."

"What name?"

"Lotthammer—Arthur Lotthammer."

Mama shrugged. "This he could make up with no trouble."

"To make a name like Lotthammer is a lot of trouble."

She waved him aside. "Please. Don't stand in front blowing hot breath. Give the fan a chance. I'm dying."

"I called up his office, and the man there tells me that so far as he knows, Lotthammer always pays."

"How far does he know? An inch from his nose. Wait until next week if he shows up with the payment. I doubt it."

"A steady fella," Papa protested. "Four years working for the company, with two kids besides."

Mama bent down to meet the gown in her hand with her teeth. She bit the thread close to the cloth and stuck the needle into her red tomato pincushion. "Time he was engaged," she said offhandedly. "Time he was thinking of getting married."

When Friday came and the first payment was due, it was almost eight-thirty, and no sign of the man. Mama was saying nothing for hours, only looking up at the clock now and then.

Such a night Papa wasn't going to forget very soon. Such an anxiety, with Mama sitting there knitting and waiting. Just to look at her made him so upset that his insides would jump and he would begin to sweat miserably.

Twenty to nine, a quarter to nine, and fifteen minutes to closing. Papa leaned on the counter and pretended to read the evening paper, the print on the page passing fuzzily under his gaze. He tried to concentrate, but his hope and one eye were on the door.—When in walks who else but—Lotthammer, Lotthammer big as life, and all dressed up. Not fit to kill exactly, but enough to make Mama get red to the roots of her ears.

"Good evening." Papa beamed. "How are you this evening? Everything satisfactory with the ring?"

"Yeah, fine."

Papa chuckled warmly and brushed his thumb expectantly over the rubber pimples of the change pad.

Lotthammer looked in his wallet. "Five. Right?"

"Five is correct. And the payment book? I'll put down for this week paid."

When Papa handed back the book, Lotthammer glanced at what he had written and flipped it closed. "You got any . . . uh, what do you call 'em?—women's housecoats, like?"

"Certainly." Papa said. Housecoats were Mama's department. "Mama, would you show to the gentleman what we got in ladies' housecoats, please?"

Mama put down her knitting and waddled to the racks. She selected three garments—one flowered hostess with a zipper, one quilted wrap-around in peach, and a sateen plain in blue with buttons—and held them up, sneering meantime dreamily out the window.

Lotthammer looked them all over. "Yeah, they're pretty. But I wanted something a little more fancy—more kind of . . . dressy."

With immediate understanding and a half-smiling glint of vengeance, Mama took down the sheer black you could read through.

"That's what I mean," Lotthammer said. "How much is that?"

"Nine ninety-five," Papa said wanly, "plus tax."

"I'll take it. Size eighteen, huh?"

Mama dropped the negligee on the counter and went icily back to her knitting.

"You want to pay for it now?" Papa inquired hopefully.

"I might as well. Wrap it up nice for me, will you?"

"Of course," Papa said, brightening. "I will put for you in a special box. —Hello, Bill."

Bill Mullins stood in the doorway, smelling from here of his bar and grill. He followed the billowing negligee with curdled eyes as Papa carried it down the counter to the paper and cord.

"Be with you in only a minute," chirped Papa. He felt like his old self again. His fingers settled on the cash-register keys with gay assurance, and when he pressed them down, it was like a one-note concerto in Carnegie Hall and he was perhaps Horowitz.

"See you next week, Mr. Lotthammer."

"Good night."

"Take care. —And now, William, my friend, what can I do for you?"

"I need a dress suit," Bill wheezed. "You got a forty-two long to rent?"

"For you only." Papa bowed. "Just step over here."

Ruffling through the sizes, Papa selected a clean white jacket, a maroon feather carnation in the buttonhole. "Here we are. Slip this on for a starter."

Bill held the coat dubiously at arm's length for a moment, then grudgingly worked it up over his damp muscles and back. He turned slowly around in an agony of beer-logged scrutiny. "The fit is all right," he mumbled.

"Perfect," Papa chimed.

"The only thing, I'm not so sure if it's the right style."

"Exactly right. For summer evening, this is very smart."

"Who said evening? I need it for nine A.M. tomorrow."

"Ah, a wedding?"

Bill picked at the suit with melancholy fingers. "No, Ed Toomey's funeral. I got to be a bearer."

"Ed Toomey?" Papa said, shocked. "Red Ed Toomey, the big building man? When did he die?"

"Wednesday afternoon, just after lunch."

"You don't say. From what?"

Bill tapped his right breast. "Heart."

Papa shook his head. "You knew him well?"

"Yeah, we seen lots of times together, me and Ed. Now he's dead and I'm . . ." He blinked as if he wasn't quite sure. "I don't know, it's funny how things work out sometimes."

"He'll have some funeral," Mama softly told the mitten.

"You bet. I was just over to the house there, and you could hardly get in the door for the big shots and flowers."

Mama looked up. "People standing?"

"Clean out to the street, there's such a mob."

"A mob? So listen, if you go back, you should mention to who's in charge if they want more chairs to rent we got two dozen downstairs—folding, with leather seats. Comfortable."

Papa kept a sad face out of all due respects for the dead, but way down deep he was secretly glad to hear Mama once more taking an interest in things. He was glad that she wasn't going to hold it against him because she made a wrong guess about Mr. Lotthammer. "Yes," he

Papa's life was like a mermaid—

no matter how beautiful on top, there was

always something fishy underneath

Every Minute a Mermaid

almost whispered, "you could mention to his missus, maybe—quietly on the side."

Every week Lotthammer came, sometimes in the evening, or sometimes in the lunch hour, when Papa was taking a nap, and Mama would politely wait on him. The whole matter drifted gradually out of Papa's mind, and new troubles came along to fill it. The hours were eventually days, the days became weeks, and a month later Mama paid a visit down to Philly to see Morty and Evelyn and the grandson.

With Mama away, Papa found contentment in the beautiful quiet that sat across the kitchen table and shared his egg at breakfast, that lay beside him in the hollow of the bed and kissed his ears all night in an absence of zooming snores. He wooed it all day with faraway eyes, and in the evening he relaxed in the chair in the back yard, lulled by the long rattle of the trains.

But time is relative, and in two weeks Mama was back from visiting hers. Coming in the door, she noticed that Papa hadn't polished the counter in over a week. On the way upstairs with her bag, she saw he had neglected to sweep down the steps on Saturday. Newspapers and a pair of dirty socks were all over the parlor. And look at the kitchen. The garbage pail was ready to walk out.

Papa rolled up his sleeves and swept down the steps, put out the garbage, and vacuumed, while Mama licked her thumb and went over the account cards.

"What happened to Kantor?"

Papa blinked. "Kantor? She was in on Tuesday. He's got more gallstones, and had to go the hospital to have them out."

He leaned over the bed

"Gallstones," Mama snorted. "By this time they should have took from him enough to build a house. She couldn't pay anything?"

"When a man's sick, I couldn't ask."

"You couldn't ask? You tongue-tied or something, you couldn't ask? Suppose I got sick, what? You could pay the bills with her sob story? You could cash it in the bank?"

"Please, please already."

"Please yourself. Next time she comes I'll get from her."

Papa couldn't stay in the store any longer. "So you'll get from her," he said, and went upstairs. He sat in the parlor and sadly batted the tassel on the lamp, trying to calm his stomach.

The pounding of the broom handle against the ceiling below shook the floor under his feet. Startled, he jumped from his chair and ran hastily downstairs. "What is it?" he panted.

"Like you didn't know!" Mama flared. "Lotthammer, that's what is it! You were hoping I wouldn't see on the card he ain't made a payment for two Fridays in a row."

"No payment?" Papa gulped. "I didn't notice."

"Like a broken leg, you didn't notice! That's why you went up and hid, I suppose."

Papa gaped at the blank squares on the card. He couldn't find a syllable.

"What happens now?" she persisted. "You'll sit until doomsday and wish that he comes?"

"Tonight I'll—"

"Never mind tonight. Put on the hat and go collect from him now."

Papa's eyes grappled with the hands of the clock for the time—almost half past three. "He's not home now, he's working."

"Then go where he works."

"I couldn't do that. He might lose his job with personal matters during business hours."

"Instead you want I should hold my breath until he gets ready to show up? —Which will be never, like I told you once before if you'd only listened to me for a change."

"I'll call up," Papa said weakly. "Give me a second to think what to say."

With a dozen dreads strumming at his jangled system, Papa once again dialed K&Y Products. A small gruff voice growled impatiently at the far end of the line.

"Lotthammer? He ain't with us no more."

Papa pressed the receiver tighter to his ear so Mama couldn't hear. "He's not there?"

"No, he was laid off. He didn't show up for work with no explanation, so they laid him off."

"I see. When?"

"Couple weeks ago about. You can get him at home, I guess."

"Thank you, yes."

Papa hung up. The organ music drifted from the radio and swarmed his head with thin arms of desolate sound.

"What did they say?" Mama asked.

"He's away on vacation."

"He needs a vacation—a married man like him fooling around with some fancy tramp on the side."

"What are you talking?" Papa blustered.

"That Hollywood negligee is what I'm talking."

"You know he bought it for his wife."

"Nobody buys such a thing for his wife. For his wife a man buys a bathrobe so she won't catch cold and make expenses. This negligee was strictly for a tramp."

Papa squirmed behind the counter.

"Besides, he's all the time drunk."

"No." Papa protested. "How could you make up such a story? Never once on his breath did I smell anything."

"Who's making up? I saw him say hello to Bill Mullins, didn't I?"

"That proves something?"

"That proves to me he drinks. You think he could know Bill Mullins from running around tea parties?"

"A glass of beer," Papa said apologetically. "You couldn't hold a glass of beer against a man."

"With one glass comes the next and pretty soon another, especially in the bar with all kinds of fancy tramps he buys rings for and maybe tells he's going to marry, when he's already got a wife and kids in the house waiting for him to come home at all hours and beat them black and blue. A bum like him, he needs a vacation!" Her eyes sparkled green. "What happens now, you're such a genius?"

Papa shrank under Mama's words. He flushed, he paled, he twitched and suffered the choking guilt of his lie. Sooner or later Mama would find it out. If Lotthammer didn't come around again she would find it out, and if he did come around again she would still find it out. Papa stood at the window, his eyes darting and snatching fearfully at every passing person.

At nine o'clock sharp, he carried out

and struggled to get the ring off his wife's resisting finger.

the big wire grids and fastened them to the windows. He locked the safe, set the burglar alarm, and turned out the lights, but he couldn't go upstairs. With Mama's rocker creaking steadily overhead, with no dinner to give him strength, he sat—how long? Two, three, hours maybe—in an exhaustion of fear and worry, rubbing his temples, kneading his stomach with the sickness of it, until he finally could stand it no longer. He put on his hat and went quietly out by the hall door to find Lotthammer.

The first wind of fall twisted down the avenue, feeling along the girders of the el for leaves to rustle, boughs to bend. Papa wished for his topcoat, and walked along, clutching the brim of his hat, slowing down occasionally to absently check the prices in the window of a rival.

Coming to Bill Mullins' place, he stopped and peered in the window. Sure enough, through the glow of the beer sign, he caught the profile of Lotthammer standing at the near end of the bar. The contours dropped into his vision like the final shape in a painful puzzle, completing the picture Mama had put together from the start and he had all along denied. He went cautiously in the door and edged his way to Lotthammer's side. "Good evening," he said. "How are you tonight, Mr. Lotthammer?"

Lotthammer turned and wobbled a blank look over Papa's face. "I'm stinking," he breathed. "How are you?"

"Fine, thank you. You remember me?"

Lotthammer's weaving gaze struggled to make fast on a feature, then slipped away in a watery stare. "Yeah, you're the man . . . with the . . . You know."

"Rings."

"Yeah, rings. I owe you money, and I ain't got a red cent. I lost my job."

"So I heard. I was hoping you could arrange perhaps a little something. A part payment even."

Lotthammer flopped his arms. "I ain't got it. I ain't got nothing."

"Just, you understand," Papa pressed gently, "to show faith."

"Faith," Lotthammer repeated, and his eyes seemed to strain to crack through their glazed shells and touch Papa. His mouth opened and closed without utterance. Then he was saying something that Papa had to lean close to hear.

"I'll give it to you back," he was saying. "You come home with me, and I'll give it to you back."

"Oh, no," Papa protested, "I don't want to do that. I only want we should talk over some further arrangements that will be agreeable."

"It's agreeable with me that you should come home with me, and I'll give it to you back." He swung around and propped himself against the bar, knocking the arm of the woman next to him, splashing her raised drink. She half-turned and poked him with her elbow. He bobbed his head at her and the ugly man she was with.

"Better you should go home now," Papa urged, hoping to avoid a fight.

"Better I should," he agreed. Then he remembered. "You're coming with me, ain't you?"

"Yes, yes," Papa said to get him out of there. "Come, we go."

Lotthammer stumbled through the crowd to the door. Out on the sidewalk, he reeled into the entrance of the dime store and sprawled against the glass, his head hanging, his eyes shut.

Papa lightly shook him. "Come now," he coaxed. "You got to go home." His words made no impression. My heavens, what a trouble this is, he thought. He pulled up his collar and started across the avenue. But Lotthammer staggered into the street after him, weaving and calling.

Suppose he was knocked down by a car, what? Suppose he was killed standing there? Papa hurried back and got him up on the curb.

"Look," he said, "I don't feel so good myself. I've got to go home now. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Don't leave me," Lotthammer mumbled. "Don't leave me, huh?"

So could Papa leave him like that? He went along with Lotthammer like he promised, and Lotthammer went along with him, all over the sidewalk, tripping over his feet in his hurry to keep up.

Turning into Lotthammer's block, picking along with his eyes for the number, Papa could feel how late it was: the dampness, the sleeping darkness, the miles-long quiet that the wind had dropped between the rows of old four-story houses. He stopped at the house.

"Here we are."

"Ain't you going to come in with me?"

"No. Good night."

"Don't you want to get the ring?"

"Not now. We talk about it tomorrow."

"I mightn't be here tomorrow," he said thickly. "I might get put out."

Papa looked at him in disgust. He was fed up to here with such a good-for-nothing. "So I'll take the ring," he said quietly.

They climbed the stoop, and Papa followed him into the vestibule and up the stairs to the third floor, where Lotthammer fumbled with his keys.

A pair of bare feet ran to answer. "Pop?"

The door opened on a little girl in flannel pajamas that had shrunk too short in the sleeves. She was bony and pale, and looked at Papa with the face of a worried woman. "Pop," she said.

Lotthammer put his hand on her head, and they went from the hall into the living room. It was bare except for an old torn sofa, a steel cot, and a buckled card table littered with paper dolls and dirty dishes. Lotthammer stood there.

"Where's Stevie?" he asked.

"He wouldn't go to sleep," the girl whispered. "He cried and ran all around, and I couldn't make him stop. He went in with Mother."

"Jesus," Lotthammer muttered. "Sit down," he said to Papa, and went into the bedroom, very sober suddenly.

Papa lowered himself to the edge of the sofa. The little girl knelt at the far end, looking now at him, now into the bedroom through the open door. Stealing a glance past her, Papa saw with surprise a fancy dressing table with pretty lamps, expensive bureaus, and a nice new rug—all fixed like a picture in a magazine, with Lotthammer, with the long figure and the short figure on the bed, looking out of place there, spoiling it by being.

Lotthammer carried the boy out and laid him beside Papa on the couch. Then he stood quietly a minute, rolling up his sleeves before he went back into the room.

Papa watched him leaning over the bed, struggling to get the ring from his wife's finger. Without a sound, her hand resisted. She was very sick, he could see.

"Don't bother," he said in a hush, but Lotthammer didn't hear. He got up and went to the bedroom door. "Please," he said again, "you shouldn't bother now."

When Lotthammer looked up, his forehead was soaking wet, and the features under it were twisted into the image of a scream. Papa turned to the bed in confusion, and his eyes widened at the sight of the woman's cold gray face, at the wasted body that showed itself through the sheer black gown like truth through a flimsy lie.

Lotthammer slowly worked the ring up over the hook of her knuckle. Then the fist closed tight and plopped back on the silky quilt.

"Here," he said, holding the ring out to Papa. "Thanks for the use."

Papa stepped back from the door, from the extended glitter of the stone and the obscene wiggle of the mermaid tattooed on Lotthammer's arm.

"I never should have bought it," Lotthammer was saying. "But I never gave her one when we was engaged . . . and I wanted for the last couple of months to try and make things a little the way we always hoped . . . just for once."

The ring burned in the palm of Papa's hand, spitting its tiny fires at him. He shrank from the dainty round touch of a death he could almost smell. Then he thrust it at the little girl and hurried dizzily out of the house.

He retreated before the stone's glitter and the tattoo's obscene wiggle

In the first streams of morning sun, Papa walked slowly home over the empty sidewalk. He let himself in the store by the hall door, and she was sitting there as he expected, waiting in her bathrobe, her hair pinned tight in curls, her face glistening with cold cream. Not a murmur. Just a look.

He went with no bones to the credit file and started tearing the cards in half, methodically, with no great rush. As he tore, he felt lighter, freer, younger. It was like having a heavy hump of pain dissolve from his back. All through the alphabet to the W's, with only Yolansky and Zimmermann left, before she opened the mouth with a wail.

"Now it's drinking all night," she started. "Now it's something new in your old age. Out all night carousing like a pig, and coming home crazy drunk to ruin everything. Is this the thanks I get for all I done?" But she got no further. He climbed up on the chair by the door and tripped the jigger on the burglar alarm, and the ringing drowned her out. She tried to shout over it, screaming against the bulwark of sound. Then she broke into tears and ran furiously upstairs, and he turned it off.

He stood by the window, looking out through the grid, watching the day begin and thinking how in God's name could you ever know what goes on with other people?—How their lives are? How your own life is, for that matter? How every minute, every day, was like the mermaid tattooed on Lotthammer's arm: no matter how beautiful on top, there was always something fishy underneath; and being happy and being sad simply depended on which half was pushed in your face. Mostly for him, now, the sleeve was rolled halfway down. Mostly there was the fish. Life no longer winked at him and waved her lovely breasts. These days she mostly smacked him with her tail.

He got out the Scotch tape and started to piece together the stacks of torn cards. A good thing she hadn't got him mad, he thought. A good thing he hadn't ripped them in quarters. THE END

The Trouble with Erica

To the naked eye she was a nice enough girl - unless the eye belonged to a man who'd been around

BY JOHN D. MacDONALD

Erica, leaning forward from the back seat, told Mack where to turn. He was aware of the fragrance of Erica, and thought he could feel the touch of her breath against the side of his throat. "Now, just two more blocks, Mack, and it will be on the right with the porch light on." She hesitated over calling him Mack. When the evening had started, it had been Mr. Landers and Miss Holmes. Marie, beside Mack, leaned forward and punched the lighter in. Mack felt a mild amusement. Marie had gone a little sour on the evening.

It was a narrow street, a bit down at the heels. The house was small, and Mack guessed it probably looked less defeated at night with the lights on than during the day.

He stopped, and Marie hitched toward him and pulled the back of her seat forward so Quent and Erica could get out. Erica turned gravely once she was out of the car and said in her charmingly husky voice, "It was nice, people. Nice to meet you, Marie, and you, Mack. I hope I'll see you again soon."

"No doubt of that," Quent said, with that fine effervescence that had been his all evening. "Be right back," he said.

They sat with the motor running. Quent walked Erica up to her door. Mack heard Marie sniff. He tapped a cigarette on the horn ring, lit it. "Pretty girl," he said casually.

"Oh, sure," Marie said.

"Don't you like her, baby?"

"She's just fine, Mack. Just absolutely

ILLUSTRATED BY ARPIE ERMOYAN

Like a hunter, he watched for the confusion and

fine. I haven't had such a gay little evening since I was a Girl Reserve." She imitated Erica's voice, saying, "Just a little dry sherry, please. The music is quite loud here, isn't it?"

Mack glanced at the porch. Erica and Quent were standing under the porch light. He saw them shake hands and nearly choked. "Like going back to when I was seventeen," he said wonderingly. "No. Sixteen. By seventeen I wouldn't let them get away with that."

"You were a dog, of course," Marie said.

Quent came loping back out to the car, got in beside Marie, and shut the door. Mack started up fast, the motor roaring in the darkened street.

"How do you like her?" Quent asked eagerly.

"She seems like a very nice girl," Marie said evenly.

"Nice kid," Mack agreed.

"She's really got me going," Quent said. "I'm glad we all got along so good together. I was kind of afraid."

"Afraid we'd be too coarse and worldly for the little dear?" Marie asked, an unpleasant note in her voice.

"Now, don't be like that, Marie," Quent said. "You know I didn't mean anything like that."

"Then exactly what are you talking about?" Marie demanded.

"Shut your pretty face, darling," Mack said.

"I was afraid he was going to tell me she's a *nice* girl," Marie said.

"Look, it was a good evening," Quent said. "Let's break it off good."

"Okay," Marie said. "Nightcap at my place?"

"Not tonight," Mack said. "Tomorrow is a working day. Landers and Dale have got stuff piled up. Right, kid?"

"Right, Mack," Quent said.

Mack drove back toward town, parked in front of the blond stone-and-glass apartment house where Marie lived on ample alimony. He got out, and Marie slid out on his side, and he said, "Back in a second, kid."

He walked into the sterile tile lobby with Marie. He grinned at her. She was a sturdy blonde with shrewd eyes, good clothes, and a petulant expression. They were easy with each other, and he knew she had learned that if she got rough it was always a few weeks before he called her up again.

"Now we shake hands, maybe?" Marie asked. "An evening with sweet young stuff and you can't even come up for a drink."

"You want him up for a drink? You want to listen to him talk about love's young dream for an hour perhaps?"

"Please. Not that."

"Okay, so I drop him and come back for my drink. That make better sense?"

Her slow smile came. She ran her fingertips down his cheek. "Mmm," she said. "Good sense."

"Within an hour, honey," he said, and turned and walked out. His heels made loud, firm noises on the tile, and as he pushed the front door open, he heard the soft closing of the door of the self-service elevator. He walked out toward the car where he could see the glow of Quent's cigarette. He got in and slammed the door and headed through town.

"I'm conversational," Quent said. "Nightcap?"

"A short one." The streets were empty, and he parked in front of Ralph's place. They went in and sat at the curve of the bar. Mack tilted his hat back off his broad forehead. There was a party in one of the big booths, two girls and three men, all loud and out of focus.

"The usual, Joe," Mack said. "What about you, Quent?"

"Just a beer, I guess." The bartender moved off. Quent said, "She's a fine girl, Mack. Never met anyone like her."

"From the way you've been acting, kid, I knew you had something on your mind. How did you say you met her?"

"I didn't. I didn't want to be laughed at. You know that Dowling case I was working on, where she wanted to leave her money to the church? I called on her, and she had a lady with her, a friend. While I was there, Erica came in a car to pick up the other lady, and it turned out the lady is Erica's aunt. Erica was in the East for a couple of years, and she got homesick and came back out here. She lives with her aunt now, and she's got a part-time job at the library. She works mornings, but I guess I told you that already. What do you think of her, Mack?"

Mack lifted his drink, took a long, slow sip. He glanced at his partner's lean young face. "It's really stacked," he said casually. "I bet it would be just fine."

Quent turned sharply and frowned at him. Quent's cheeks were red. "Damn it, that's no way to talk."

Mack grinned. "I'm an evil old man. Ask anybody."

Quent finally smiled, reluctantly. "All right. You were kidding me. Seriously, I'm thinking of marriage, Mack."

"I was married once," Mack said. "A very unpromising relationship."

"You had bad luck."

Mack took a few sips of his drink, slid the glass a few inches along the bar top, and examined the wet streak it left.

"Do I have to like the idea?" he asked softly.

"What do you mean?"

"Look, kid. The business is growing. And you know why. We both draw peanuts and put the rest back into the firm. Look at the picture. You get married. You have to draw more. It stands to reason. You draw more and I have to draw more. So what happens to the plans? We start leveling off. We don't grow anymore. We have an outfit that gives us both a nice comfortable living. But is that enough? I thought we had the idea of really getting big. Marriage in five years, Quent? Fine. But right now—you can see how I feel."

"She'd understand, Mack. She really would. She's smart. You can tell that. We each draw a hundred right now. We could stay within that."

"For five years? You and she and your three kids? Life doesn't work that way. If she's that smart, she's going to know what we're netting, kid. And she's going to start resenting the way we keep ploughing it back in. Kitties like cream, kid."

"I can't help it, Mack. I've got to marry her."

"Name it after me."

"Damn it, you always twist things around."

"Take it easy, Quent. Anyway, how much do you know about this girl? I'm only eight years older than you, but by heaven, sometimes I feel forty years older. Marriage lasts a long time. At least it's supposed to. Don't rush into it. How long have you known her, anyway?"

"Six weeks, Mack."

"Know a girl six months and marry her and it's still fast. I always have to keep

fright that would betray her into his hands

slowing you up. You know that. Remember the Barton deal? That could have been a real jam if I'd let you go ahead the way you wanted to."

Mack tossed off the rest of his drink and stood up. "Finish your beer, Quent. I'm bushed."

They went back out to the car, and Mack dropped Quent off at his small apartment, headed on east as though going to his place, then circled and went back to Marie's apartment.

He sat in his car for a time without going in. He lit a cigarette and smoked it slowly, frowning ahead through the windshield at the dark street. A city bus hissed to a stop, let a man off, groaned away down the street.

From what Quent had said about her, he had expected Erica Holmes to be Miss Anemia. A bloodless and bifocaled thing with elfin mannerisms. Quent wasn't noted for his taste in women. But Erica had been a thing to stir the blood. Every time, during the evening, when she had been close to him, the backs of Mack's hands had tingled. She was a grave brunette, her hair so dark it looked almost blue under lights. She had tilted gray eyes, that husky voice, and a body suitable for a calendar in a body-and-fender works. But it was more than that, he knew. It was a certain aura, an invisible emanation of desirability that could be felt ten feet away. And she obviously had the kid mumbling to himself. He thought of one little incident during the evening. When he had danced with her, she had grown rigid each time he tried to pull her a bit closer. And once, when dancing, her fingertips had accidentally brushed the nape of his neck, and they had felt like ice. He sat, eyes narrowed, thinking. He got out, flicked his cigarette away, and walked slowly toward the lobby entrance, separating the proper key from the others.

Mack was at his desk when Quent came in, whistling. Mack saw Mrs. Ober glance suspiciously at Quent, and he knew Mrs. Ober was not deceived. Prior to Erica, Quent had been a young man who never came in whistling. Mack had coldly selected Quent for the fine intuitive quality of his intelligence. The younger man was not the sort of person with whom he felt most at ease. Mack thought of Erica for a time, and then sighed and turned back to the work that was lying on his desk.

At eleven o'clock Mack went out. As he waited for the elevator, he looked at the door to the reception room. Landers and Dale. It had started three years ago in one crummy office, just he and the kid and Mrs. Ober. Five rooms now and four people working for them. Another five years and they'd have the whole floor. Ten years and they might have their own building. Crazier things had happened. But the kid hadn't been pulling full weight the past six weeks.

Mack went out and walked five blocks to the public library. He went in to the main desk and asked for Miss Holmes. Erica Holmes. The girl at the main desk told him she was in the reference room, the door to the right. He walked through into the sunlit silence. A few people frowned up at him as his metal-tipped heels struck hard against the wooden floor. Mack looked at them blandly. Erica was behind a semicircular desk in the corner. She wore glasses with heavy rims. As she looked up at him, smiling without too much enthusiasm, he saw that the lenses did not distort her eyes at all. Probably a very minor correction. She wore a black skirt, a white blouse with starched cuffs and collar.

"Good morning," she said in a low voice. "I had a lovely time last night."

"I wanted to see you in your natural habitat, Erica."

She raised her eyebrows. "Yes?"

"And maybe see how natural it is."

She tilted her head a bit. "What does that mean, Mack?"

He looked at her mouth. Wide and soft and firm, lips lying evenly together. He said, "Just making jokes. Poor ones, I guess. Did you do library work when you were back East?"

"No."

"Just that? No?"

"Is this some sort of an inquisition, Mr. Landers? If so, I'll have to ask you to excuse me. I'm really quite busy."

He grinned. "I feel like a father to the kid. You know how it is."

"Please don't talk so loudly. You're disturbing the whole room."

"Buy you lunch?"

"No thank you."

"Have I said something wrong?"

"Please. You'll get me in trouble."

"Come on out by the front steps a minute, then."

"I can't."

"Then we'll talk here."

Her lips tightened. Her knuckles were white against the edge of the desk. "I'll be out in a couple of minutes."

He walked out onto the front steps, leaned against the front of the building, and lit a cigarette. It was a good five minutes before she came out. She looked angry.

"What *is* this all about, Mack?"

He looked into the gray eyes, saw them slide uneasily away. "I guess you misunderstood me, Erica. I was just being friendly. Quent told me you worked here mornings, and I had a call and I was going by so I stopped in. That Quent, he's a fine boy, don't you think?"

She gave him a puzzled look. "Of course, I think so."

"Guys like that are rare. You know, idealistic, dedicated. I was telling Marie last night that I lost my illusions when I was sixteen."

"Too bad, Mack."

"We'll have to have an evening together, Erica."

"Really, I don't see—"

"Just the four of us. What do you say?"

She half-turned away from him. "That would be nice. I have to go back in now."

"I'll work it out with Quent, then."

"Yes, do that."

"Or we could go on a picnic. I haven't been on a picnic in years."

"I really have to go in, Mack."

"Nice to see you, Erica."

She gave him a tentative smile and went in quickly. He held the big door open and watched her go up the several steps to the main floor. He watched her coldly, and he saw the faint awkwardness as she went up the steps, and he knew that she was aware of his eyes on her.

He went down the street toward the club, deciding to have a drink before lunch. A slight celebration. A one-man celebration. He was smiling a bit.

When the day ended and Mrs. Ober had gone, Mack went in and sat on Quent's desk and said, "I stopped in and saw Erica today when I went by the library."

Quent stared at him. "What for?"

"I thought it would be nice if the four

"Honey," he told her softly, "I'll drop him off and then come back."

of us went on a picnic. How long since you've been on a picnic?"

Quent relaxed. "You asked her? What did she say?"

"She seemed to go for the idea. Marie is a good cook. We can work it this way. Cold fried chicken à la Marie. Potato salad, maybe, from Erica. We bring the beer. You going to see her tonight?"

"Yes, I am."

"We can try to set up a date."

Quent grinned. "Sorry, it takes a little time to get used to the idea of you surrounded by nature."

"I always sit on the ground once every seven or eight years, kid. Let's try to set it up for next Sunday. Leave about ten?"

"It sounds like it'd be fun, Mack. I've been thinking about what you said last night."

Mack adjusted his hat, clapped Quent on the shoulder. "Forget it. We'll get along. I worry too much. I'll set it up with Marie. Next Sunday."

Mack was on his second drink when Marie came in. He rose, and pulled the table out. Marie slid in onto the bench beside him, smiled up at the waiter, and said, "Gibson, please." She winked at Mack as she took off her gloves. "Have a big rich day, darling?"

"A truly handsome day. Honey, what do you think of picnics?"

She stared at him. "Picnics? Geeze! Ants in the potato salad and nothing to sit on but rocks."

"We're going on one."

"What did you say you were drinking? I'd better change my order."

"No, actually. The same four like last night."

"Goody. I'll bring my bird book. Really, Mack!"

"It's all set. We leave Sunday at ten in the morning. Up into the hills. Cold chicken, and potato salad, and beer, and scenery."

"You mean it, don't you? Wasn't one evening with young love enough for you?"

"Just being with them makes me feel young again, honey."

Her drink came, and as she sipped it, she turned so she could look at him over the rim of her glass. She set the glass down. "You, my friend, look entirely too bland. What evil is afoot?"

"Evil? On a picnic? Please!"

"I think you better tell me what you have on your mind, Mack."

"You are an unflattering type. I just happen to want to go on a picnic."

"I'll wait until the third act, then. It better be a good script."

"It's all ad lib."

"Do I supply the chicken?"

"You do, my love."

The next morning Quent reported that Erica had agreed to a picnic, and he said

it was funny she wasn't more enthusiastic about it, because she really enjoyed the out-of-doors and they had taken long walks in the country a couple of times. He said she had praised her aunt's German potato salad and would come with a large bowl of same.

On Thursday Mack drove up into the hills and spent considerable time exploring side roads. When he was satisfied, he made small check marks on his map, and returned to the city.

In the afternoon he went into Quent's office. "Kid, I think we better take both cars. You know how Marie is. She gets restless and wants to take off, and maybe you and Erica would want to stay longer."

"Okay. You want to follow me?"

"We don't even have to do that," Mack said. He unfolded the map and spread it out on the desk. "I told a friend we were going on a picnic, and he told me about this place. He says it's fine. Easy to find. We can meet there, kid. Look. Eighteen out of town and turn left on Thirty-one. Go nine miles on Thirty-one up into the hills, and you see a barn right here with half the roof gone. Turn left on the first road right here beyond the barn. It's a dirt road, and you go to the end and you come out right on the side of the mountain where you can see for miles. Nice and private."

Quent studied the map. "That's easy enough. Sure."

"So we can meet out there at eleven. Marie's going to get some nice chickens."

At eight Sunday morning the alarm woke Mack. For a few minutes he didn't remember it was the day of the picnic. Then he smiled and stretched and got up feeling good.

He hummed under his breath as he shaved, pulling the skin tight and doing a good clean job.

He opened a can of tomato juice, put the coffee on, and then phoned Quent. Quent answered on the second ring. "Oh, it's you, Mack. Say, it's a nice day for it, isn't it?"

"A swell day, kid. Up to a point."

"What's the trouble?"

"I just went down to get the paper, and my left rear tire is flat and the spare is too soft to put on. I found a place that will send a guy to fix things, but he can't get here for an hour or so. And there were a couple of things I was going to do. How about you helping me out, kid?"

"Of course, Mack."

"I left that zipper case down at the office. That red thing that keeps things cold. I was going to start early enough so I could take it out to Walker's and load it up with cold beer. You can buy it there any time. Can do?"

"Sure."

"That means you'll have to go right by Marie's place. So it'll help the timing if you pick her up, and I'll pick up Erica. Okay?"

"Glad to. Want me to phone the gals and tell them about the switch?"

"I don't see any need of that. They both said they'd be ready at ten. You tell Marie what happened and I'll tell your gal. And I'll see you out there. Don't get lost, kid."

"You're talking to an eagle scout."

"Thanks for helping out."

It was ten o'clock when Mack arrived at Erica's. He rang the bell. She opened the door and looked at him, looked out at his car, and asked, "Where's Quent?"

He explained the change in plans. She introduced him to her aunt, a small woman with nervous mannerisms. Erica seemed a little uncertain and said she'd better phone Quent.

"Why? It's all arranged. Besides, he's left already, probably."

She kissed her aunt, and Mack carried the big yellow bowl of potato salad out to the car. He set it carefully on the back seat, shut the door on Erica, went around and got behind the wheel. She seemed subdued.

"Great day for a picnic," he said.

"It certainly is. It might be a little cooler when we get higher."

"Not enough to matter."

She sat far over on her side of the seat. He drove through traffic as fast as he dared, watching carefully ahead for Quent's car. He decided that if he saw Quent ahead he would slow down, turn into a gas station. After he got on Thirty-one, he was certain he was ahead of Quent. The big car rocked and leaned on the mountain curves.

They had nothing to say to each other. When he saw the barn ahead, he glanced into his rear-view mirror. The road behind him was clear. He passed the dirt road just beyond the barn. Erica turned suddenly and looked back. "Isn't that the road? Quent told me."

"It's the second road after the barn, honey. Right up here."

"But I'm sure Quent thinks—"

"If he doesn't show up, we'll go back and take a look."

The road ended at a small clearing he had seen before. He parked the car and turned off the motor. The cooling engine made ticking sounds. The wind made a soft sound in the leaves.

"Let's take a look around," he said.

"I'll wait here in the car."

He opened the door on her side. "Come on. Let's find a good place. Let's be Girl Scouts, lady." He grinned at her.

She got out of the car, and he said, "That looks like a promising path." He stood aside, and she went ahead, holding the branches so they wouldn't slap him in the face. After a hundred yards, the path opened into a small clearing. There was grass, a large log.

"This looks okay," he said.

"Let's go back."

He sat down on the log, took out his cigarettes. "Here. Sit down and smoke and take it easy."

She took a cigarette. She didn't seem to want to look at him. "Sit down, Erica. You make me nervous."

She sat on the log a good four feet away from him. She sat with her hand braced against the rough bark. He watched her and saw the quick lift of her breathing. He saw her moisten her lips nervously.

He reached over almost casually and folded his fingers strongly around her wrist. She stopped breathing for a moment and then turned sharply toward him. "Mack! What's the idea?"

He chuckled and moved closer to her. She stood up. He gave a quick yank to her wrist and she was pulled toward him, falling to her knees. He put his arms around her, and she was like a woman made of stone, unbreathing. And then he felt the sudden softness, the great shuddering breath she took. He kissed her and then looked calmly at her face, looked at the glazed scimitared eyes, at the broken mouth. He laughed somewhere deep in his throat and took her in his arms again.

He stood up afterward, and lit a cigarette. His hands trembled. He looked down at her face, at the blue-dark hair spread wild against the grass of the clearing. Her eyes were tight shut. She was breathing deeply, and with each exhalation she murmured, "Darling . . . darling . . . darling." It was a meaningless metronome sound, as soft as the wind in the leaves overhead.

He sat on the log, watching her with a curious, cold tenderness. After a time, she opened her eyes and looked vaguely around, like a person coming out of deep sleep. She sat up, then knelt and brushed at the twigs and bits of grass that clung to her skirt. She stood up and looked at him without expression, stepped over and sat beside him on the log, sat close to him. She picked up her leather purse, took out a comb, combed her dark hair carefully, looking straight ahead.

"Cigarette?" he asked when she had finished.

"Please."

He lit her cigarette, and she looked at him over the lighter flame, meeting his eyes for the first time. She turned away, her shoulders hunched.

"So it was a foul trick," he said. "Go ahead. Rave."

"I don't know. I don't know," she said

vaguely. Her voice had a faraway sound.

"You must have something to say."

"I just feel . . . damn empty. It was probably a mistake. The whole plan. I thought . . . coming back here. I thought it would change things. Heaven knows I tried hard. Back there too many people . . . knew. When they know, there's no defense." She turned and looked at him again. "How did you know?"

He studied his cigarette. The breeze whipped the smoke away. "I don't know. An instinct. Little things. That deal of your shaking hands with him to say good night. That was a sort of tipoff."

"It had to be that way."

"Sure."

"Oh, Lord, if there was some way . . . something that could be cut or burned out of me. Mack, why didn't you leave me alone, even if you guessed?"

"I told you in the library. I feel almost like a father to the kid."

"I wouldn't have hurt him!"

"Not this year, maybe. Then what goes on, honey? Some smart guy selling vacuum cleaners? A meter reader? Some drunk at a party? Don't kid yourself."

"Stop," she said faintly. "Please stop!" She held her hands over her eyes. The discarded cigarette was near her moccasin, the smoke drifting in the grass.

"Now tell me you love the kid."

"I do!"

"That's good. Then you know what you have to do."

She lifted her head. "Or?"

"That's an unnecessary question, don't you think?"

She stood up. Her face was all at once slack, gray, older. "You did go right by where we should have turned, didn't you?" He nodded. "You've been so clever, haven't you, Mack?"

He stood up. "Sure. A big I.Q., darling. Let's go."

Mack watched Quent carefully over the next few weeks. He watched the slow change in his partner, watched the listlessness, the climate of the rejected. One evening, knowing that Quent had gone back to the office after dinner, Mack returned also, occupying himself with work that could have waited until the next day, knowing that there was no need, actually, to talk to Quent, yet sensing, also, a strange compulsion to say something to him.

He wandered at last into Quent's office. Quent looked up, and Mack saw the lean pallor of his face, the obscure sickness in his eyes.

"Knock off and have a quickie?" Mack asked.

Quent stretched, yawned. "I guess so. Sure."

They walked side by side through the darkness to the brittle cheer of Ralph's place, sat on stools at the quiet bar. When the drinks came, Mack waited a bit and then asked quietly, "What's the pitch on these wedding bells, Quent?"

Quent's smile was not a good thing to see. "You tell me, maybe. Erica's going back East next week. She doesn't seem to like it out here."

"You kids have a little scrap?" Mack asked.

"I wish we had, Mack. Then I could figure it out. She just cooled off toward me. Ever since that picnic, it hasn't been the same. Like she took a good second look at me and decided I wasn't the guy after all. What's wrong with me, Mack? What is it?" There was a certain taut desperation in his tone.

"That's no way to think, kid."

"What other way is there? Tell me that."

Mack knew there were no words. Nothing, after all, to say. "Quent, it's one of those things. Roll with the punch, kid. Couple of months, and you won't remember what she looked like."

"I don't believe it."

"It's a big, wide, wonderful world, kid. And a good cigar is a smoke."

"You're a good guy, Mack, and I know what you're trying to do and all that, but it isn't going to do any good, so let's just drop it, shall we? I don't want to do any talking about it."

"Sure, kid. Sure."

Mack tried to talk shop, but it was flat. The air was stale. The drink didn't taste right. Quent was trying to respond, but his eyes were dead. Mack kept wishing there was some way to explain. They finished the drinks. Mack paid, and they went out onto the dark street. The night was lonely.

"Want a ride, kid?" Mack asked.

"Thanks. I think I'll walk it."

Mack's car was in the opposite direction. He stood and lit a cigarette and watched Quent until he had turned the corner and the sidewalk was empty. He wondered why thinking of Erica should make him feel older, feel a little worn around the edges. Hell, a blind man could have sensed it. That was the trouble with Erica. The kid was well out of that deal. He'd get over it. It was something you had to keep telling yourself. The night wind cut through his topcoat, and he shivered. Marie expected him. As he walked slowly toward his car, he decided that this was a night for going home. A little warm milk. Call Marie in the morning from the office. This was a night for going home and going to bed and hoping sleep would come quick before your mind started that squirrel-cage routine.

THE END

Her shuddering

breath told him everything he wanted to know

SURPRISE HIT of the Stork Club telecast is nine-year-old Shermane, shown with her father, Sherman Billingsley, owner of the club.

Orchids, Champagne, and Caviar in Your Living Room

A huge horde of home-lovers spend part of every Saturday night at Sherman Billingsley's Stork Club, New York's plushiest bistro

BY JOE McCARTHY

Sherman Billingsley, the proprietor of the Stork Club, got involved in a misunderstanding with a license bureau a few years ago and feared he might have some difficulty. Then one evening during this troubled period, he was told there were two men from the bureau at the door of the Stork Club, wanting to see him. Billingsley walked out to meet them, with the air of a convicted spy on his way to face the firing squad.

"We'd like to speak with you privately," one of the men said.

Well, I'm in the soup now, Billingsley thought bleakly, and here I go into bankruptcy.

"We want to ask a favor," one of the men said. "Could you fix it with that man on the door so he'll let us come in here with our wives some night for dinner?"

To numerous Americans, a crossing of the Stork Club's velvet-roped threshold is the ultimate social accomplishment. Even celebrities like Darryl Zanuck, Phil Rizzuto, and Burt Lancaster have failed to get by Billingsley's doormen. A reproduction of the Stork Club was the setting for a big scene in "All About Eve," a movie written and directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. Grateful for the plug, Billingsley cordially invited Mankiewicz to make the Stork Club his home the next time he was in New York. Mankiewicz accepted the invitation—and was stopped cold at the door.

The Stork Club takes in millions annually, yet Billingsley never has a floor show with well-known entertainers, and he does not hire name bands. Although his food is excellent, it's not the main drawing card. The big attraction is the exclusive atmosphere. So famous and valuable is this commodity that Chesterfield cigarettes pays out approximately $30,000 a week to capture a half hour of it on Saturday nights over the CBS television network.

"Billingsley himself collects five thousand a week for running the show and appearing on it," a television executive points out. "Can you imagine collecting that kind of money for advertising your own restaurant? Why? Well, I think people want to see the Stork Club on TV because that's the only way most of them can get into the place."

The Stork Club TV show tries to make the televiewer in his living room feel he is paying a visit to the Cub Room. The same people who would be seen in the Cub Room at seven o'clock on a Saturday night, and the food, the waiters, and the furnishing are all there. And the performers on the program sing their songs sitting at a table, because the Cub Room has no dance floor.

The Show's Nine-Year-Old Star

Along with several singers, the show has a few minutes of Billingsley's nine-year-old daughter Shermane, an attractive and poised child, who each week gives away a puppy to a deserving child. But the real star of the half-hour program is the Stork Club itself. Most followers of the show say they enjoy it most when the camera simply moves around the room, looking at the people who are eating dinner. The biggest pleasure in going to the Stork Club, after all, is rubbernecking.

A sizable number of the customers who are seen on the Stork Club show are celebrities, like Katharine Hepburn, Charles Boyer, and Irving Berlin, or socialites, like Mrs. Orson D. Munn, Brenda Frazier Kelly, and John Jacob Astor. The camera also catches glimpses of seldom-seen wives of celebrities, like Mrs. Perry Como and Mrs. Westbrook Pegler. The night John Jacob Astor was on the show, the audience saw only his back. He refused to look toward the camera because turning in that direction would have obliged him to face his former wife, Mrs. Raymond R. Guest, who was also sitting in the room at the time.

Like flesh-and-blood television stars, the Stork Club draws heavy personal fan mail. Midway through the show, a group of good-looking, well-dressed young women known as the Glamour Panel select a number of questions from the mail and toss them at Billingsley, who tries to answer all questions as frankly as possible.

Some of his answers turn out to be pretty surprising. When he was asked, for example, what customer ordered the strangest drinks, Billingsley told about one celebrity in the sports world who follows a straight bourbon with a glass of Bromo-Seltzer and a gin rickey.

(continued)

Photos by Matthew Harlib

CHAMPAGNE is as much a club trade-mark as the raffish storks that decorate the waiters' sleeves and the club's ashtrays.

PERFUME is one of Billingsley's frequent gifts to lady patrons. He and partners Arthur Godfrey and Morton Downey own the Sortilège brand.

GUARDIANS OF THE GOLDEN CHAIN and velvet rope are Billingsley and chief aides, Night Manager Arthur Brown and Manager Dick Conlon.

Then he calls for three more of the same.

Billingsley is often asked about tipping. He says the Stork Club waiters are satisfied with fifteen per cent of the bill but usually receive more. Sums as high as $2,500 are not extraordinary. One headwaiter once got a $10,000 tip.

A prosperous Detroit manufacturer came in one evening and asked the man on the velvet rope at the front door what was the biggest tip he had ever taken. "A hundred and fifty dollars," the doorman said.

"Here's two hundred," the Detroiter said. "Now tell me, who was the guy who gave you the hundred and fifty?"

"You did, sir," the doorman said.

Billingsley often cashes personal checks for five or ten thousand dollars; he will cash a twenty-five-dollar check for almost anyone. "If the check bounces, the guy will not come back," he says, "and it's worth twenty-five dollars to get rid of people like that."

Some memorable private parties have been staged at the Stork Club. Billingsley remembers one cocktail party thrown by Benjamin Sonnenberg, the New York public-relations counsel. It lasted two hours and cost $2,000. The most gala private dinner at the club was one Charles Cushing gave for the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Everybody who was anybody was there. Billingsley unhesitatingly names the Duke of Windsor as the customer who causes the most excitement in the Stork Club.

"Clark Gable, Jack Dempsey, and Gene Tunney, and, of course, Bing Crosby also create a big stir," he says. "But the Duke turns more heads than anybody else. I guess Americans are still overwhelmed by European royalty."

Billingsley contends that the stories about the Stork Club's exclusiveness are exaggerated, that the tales of the rank and file being barred at the door are greatly blown up.

The Club's Not That Exclusive

"A whisky manufacturer who did me some favors during the war when liquor was scarce once asked me if I'd display his stuff," he says. "I told him it was displayed all over the bar. He said he'd rather have it in the lobby, where it could be seen by all the people we turned away. The pay roll alone of the club is two thousand dollars a day. With an overhead like that, how could I afford to be that exclusive?"

Billingsley says that respectable and sober people are turned away only when the club is crowded and they have failed to make reservations. He says it's a simple matter of arithmetic: the demand for tables usually exceeds the number of tables. Of course, the freeze is put on certain people known to get nasty after they have downed their second drink.

And a famous movie actress and her husband are on the Stork Club's blacklist because he threatens to punch college boys who stare at her.

"He's got no right to take that attitude," Billingsley says. "A movie actress must expect to get stared at."

Cub Room Is for Celebrities

The Cub Room, however, is admittedly exclusive. It is small to begin with, and Billingsley has made it a place where celebrities can relax without being pestered for autographs. He tries to reserve the Cub Room for the kind of people whose eyes will not bulge if Marlene Dietrich sits down at the next table. Sometimes, though, a celebrity acts like a rube when he sees another celebrity. One evening recently Ernest Hemingway came into the Cub Room and was asked for his autograph by Johnnie Ray.

Hemingway and Billingsley are close friends, incidentally. One night Billingsley telephoned Hemingway, in Key West, Florida, and asked him to locate a local lawyer.

"I'll be your lawyer," Hemingway said. "What do you want?"

"Well," Billingsley said, "I've heard that somebody in Key West is running a saloon called Billingsley's Stork Club."

"I'll call you back in an hour," Hemingway said.

In less than an hour, he was back on the phone. "I went to see that guy," he reported, "and the name of his joint is now Billingsley's Goose."

Billingsley lavishes gifts on the Stork Club's customers. He estimates that in the eighteen years the Stork Club has stood on Fifty-third Street he has spent about $10,000,000 on presents, ranging from lipsticks to automobiles. He has handed out 100,000 pairs of bright red suspenders. A woman, if she has not received a more costly gift during the evening, is usually handed a small bottle of perfume when she walks out the door. Billingsley is also quick to pick up dinner checks.

"I don't spend money on advertising or expensive floor shows," he explains. "My idea is to make people happy so they'll want to come back. It's very important to keep certain steady customers. I could write you a list of ten people in New York who could make any restaurant successful if they went to it every night, or three or four nights a week. But, for diplomatic reasons, I'd rather not write it."

Despite the fancy dishes—like Pheasant Savaroff—served at the Stork Club, Billingsley's personal favorite dish is remarkably simple—beef stew. "And if you think it's easy to get a good beef stew, you're crazy," he says. "There are more ingredients in a good one than in any fancy dish served anywhere." He likes to recall one time when he told a chef that a certain brand of chili made a party of customers ill. The chef was indignant. To prove nothing was wrong with the chili, he ate a plate of it himself. He was sick in bed for two weeks.

Romances Start at the Stork

A number of romances have started in the Stork Club and ended in marriage, among them that of Alfred G.

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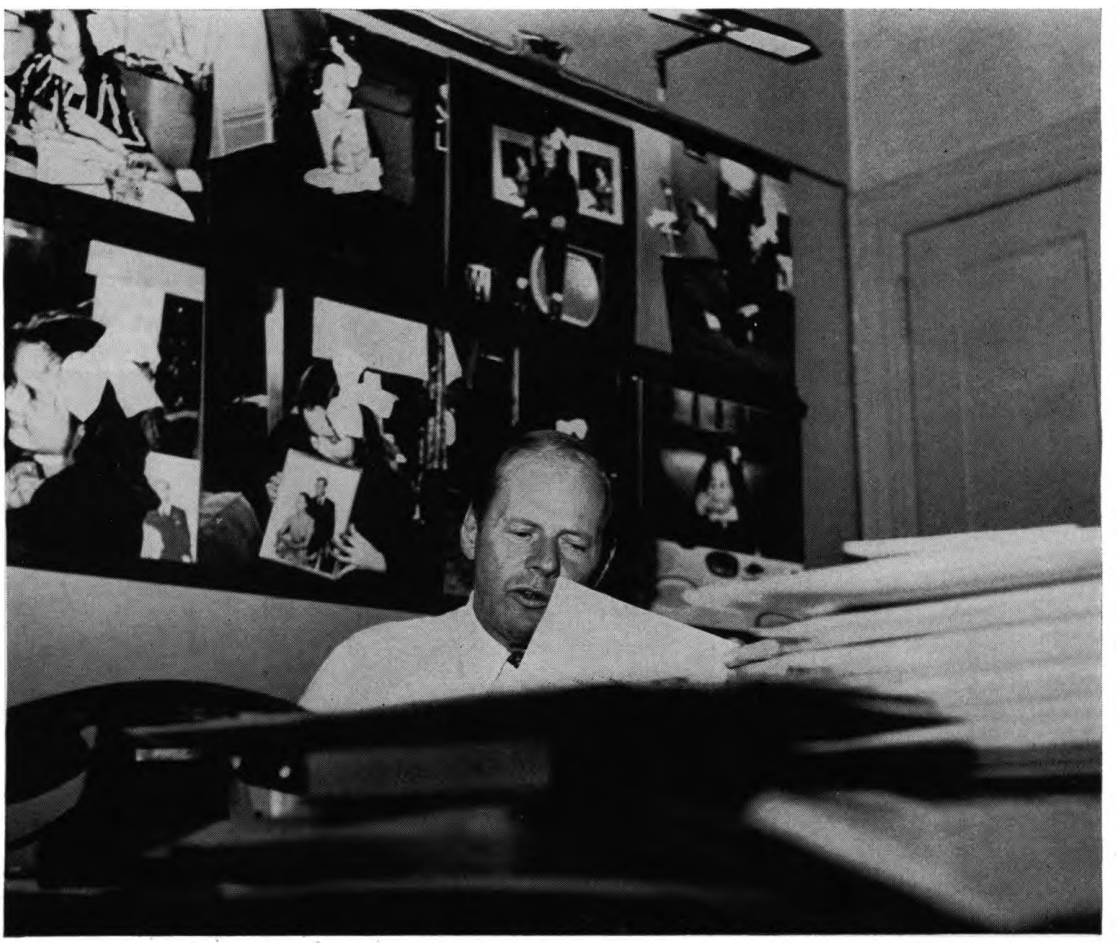
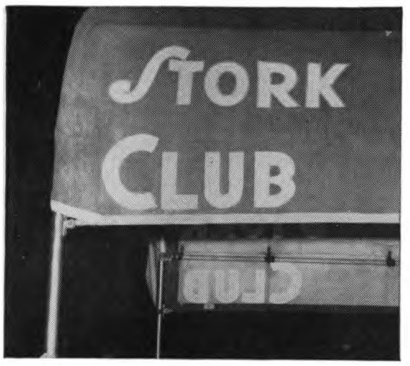


IN HIS SEVENTH-FLOOR OFFICE in the East Fifty-third Street building that houses the Stork Club, Billingsley pores over some of the 1,500 letters he receives each week. Most writers ask how they can get into the club.

THE GLAMOUR PANEL, usually four attractive ladies-about-town, are a regular feature of the show. They help give the program its atmosphere of high style while asking Billingsley questions about the Stork Club. His answers are frank, often surprising.



AFTER THE SHOW, Billingsley busses Shermane. He's swamped with letters asking about his family. His wife and two older daughters seldom visit the club.

Vanderbilt and Jeanne Murray. The Stork Club welcomes unescorted ladies at lunch and for cocktails, up until seven o'clock, but after that an escort is required. Formal evening dress is not required.

Billingsley says his waiters never have any trouble persuading customers it's time to go home. The crowd begins to thin before two o'clock. At three, the regular closing hour on Saturday (other nights it's four), the place is usually empty.

What was the most exciting incident that ever happened at the Stork Club? Well, Billingsley recalls one night when his door was darkened by a famed gunman who specialized in neat murder accomplished by one small bullet placed precisely between the victim's eyes. He and his wife were showing the town to Mrs. Bugsy Siegel, and they decided she should see the Stork Club. When they reached the lobby, the gangster was halted. He turned to Billingsley and pointed at the man on the door.

"This makes the tenth time I've been stopped by this guy," he said. "The next time I have to walk away I'm going to leave him and you laying here."

Billingsley merely called the police. The next day the City of New York warned the gunman to steer clear of the Stork Club, as well as the rest of New York's swank East Side. He caused no more trouble.

The Bum and the Apéritif

There was also an evening when the doorman left his post unguarded for two minutes during a lull. He returned to see a Bowery bum of the worst type casually sitting inside at the bar. He was dirty and unshaven. His long hair was matted, and his clothes were in shreds. He clapped his hands and called to the barman in a rich Oxford accent, "An *apéritif*, please, my good fellow."

"It took the captains and the waiters quite a while before they could pull themselves together enough to throw him out," Arthur Brown, the night manager of the club, says. "That business of clapping his hands and calling for an *apéritif*, instead of saying, 'Gimme a drink,' floored them. I always remember the bum's last line as he was being hustled to the sidewalk. He yelled back at us, 'You'll get no more of my trade!'"

Another evening Billingsley started to ease out a decrepit little old woman dressed like a sister of the Collyer brothers. "Something made me pause," he says. "And I was glad later. She turned out to be a very wealthy and very close relative of a President of the United States."

His experiences at the Stork Club have

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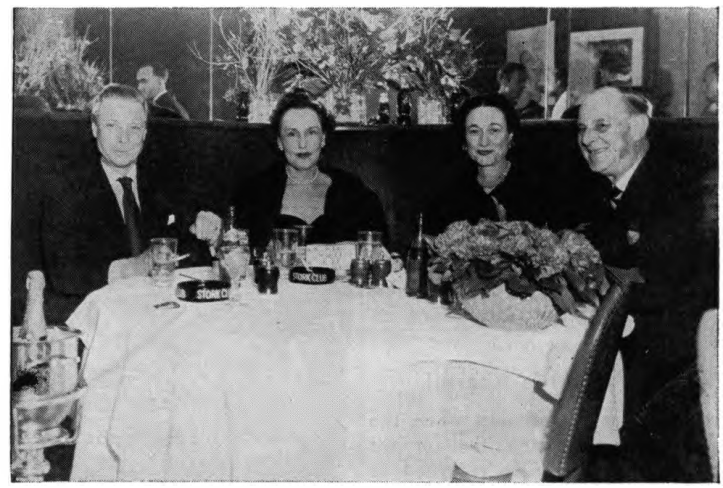
ARTHUR GODFREY AND BING CROSBY are Billingsley cronies. The club started as a society rendezvous, now draws top people in all fields.



BIGGEST HEAD-TURNERS are the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. A dinner honoring them was the biggest ever thrown there.

MAMIE EISENHOWER and daughter-in-law, Mrs. John Eisenhower, drop by. Like other women, they are barred from the Cub Room at noon.

taught Billingsley you never can tell about people. One night a customer he regarded as a bore and a chiseler kept asking for a word with him. In desperation, Billingsley finally asked a waiter to bring the man into a pantry, where there is a lot of clatter from pots and pans. Billingsley figured that a conversation in such cramped, noisy quarters could not last long.

"Well?" he said gruffly to the man. "What can I do for you?"

The fellow reached into his pocket and pulled out a roll of bills.

"I only wanted to pay you back that eight hundred dollars I owe you, Sherman," he said.

Billingsley has no trouble filling the tables for his TV show. Visitors from out of town pull strings to get invitations. Youngsters from New York's social register are only too glad to appear on the show.

Her Mink Was Showing

But being seen at the Stork Club on television can have certain disadvantages. A while ago, the camera showed an attractive young woman sitting at one of the tables with an attentive escort. A costly mink coat was draped over the back of her chair.

In a living room on Fifth Avenue, the coat was spotted immediately by the fur dealer who had been trying to collect for it. He hurried to East Fifty-third Street. When the young lady walked out of the Stork Club, the coat was gently but firmly removed from her shoulders by the grateful furrier.

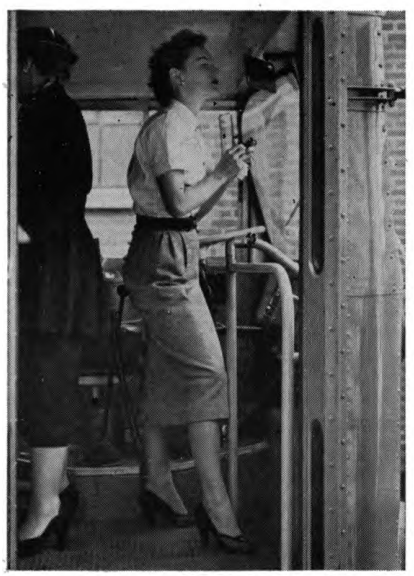
"Television," the fur dealer said, "it's wonderful." THE END

EXCLUSIVENESS, symbolized by the gold chain, is the secret of the club's fame.

Theatre on wheels *carries models, clothes, dressing rooms, runways, and music. It also has its own short-wave radio station, in emergencies can call ahead to prevent delays in schedules.*

Fashion Caravan

It moves right into the factory yard to preview, for the men, the clothes their wives will be wearing next season



Irene Maher, *formerly Miss Sweden, uses driver's mirror to repair make-up during Fullertown, Pennsylvania, stop.*

On the theory that husbands ultimately foot the bill for female fashions, Max Hess, Jr., president of the Hess Brothers Department Store, in Allentown, Pennsylvania, decided the least they deserve is a first look.

A realistic merchant, Hess knew that few men could be dragged into the perfumed confines of a fashion showroom. So he outfitted an especially designed bus, complete with plush runways, fancy clothes, and three of the best-looking models he could find, and brought the show to the men.

He sends the caravan to the industrial regions of Pennsylvania, where it stops at steel mills, coal mines, and construction projects, during nonwork periods, such as lunchtime and between shifts.

To the surprise of nobody, the men showed a sharp interest in the girls. To the astonishment of practically everyone but Max Hess, they also showed a sharp interest in fabrics, styles, and prices. The show presents the latest and best in original styles, explains that their wives will be able to purchase copies and variations of these originals this season—but at weekly-paycheck prices. The idea is to get the men interested in fashion trends and sympathetic toward their style-conscious wives. So far as Hess Brothers is concerned, it works.

The models by this time have become accustomed to the occupational hazards of such a show—sudden windstorms, rain, cramped dressing quarters, harsh lighting. But the hardships are more than offset by the thrill of participating in a show with a theatrical spirit.

The men whoop and holler, applaud enthusiastically, and treat the models like musical-comedy stars. So enthusiastic has been the response that many industries are bidding for the caravan fashion show—on company time.

The management of the Lehigh Materials Company in Tamaqua, Pennsylvania, provided such time. "It cost a pile of dollars in labor time," said one management official. "I don't know if the men made better aggregate afterward, but they sure weren't tossing bricks at the management."

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In cramped quarters of bus, *models Irene Maher and Wilma Kaspar hurriedly wriggle into some of the $22,000 worth of fashions by Schiaparelli, Dior, and other top designers at Coaldale, Pennsylvania. Miners showed distinct preference for Dior's 1953 tulip silhouette, winked their miners' lights approvingly at $7,000 ranch-mink fur coat.*

JACK STAGER—GLOBE PHOTOS

A full-skirted black coat *with bands of silk fringe drew oh's and ah's from the Coaldale miners. The coat was tailored by Monarch of New York.*

Three-piece cotton sun suit *got sharpest looks. Coal miners said the price of $29.95 wasn't too much provided that "the blonde lady came along with it."*

Most popular clothes *on trip were the formal and expensive ones, like this $1,725 emerald-green ballgown imported from the salon of Italian* couturiere, *Contessa Simonetta. Workers at New Jersey Central Railroad yard in Allentown were impressed when the announcer revealed that copies of this dress would probably be selling for about $39.95 in two months.*

Workers *at the Jordan Park Apartment Project in Fullertown winked when the mistress of ceremonies described "that nightgown" as a "Schiaparelli peignoir of pastel pink and hot pink over a Vanity Fair gown of nylon tricot with adornment of appliqued roses on bodice and a pleated skirt." Then they grinned at the ensemble's $75 price tag.*

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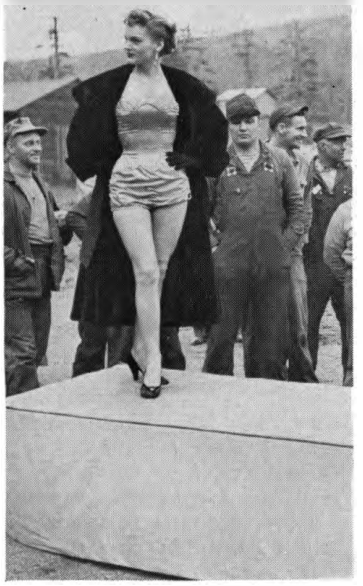
"Gentlemen in overalls" yelled loudest for swank glamour clothes. Most popular item—a $1,725 evening gown

In the new tulip silhouette, *this iridescent red-and-green pebble tweed tailored by Rafi, cost about $110, drew far less response than glamour clothes.*

As soon as fashion show *is over in one place, caravan hustles on to another to play for short, free-time period. En route, models iron, repair abused clothes.*



Hess knew *the swim season was finished as far as sales were concerned, but shrewdly used sexy model in hourglass Dior bathing suit to set off black seal fur coat.*

At end of last show, *caravan, usually deep in Pennsylvania coal centers, heads back to home base in Allentown. Models, after long day in which they do four shows, doze off in bus, prepare for next day's grueling performances.*

THE END

A hugely popular movie, a Broadway hit, and James Street's fabulous writing career all began with this story, which first appeared here in 1937.


Nothing Sacred

The only thing that can beat a good newspaperman in search of a story is a beautiful girl in search of a happy ending

by James H. Street

NOTHING SACRED

Some girls will die a thousand deaths just to get a man, but Adele would die just once, and she wanted to enjoy it

BY JAMES STREET

William Burke was in his Monday-morning mood, not surly, just sour. Most city editors are like that on Mondays—particularly those whose weekly holiday is Sunday. They come to their desks with echoes of Scotch on their palates and the vengeance of Simon Legree in their souls.

The mail always was heaviest on Mondays. Burke puckered his lips into a "don't-say-anything-to-me" expression as he glanced at his letters—letters from "indignant readers." He tossed batches of mail across to his assistant after reading the first line of each message. He could tell by the first line if it was a serious kick, and as he flipped the letters across the desk he would say curtly, "Spike 'em."

The job of digesting the day's grist completed, he began the more serious matter of arranging his staff's work for the day.

"It looks dull, eh?" he asked his assistant, and before that worthy one could make his usual answer of "Yes, sir," Burke replied to his own question. "Yes, it looks dull. Always *is* dull on Mondays. Everything is dull, *including* this underworked and overpaid staff! And the boss is on my neck—says get something new or he'll get a new staff. Told him I couldn't get news when there isn't any, and he said, 'Make it!'"

"And what did you say then?" Pete, the assistant, asked slyly.

"I said, 'Yes, sir,'" Burke replied. He frowned at Pete. "Get this, you cluck. I'm no yes-man. I get pieces for the paper, and *you* get paid to help me. But of course *you* haven't any ideas. I want a feature, a hot one that'll make our

readers miss their trains, forget to eat."

Pete suggested, "There's a good yarn in one of those letters I spiked—the one from Mount Ida, Arkansas."

"Mount Ida?" Burke furrowed his brow. "Never heard of Mount Ida—but I know a girl in Hoboken named Ida, and she's as big as a mountain and just as tough."

He retrieved the letter, however, and read it through:

City Editor,
New York Express
Dear Sir:

Do you want a story written by a dying woman?

I am thirty-two years old and the daughter of this village's postmaster. I am a victim of radium poison, contracted while a student nurse. Doctors say I cannot live longer than three months.

The affliction does not show. When first told I was doomed, I almost lost my mind, but I have come to the sane conclusion that if I have three months to live, I should really *live*.

I never have been to New York. Here is my proposition: If your paper will pay my expenses to that city, outfit me, and give me funds to see the sights, I will write my life story for you.

I am enclosing an affidavit from Dr. Allison Taylor which will confirm the statement that I cannot live.

Sincerely yours,
Adele Ruth Morris

Burke snarled, "Story! Where's the story in this?" He hurled it back.

The assistant city editor hastily shoved the letter back into the heap. "I thought maybe—with the right lead—it might make a story."

"Story, hell! We can't run articles by a woman dying of poisoning. Too gruesome. If she had some sweet little injury, now, like a twisted spine—maybe. But not radium poisoning. And thirty-two years old—and a country spinster? Where's your sense of romance?"

He picked up the opposition morning papers, glanced over them with a grunt and a snort. Then he spent fifteen minutes gazing through the window behind his desk. Ideas—ideas—ideas! Were there no ideas in all Manhattan, with the managing editor yammering for news?

Suddenly he whirled in his chair, all but knocking the phone from its cradle.

"Pete," he snapped at his right bower, "you never have given birth to an actual idea yet, but for once maybe you've *conceived* one! Get that letter. Send this doctor—Dr. Allison Taylor, wasn't it?—a wire, and check this Morris woman's story. If it's the straight goods, wire the Morris woman expense money and tell her we'll meet her proposition. Then get Hank Watson and Joe Norman in here. And don't ask questions!"

When city editors speak like that, the city desk leaps into high with a hum. Reporters Hank Watson and Joe Norman were cooling their heels in the office even before the return telegram arrived from Dr. Taylor in Mount Ida, and that was in twenty-three minutes by the clock.

The telegram was simple but to the point:

MISS ADELE RUTH MORRIS HAS BEEN A PATIENT OF MINE FOR THREE YEARS. SHE IS SUFFERING FROM A STRANGE MALADY CAUSED BY RADIUM POISON. SHE CANNOT LIVE LONG. I DO NOT APPROVE OF HER PROPOSED EXPLOIT, BUT I CAN'T PREVENT IT.

ALLISON TAYLOR, M.D.

Flipping the letter and the telegram at his two star reporters, City Editor Burke crackled orders and instructions.

"Our best fashion writer will meet this Morris woman at Newark airport. She'll take her uptown and have her dressed like a princess. We'll entertain her for two days. You, Hank, take her the first day, and you, Joe, the second. Draw on the expense account and *show this dame the town!* Take her places—the places you like.

"I don't give a whoop in hell about *her* story. No thirty-two-year-old old maid from Arkansas can write even want ads for the *Express*. It's *your* stories I want! Each of you birds write me a story of your experiences as the escort of a dying woman. Keep your traps closed and don't hurt her feelings. We'll use Hank's story next week, and Joe's after her death."

She arrived Thursday on an eastbound air liner.

There were other passengers on the same plane—some of them important—but they were practically lost in the stampede as the *Express* staff went into action. For one brief instant the timid person in gray stood on the air liner's steps, and then she was almost knocked off them by a flash bulb exploding near her face. The crack photographer of the *Express* pushed forward.

"Step right over here, Miss Morris—that's right. Oh, I forgot—I'm Hal Morgan of the *Express*. Want to get a few shots—pictures, you know. . . . Hey, pilot! Come over here for a picture.

"Now, Miss Morris, shake hands with the pilot. Smile at him. Great! Now, put your foot back on the second step of that ladder to the plane. Now, wave a greeting at New York. Swell! And here comes Miss Phillips, our fashion editor."

The tall, stylishly dressed fashion writer of the *Express* dropped a gloved hand on the shrinking shoulder in gray. "This way, dear. I know you're tired. I have a taxi here. We'll drive straight to the hotel."

"But—but I'm not tired. I had a lovely rest on the plane."

"Splendid! Then we'll go straight uptown and select your clothes. Let's see. You'll look nice in brown, or tans and grays—and we'll get you a gorgeous black evening dress. You'll look good in black, too. Oh, dear, I didn't mean that!"

Miss Adele Ruth Morris smiled wistfully from beneath her two-year-old gray toque, and her voice was soft but brave. "That's quite all right. I realize what to expect. Please don't be embarrassed."

There was something about her slenderness, her voice, that sent little quivers up even Miss Phillips' sophisticated spine as she helped her charge into a taxi. Miss Adele Ruth Morris sank back with a sigh.

For ten minutes she sat silent. Then she timidly turned and said. "Miss Phillips, I've been a fool, I know, but I do want to enjoy life as long as I can. Please don't think me ill-bred, or calloused. I wrote that letter to your editor on an impulse. I've got nothing to lose—but I'm scared pink."

"I was wondering what made your skin so nice and pink. But don't worry. Just don't think about anything except the sights you are going to see. We'll soon be in Holland Tunnel. You've never seen our Holland Tunnel, have you? And after that, we'll go over to the Fifth Avenue shops. You'll love the shops."

Almost the whole trip Miss Phillips chattered in a way she would never have believed possible. As the taxi drew up outside a shop whose name was known from Manhattan to Bangkok, Miss Phillips was quick to step out.

"Now for the dresses. Pick out anything you like—and don't worry about money. Excuse me a moment, will you? I have to make a phone call."

Two minutes later Miss Phillips was ringing City Editor Burke. When she got him, her voice was accusing.

"Look here, Bill Burke, what's the idea? You trying to put a fast one over on me? Hillbilly, you said. Well, then your Adele Ruth Morris must be queen of the hillbillies! She is delightful—poised. Maybe she's thirty-two, but she looks twenty-five! She's five-feet-four, and her hair is as black as onyx. Her eyes are hazel and large. Her complexion is coral-pink. She's trim and knows how to wear clothes. If she's Mount Ida, Arkansas, how is it the Hollywood scouts have overlooked it all these years?"

"That's great!" City Editor Burke was

Penguin

CAROLE LOMBARD controls Fredric March in the 1937 movie "Nothing Sacred." To publicize the comedy, an almost nude girl rode bareback through busy Hollywood.

enthusiastic for the first time in weeks. "After you've finished outfitting her, take her to her hotel and make her rest. Don't let her know; don't let her see or hear anything that'll remind her of—of—oh, hell, you know."

Miss Phillips slipped back to the shop. Adele Ruth Morris still was looking starry-eyed at her first selection, the brown one.

"I'm glad that you took so long to choose one dress," Miss Phillips praised her. "Dresses should be chosen like husbands. They last about as long."

"It depends upon the material in both cases, doesn't it?" Miss Morris smiled.

Miss Phillips mentally took that down to repeat at some later date.

With a complete outfit purchased, Miss Phillips called a taxi again.

"That's all the work; now all you have to do is have a good time. Bill Burke, our city editor, is a gruff old bear—with men. But he's Irish, and there never was an Irishman who wasn't sweet to pretty women. He asked me to bring you down to the office tomorrow morning. But look here, I can't go on calling you Miss Morris. It's too—too formal. What do your friends call you?"

"Well, they generally call me Adele."

"Adele? It's a pretty name, sweet, dignified. All right, Adele. . . . But back to the program. While you're seeing the sights, your escorts will be two boys from our staff. Hank Watson will take you out tomorrow. He gets tight at times, and it makes him want to make love to every pretty girl he meets. If he drinks too much, he may try to sympathize with you, but don't take him seriously."

"I'm not afraid of a man with one too many drinks if it just makes him nicer," said Adele, with a smile. "People in Mount Ida drink too much, too, sometimes—only they're not always nicer."

Miss Phillips glanced at her approvingly. "Hank isn't that kind. And Joe Norman, your other date, doesn't drink at all—but I don't think he'll bore you. He'll want to show you every museum in town, and he'll spend hours explaining how the electric eels in the aquarium generate enough juice to light an electric-light bulb. I was in love with Joe once and went with him six months—and the only animation he ever showed was to squeeze my hand at a movie."

The taxi drew up before the Waldorf. Miss Phillips held out her hand.

"You go in and rest. I'll see you in the morning, honey. And say, if looks are a family trait in the Morris family and you have a brother in Mount Ida, give me his address, *please!*"

About that moment, Hal Morgan, in the developing room of the *Express*, was yelling into the city editor's phone.

"Burke? Morgan. And say, have we got plates on that Morris doll! They'll knock your eye out! Boy, if she's been poisoned, I want a highball glass full of that same poison! She's about five-feet-three—hair as black as the darkroom here. And eyes—you tell 'em!

"Figure, did you say? *Figure!* You bet! Front-row stuff. And I got a leg-shot with her right foot on the plane ladder that'd knock the hosiery ads for a million loops!"

In her suite high up in the Waldorf, Adele Ruth Morris was standing beside the window staring out over the miracle of lights and shadows that is New York by night. Fascinated, she stared for a long, long time before she tore herself away and went down to the dining room.

The solicitous waiter brought her water, a menu card. She glanced hesitantly over the card and ordered the most inexpensive things. But before the waiter departed, she said suddenly:

"Shucks, I'm out to enjoy life—not humor it. What sort of cocktail would you recommend, waiter?"

A smile came into the waiter's eyes. "The champagne cocktails are very good, madam."

"Bring me one, then."

After that she ordered a steak with mushrooms, potatoes au gratin, French peas, and a salad—the sort of dinner she had eaten years before when she had been a schoolgirl in Kansas City.

But when she regretfully pushed her coffee cup away, her eyes still large with the glamour of the crowds and music around her, the waiter took one look at the name and room number she wrote across the check, and shook his head.

"Miss Morris, Room 1944? You need not sign it, madam. We have orders to take care of everything. And if you should wish anything else, just call room service and it will be sent to your room."

When the *Express* did a thing, it did it right.

Adele slept late. She was scarcely out of her bath and dressed and eating the breakfast that room service had sent up, before Miss Phillips arrived.

"Hurry and get ready. I've got a taxi waiting downstairs. We must be at the office at ten, and Bill Burke likes promptness. I hope you had a restful night. You look lovely this morning."

"I feel like a schoolgirl." Adele reached for the new brown hat. "But do we have to ride in a taxi? I've been looking forward to a ride in the subway. I've never ridden in a subway."

The fashion editor was polite but adamant. "No subways for you. You mustn't get tired, with all of New York to see. Now, let's get going."

In the reception office of the roaring news building, Adele looked bashful, almost frightened. But City Editor Burke took one look at her, smiled, and held out his hand. And when he spoke, Adele remembered what Miss Phillips had said about the Irish in him.

"Sit down, Miss Morris. I want to tell you frankly that I don't know whether I'm making a mistake or not. I may have

the wrong hunch, so if you want to withdraw from our agreement, please do so now. The *Express*, of course, is interested in the troubles of people primarily because they make news. Understand?

"Now, you may see or do anything you please for two days, under escort of two of my reporters. You will write us an account of your experiences. We may not use anything you write. However, each of your escorts will write a story of his experiences, and we *will* use those.

"There will be no splurge of publicity to embarrass you while you are here. When you leave, the *Express* will begin a campaign to build up interest in the stories. Another thing—we must have frequent reports, on your condition, after you get back home. Now, is it a deal?"

"It's a deal," said Adele.

Burke turned to an office boy and ordered, "Tell Mr. Watson to report here."

Sheepishly, a chunky young man came in to blink and then stammer as Adele's soft fingers touched his.

When City Editor Burke had gone out, Hank Watson said, "As I understand it, Miss Morris, you are under my care until you want to go home tonight. So—where do we go first?"

"It's your town," said Adele, smiling, "and I'm your victim. Anywhere you say is the program; and anything you do is the law—that is, *almost* anything."

"Fine." Taking her arm, he ushered her downstairs and into his automobile. "Let's go look up the gang."

"Looking up the gang," Adele discovered, meant visiting a mid-town bar. And the "gang"—a half-dozen zestful young reporters from as many different papers—were engaged in the serious business of rolling dice for drinks.

Hank Watson performed all necessary introductions by shouting, "Fellows, this is Adele. Adele"—he waved his left hand—"this is the gang, the mob—the moochers!" He elbowed a place for her alongside the bar.

Like bees around honeysuckle, the gentlemen of the press swarmed around.

Only Richard Dougherty, the nationally known Broadway columnist of the *Evening Appeal*, seemed aloof. He slouched at the end of the bar, blind-drunk as usual.

The reporter nearest him jabbed him in the ribs and reported enthusiastically, "She's a doll, isn't she?"

Dougherty pushed to a place alongside her. He grinned. "Don't say I never rescued you from the wolves. Come over to a booth and let's talk pleasantly, not professionally."

He led her to one of the side booths. Over untouched drinks, he plied her with questions.

"Where you from, babe?" He tried to focus his eyes. "I'm a little drunkee, but what you doing with that Hank Watson?"

"Why—er—er," she stammered. "I just—"

"Oh, I understand, babe. I know Hank. But when may I come up?"

"You never can come up. And I'm here on business that concerns me only."

All at once Hank Watson became aware of her absence. "Looka' that Broadway pirate over there—stealing my girl!" he complained to the gang. "You know Dougherty, what sort of a guy he is. And I got to look after Adele. She's a friend of Bill Burke's."

"Who is she, Hank? What's the gag?" demanded a rewrite man from the *Blade*.

"She is worth millions," Watson lied fluently, under the influence of a warm imagination and half a dozen drinks. "Her father is a big shot down in Arkansas—a power in Federal circles. Owns a chain of post offices, a string of race horses, a flock of oil wells. I'm kind of stuck on her. Maybe I'll marry her. What would you guys think if I married an heiress?"

"I'm not thinking—it's my day off. But if she was mine, I'd grab her away from that Rialto rambler *tout de suite*."

Hank Watson stalked across to the booth and took Adele by the elbow. "Sorry to bust up Old Home Week," he said gratingly, "but we have other engagements this afternoon. Come along, darling."

Adele frowned, but she went. In the car, Hank shook his head at her as he kicked on the starter.

"Don't waste time on Dougherty. He's always telling pretty girls love stories. Shame, too—used to be a good fellow until he tried to take New York. It can't be done. New York always takes you."

For a moment she looked at him almost resentfully. "What do you mean? He didn't say anything. Anyway, I will be with you only until midnight; then with another man tomorrow—and then home for good."

"Home for—Lord, what do you think I'm thinking of, anyway? Hell, I wish I could forget it—the assignment, I mean. I just can't think of you—so alive, so beautiful—"

She forced a laugh. "I'll forgive you. You see, Miss Phillips warned me that when you are full of bourbon, you are also brimming over with compliments."

"Compliments be damned! I mean it. And don't think I don't know I was talking like a nut back there, but I couldn't let those mugs know the truth. What the hell! Come on. Let's ride up to a little joint I know for cocktails, and then we'll come back and see the town."

Cocktails were just the start of a continuous round of revelry, though. Hank seemed determined to show Adele every bar and every person he knew. They

dined in a mid-town restaurant where a raucous band played blatant music.

Then at nine o'clock they saw Broadway when the lights were bright and the funsters were tight—and they saw Broadway again at midnight when the same lights told the same old thing in the same old way. When Hank left Adele at her hotel, her face was sober, her steps dragging. But she had seen New York as Watson knew it.

As he held his hat in his hand, his voice was gruff, almost harsh. "All right, Burke told me to show you the town as I see it. I did. You didn't enjoy it. Neither did I. You belong where there are honeysuckles and lilacs, and so do I! Please don't laugh. I'm serious. Now I've got to write a piece about what I think. Well, I think you're great!

"I wish—after your date with Joe Norman—you wouldn't go home. I wish you'd stay in New York and let me show you the part of town I *really* like, but seldom see. And—may I kiss you good night?"

She nodded, soft-eyed. "Of course. Good night—and good-by. And—I think you're swell."

She sat up very late, writing her first article.

Joe Norman came for her the next morning. Her first impression of him was that he was tall and stern-looking. "Miss Morris? I'm Joe Norman."

"Yes, Mr. Norman, I'm your problem child for today, but please keep me out of the same bars I saw yesterday."

He looked at her sharply. "Apparently you had a great time yesterday. I know Hank. And—you did see the *Appeal's* Broadway column—Dick Dougherty's?"

"No-o-o."

"Well, I brought one for you—thought you'd like to see about yourself in print. Burke doesn't mind. It's good publicity as long as the other papers are kept in the dark about you." He unfolded the paper and spread it before her.

> Hank Watson, the whisky-and-soda tenor and tripist of the *Express*, was pulling a new comet around the sin spots last night. He says they will weld. She, an Arkansas heiress, didn't say anything. Her papa, Hank says, has oil wells, etc. Well, well!

Adele looked up with a gasp. "Where did that start?"

"In bourbon and Dougherty, probably," replied Norman. "Most one-day romances begin in print and bourbon—and end in print and ice packs."

"And what do *you* drink?"

"I drink orange juice in the morning and tomato juice at night."

"What, no lemon juice?" she inquired.

"Plenty lemons. The world's full of 'em!" He grinned at her suddenly, and she liked his grin. It was so friendly.

By this time they had reached the street. But to her surprise he did not call a taxi. Instead, he turned toward green lampposts that said "Subway."

"But I thought I was not to ride subways," she said. "Miss Phillips said that sick persons—"

"Subways are good for sick persons." He helped her down the steps. "As I understand all this, you are to do as I say. We will go first to the aquarium."

"Hank bet me it would be the aquarium," she said gloomily. "And then do we go to those museums where they have mummies—and funny dead things?"

"Dead th—" Suddenly he stopped and looked away. "The aquarium is lovely—all bright-colored fish and cool water."

But he was strangely silent all the way down in the train.

Inside the aquarium, however, he seemed to recover his briskness. "This," he said, pointing to four feet of squirming fish, "is an electric eel. Power enough in his body to light a—"

"How marvelous," said Adele, and walked toward the goldfish.

For the first time he laughed—a cheerful laugh, as friendly as his grin.

"And right over here, I was about to say, is where we catch a ferry to Staten Island. We'll stand in the bow of the boat. The air will do you good."

As the churning boat pulled away from the slip and the fresh breeze from the harbor fanned their faces, Adele gave an exclamation of delight. The sparkling water, the scurrying boats, the heaven-scraping panorama of Manhattan behind—she could only "a-aah" and "o-ooh" with amazement.

After that there was the glory of Central Park, with the towers of Fifth Avenue on one side, and the miles of Central Park West apartments stretching like the Chinese Wall on the other. They spent the remainder of the day in an uptown museum looking at some things that had been dead for centuries and at other things that would never, never die.

It was twilight when they came back downtown, and Norman piloted her to a cozy restaurant in Greenwich Village.

"It's my favorite place to eat," he explained. "They have only ten or twelve customers each evening, and the food is marvelous."

Over the wine, as delicious as the food, Adele began to glow like an evening glory that blossoms only after sunset. Her eyes met his across the table.

"I hope you're not bored," she said.

His response was so harsh it almost took her breath. "Not bored—it's worse than that! You can't expect me, or even

HELEN GALLAGHER, as the dying heroine, and Thomas Mitchell, as her partner in conspiracy, help to make "Nothing Sacred" a hit as Broadway's "Hazel Flagg."

Watson, to enjoy a beautiful day with a beautiful girl under such conditions! Burke was a brute to think of this. *News! Stories!* Anything for news so the good old paying and prying public can gobble it up. If I had the nerve of a rat, I'd tell Burke to take his damn job and jump in the bay with it! How do you think I'm going to feel when I have to write this experience?"

She dropped her hand on his gently. "Let's not be softies about all this. Don't! Something tells me you want to ask me a lot of questions, but are afraid you'll hurt my feelings. And I *know* I've got a lot of questions I want to ask you."

"Questions about what?"

She smiled into his eyes. "You. You see, the funny thing is that you're feeling sorry for me, while all the time I'm feeling sorry for *you*. You know I can't live long—and I know you never have lived!" She went on, "One of the things I'd like to ask you is why you try to act so cold and stern when you should be happy. And one of the things you want to ask me, but won't, is how I can be so happy when I have so little to be happy over."

His eyes were admiring in his solemn face. "Miss Morris, you are a marvelous woman!"

"Don't you mean Adele?"

"Then, Adele, you are a marvelous woman! Is that better?"

"Much better." She held a cigarette for him to light. "All right, here goes. Since you won't interview me, I'll interview you—for my second article. I'm writing articles for the *Express*, too, remember. Well, in my next article I want to tell about a man who has everything to live for, but is grumpy just because he wants to be different. Weren't you ever in love?"

"Who said I'd never been in love?"

"Then you have!" she cried.

"All right. I have, then." He made crazy designs on the tablecloth with his fork. "If you have to know, it was back in Oklahoma. She was only a youngster, but she promised to follow me here when I got a job."

"And she didn't?"

"No—she did. Only she met the one man on earth I detested most, took a wedding vow with him—and had two babies."

"And you're weak enough to let it make your whole life bitter!"

He grinned at her again. "Oh, no. I'm not bitter. Just sort of hate myself for having fallen for a shallow thing like that. I see them together now and then, and I'm glad he got her. Serves him right! I told you I hated him, didn't I?"

He lighted a cigarette. "But now you've started it, I'm going to ask *you* questions! What about *you?* You're thirty-two—and not married either, apparently. You can't alibi it on your illness, for you've been ill only three years. Come on; what's the deep secret in *your* life?"

She did more than smile. She laughed.

He frowned. "What's so funny?"

"You," she said. "And me! To think— here I come to New York on this idiotic mission, and with all there is to see and talk about, I sit and talk about the same things we talk about in Mount Ida!"

She laughed again, then caught herself hurriedly. "Yes, I was in love, or thought I was. He came to New York to write, too—and to send for me when he got a job. He got it—but he made a vow with another woman and has children, too."

Norman caught her hand. "Now I know why you came to New York! You came hoping to see him before—that is, before you went home for good!"

"Yes." She nodded. "I did want to see him. But when I did, I hated him!"

"You mean you've *already* seen him?" Norman gasped. "But—but how could you? I thought the *Express* had covered every move you made." Then, with a dark suspicion: "You don't mean Watson, because Hank's never been married."

"No. Not Watson. Dougherty. Dick Dougherty of the *Appeal*. Only when I knew him, he was just Richard Howard Dougherty, a news reporter on a Hot Springs, Arkansas, paper."

"Dougherty! Well, I'll—be—damned!"

Norman began to laugh. Adele looked at him, frightened.

"What is it? What's so funny?"

"You—New York—the world! The crazy, preposterous world! It's incredible—impossible—and yet it's happened. You see, it was *Dougherty* who married that girl in Oklahoma who threw me down!"

She laughed, too; then cried a little.

Joe Norman's face sobered suddenly. "S-a-a-y, didn't he recognize you yesterday? Don't you know he'll spill the story about you, and Burke will go berserk if we get scooped on our own yarn?"

"He didn't recognize me." Adele shook her head sadly. "He was too drunk."

"Oh, you poor darling!" he gasped.

"And you poor dear," she echoed.

Then they laughed some more. Suddenly he looked at his watch. "But we can't stay here talking. I've got a job. Burke told me to show you the town. Which theatre would you like to go to?"

"Do I have to go to a theatre?"

"Don't you want to go to a theatre?"

"No. Let's take another ferry ride!"

It was midnight when Norman hailed a taxi at Battery Park. Inside, he put his arm around Adele's shoulders.

"Adele, it'll be like the bottom falling out of the world when I take you to your hotel. I don't see how I can stay here when you go away. And I'm sure I can't write the story Burke expects."

She let her head fall back on his

A COMEDIENNE who can sing, dance, and act, Helen Gallagher was the only actress considered for the lead in "Hazel Flagg."

shoulder. "Why can't you?" she asked.

"You know without my telling you. You know—you must know!—that I love you, and it's hopeless. Lord—this sort of thing, when all I want is to make you happy! But it wouldn't be fair. The time is too short. I'd be a brute."

"Yes, Joe. Yes—I understand."

At the hotel, in a deserted corner, he held her close again. "Good night, sweet—and good-by."

"Good-by—?"

"Yes; I won't be at the airport tomorrow when—you leave."

"I know." She kissed him again. "I know how you feel. Good night."

She went to her room and cried herself to sleep. Joe Norman went to the office and wrote his story.

City Editor Burke arrived at his desk at ten o'clock. Three minutes later, he was stalking into the reception office, a telegram in his fist and fire in his eyes.

Adele Ruth Morris was waiting there in a chair. She half rose, then sank back as he towered over her.

"Well"—in City Editor Burke's voice were wrath and crisp, biting sarcasm—"well, Dr. Allison Taylor *alias* Adele Ruth Morris, how are you this morning?"

She looked at him. "How did you know?"

"Easy. Easy, *Doctor!* That first article—the one you wrote about our experience with Watson—I knew the moment I read it. Who but a doctor could use words like those? 'Radium poison is unlike such common poisons as toxemia, septicemia, and pyemia, for while they leave the blood in a morbid condition, radium poison spreads through the tissues and eventually and inevitably destroys life.' I knew no little Arkansas girl would use them, even if she had been a student nurse."

"O-o-oh!" said Dr. Adele Ruth Morris Allison Taylor.

"You bet I knew it. But just to make certain, I wired this Dr. Allison Taylor. The telegram was returned to us, marked 'Undelivered—Dr. Taylor not in town.' So I wired the nearest Arkansas daily newspaper and learned Dr. Allison Taylor is a charming brunette who built a reputation in a hospital at Hot Springs, but later buried herself in the Arkansas hills as a country doctor because of disappointment in a love affair. It was a great idea—only it didn't work!"

He made as if to hurl the papers and telegram into a wastebasket, then hesitated. His eyes began to dance.

"A ride—taken for a ride!" he gasped. "And what a ride! New York—city of rackets—and a little gal from Mount Ida, Arkansas, knocks it for a loop! Outsmarts the hottest newspaper in the hottest circuit of the world. My Lord!"

Adele sprang out of her chair. Gone now was her timidity. "It wasn't a racket!" she flared. "And if it was, it was

New York that caused it! New York—*your* New York that you're so proud of. I wanted to see the city that could take a once-decent small-town reporter and make the rotten thing out of him it made out of Dick Dougherty."

Burke stopped laughing. "What do you mean—Dick Dougherty?"

And then she told him the story.

"When I saw him here, he was so drunk he didn't know me. I wanted to know what there was here that ruined boys. I didn't have the money, but I meant to pay it back. I *will* pay back every cent of it—the plane fare, the hotel, the clothes. I thought I still was in love with Dick Dougherty, and I wanted to see what New York had done to him!"

"You did! How you did!" He started laughing again.

"Stop it! I tell you I'll pay you back. I'll pay your old *Express* back every cent!"

"Oh, no, you won't!" He caught her hand, shook it vigorously. "Shake, sister. No one ever can say the *Express* isn't a good sport when it's licked at its own game—or that Bill Burke isn't a good editor! You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to write this story myself for our Sunday feature section! It's life and love people like to read about—not death! It'll be a knockout—all about you and Dougherty and Joe."

"But you can't!" she wailed. "You can't! And I've got to go home right away. When Joe finds out, he'll hate me!"

"Oh, yeah?" City Editor Burke's face was glowing now. "You know how I know? Because Joe Norman, who *never* drinks, went out this morning after he left his story on my desk and got potted! Not only that, but he wired me his resignation—collect, mind you!—and then phoned me to be sure I got it. And I'm going to have a hell of a time looking in the barrooms to find him for you."

Adele's eyes were two stars. Her face was as crimson and white as the satin skin of a fresh May peach. She tried to speak, but could only stammer.

To save her embarrassment, Burke jerked a manuscript from his pocket.

"You'll like this. It's the story Hank Watson wrote about you. It's a shame you're so healthy—it's a swell story."

She read the article, and wiped unashamed tears from her eyes. "Did he really mean all those nice things?"

"Did he? Sure he did." City Editor Burke beamed. "And the stingy cluck didn't say half enough, at that! And Hank Wilson is the best damned Broadway reporter in this or any league."

"I—I wonder," Adele said, smiling through her tears, "if now you'll let me see what Joe wrote."

"No, I guess not, baby." City Editor Burke winked at her. "You see, Joe is our obituary editor!" THE END

She Shimmied Her Way to Success

Sheree North, a platinum blonde with an uninhibited body, became a Broadway sensation in her speechless debut in "Hazel Flagg"

The first nighters were watching Broadway's hit musical "Hazel Flagg," based on the James Street story "Nothing Sacred." Suddenly a lightheaded body tore out of the wings. She never recited a line. The sounds that came from her throat were incredibly like those made by an air-raid siren capped by a derby. Whether her movements can be considered dancing is debatable.

In short, all she did was to wiggle, shake, twist, and shimmy her amazingly voluptuous body all over the stage. The audience felt the shock, and Sheree's (accent on the last "e") career was born.

The furor she created still bewilders Sheree. "It's silly stuff that part, y'know, kind of a dumb dame without much up here," she says, poking a finger through a freshly platinumed head of hair. "I guess I'm good at it because in my long career I've known such dopy drips and had so much experience dancing."

That "long career" becomes imposing when her age (Sheree insists that she's only twenty) is considered. Those "dopy drips" she has been encountering for more than half her life, while dancing in cabarets, juke joints, gambling houses, and anywhere the management had a "line," a platoon of girls always high in décor, usually low in talent, and often equipped with two left feet.

Knowing what to do with her feet has never been a problem for Sheree North, born Dawn Bethel. Her mother enrolled her at an early age in a Los Angeles dancing school. At eleven she wangled her way into a USO chorus.

"I'm always having to lie about my age," she says plaintively. "I was kinda well developed, and it wasn't too hard."

A veteran at thirteen, she got a job with the chorus of the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles, roller skating to her job during the summer months. By some more adroit fabricating about her age, she got hired at the famous Flamingo gambling palace in Las Vegas. Asked the kind of dancing she did there, she recites with a deep-breath monotone, "ballet, tap, Latin American, acrobatic."

She rattles off her measurements with similar detachment, "Five feet four and a quarter, 35½, 23½, and 35 downstairs."

Motherhood at Sixteen

At fifteen, she eloped with a gambling man named Fred Bassire. "I lied about my age," she explains.

Months later, when Mrs. Bethel found out, she buckled down to teach her precocious daughter the facts of life. "Here she was trying to teach me," giggles Sheree, "and here was I pregnant."

About as suddenly as it began, the romance died. After nine attempts, Sheree will get her divorce this month.

Motherhood and slim billings convinced her that perhaps she should quit show business to become a businesswoman. To accomplish this she took theatre arts, ballet, and music classes.

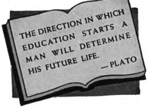
Nights she was performing torchy dances in a Los Angeles night club. Robert Alton, the dance director, saw her, thought she was exactly the tonic "Hazel Flagg" needed, and brought her East. Before leaving, she boarded her daughter, Dawn, now four, with a nurse. "She'll get a good spiritual raising," Sheree solemnly explains.

Still somewhat unfamiliar with stardom, she utilizes the breathless late entrance for interviews, says the things a celebrity is supposed to say.

"I really want to marry and have a husband and a home and six or seven—or even more—kids."

When reminded that this would render somewhat impractical the career that now pays her $300 a week, with more to come, she rolls her giant blue eyes, shifts the gum wad in her cheek, and reverts to the pre-star Sheree.

"Yeah, y'know, that would be tough, come to think of it." THE END



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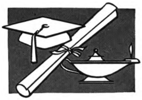

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The Good-in-Man

Every man, good or evil, has one supreme moment when all his nobility comes to the fore

"You are," I told the bartender deliberately, "an exhibitionist of a peculiarly nasty sort."

BY HENRY CECIL ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE HUGHES

It was ghastly. I had walked into the bar of the Good-in-Man, and if I had not been so thirsty, I think I should have walked straight out. I might have been prevented, though, by a desire to know what kind of man was responsible for the place. I waited a moment or two in the empty bar, and then, in response to my knocking on the counter with a coin, he came in. My immediate reaction was to wonder whether I'd walked into one of those plays where the author sends a messenger from Heaven in the shape of man. He looked like Edmund Gwenn playing such a part. But when he spoke, Heaven disappeared and the spell was broken.

"Good afternoon, sir. What will it be?"

"A glass of beer."

"A glass of beer it is." And he drew one and handed it to me. As I raised my glass, he spoke again.

"Your very good health, sir."

I am a mild-mannered person and said, "Thank you," but the fellow was starting to annoy me. His cheerful attitude was irritating.

"Down she goes," he said. "That's better, isn't it?"

"Yes," I said, not at all sure it was.

"Very monosyllabic we are today," he went on chirpily. "Anything biting you?" He read my thoughts exactly. "It's the decorations, I suppose. Combination of me and them, I imagine."

"Exactly," I said.

"Three syllables," he said cheerfully. "We'll have a whole sentence out of you yet." There was a pause. "I suppose you want to know what it's all about, eh?" he finally said. I still said nothing. "Come on," he said. "What do you think of it?"

I dislike being rude to people and avoid scenes at almost any cost. But now he really was asking for it, and after a moment's hesitation, I decided to let him have it.

"You are obviously," I said, slowly and deliberately, "an exhibitionist of a peculiarly nasty sort, with a loathing for mankind."

He gazed at me intently. "Go on," he said. "Finish it."

"That will do for the moment," I said.

"Okay. Will you have another glass of beer before I explain?"

I gave him my glass.

"Shall I have one with you?"

"That's up to you," I said brusquely.

"Now, that's very civil of you," he said. "I don't mind if I do. I'll have a whisky." He poured out the drinks. "That'll be a dollar-fifty. Hope you don't mind. I had a double. There's no hurry. You can pay up later. Now, where shall I begin?"

The fellow's impudence was starting to fascinate me, but not the things on the wall. Almost every part of it was taken up with a picture of some disaster. Shipwreck, flood, fire, famine, war—all the things one hates to be reminded of. Some of the scenes were heartrending, some brutal, and the over-all effect was almost beyond description. Ghastly was a mild word.

"Exhibitionist? Yes," he said. "I plead guilty to that. Who isn't in one way or another? But—a loathing for mankind? Not on your life. Just the opposite. I love my fellow man. You noticed the name of this place?"

"Yes. I'm surprised you haven't changed it."

"I have. It was the Red Cow when I bought it. The Good-in-Man is my own

The devil himself couldn't have provided a better opportunity to steal a man's wife

invention." He paused. "Now, look," he said. "You see this glass which looks as though it contains whisky—the drink you were kind enough to buy me?"

"I see it."

"Well, you probably know there's practically no whisky in it. My drink's in the till—or will be when you pay up. Pretty cheap? I agree. And how did I get this drink out of you? By a trick. That was cheap, too. So here I am, a mean little man. You'll agree to that, I guess."

"You should know," I said.

"Now, suppose there were a car accident outside and they brought the victims in here—some hurt, some just shaken. What would I do then? There'd be drinks all round on the house. You see what I'm getting at? Everything at peace, no crisis, one solitary customer—and I'm a mean little man, squeezing all I can get out of you. A crisis—and I cheerfully give everything away. Now, that's not just me. That's your man in the street. He's at his worst when times are normal, at his best when there's danger or destruction all round him. Now do you see why I like these pictures? I like to be reminded of him at his best."

I found myself staring at the pictures again.

"Look at that captain there," he went on. "Probably as brutal as most captains of his time. Had men flogged to death and thought nothing of it. But there he is, going to his death without a murmur, while many of the crew are being saved. It's a fine picture, isn't it? That was his supreme moment. When I hear the little men whining about the price of meat and groceries and the housing shortage, I like to remind myself that most of them would go down with their ships, if necessary. Still think I loathe my fellow men?"

I was puzzled. "I'm beginning to understand," I said.

"Splendid," he said. "Drink up, and I'll tell you some more. Same again? Right. No, don't bother to pay now. I'll chalk it up. I'll probably add it up wrong—in my own favor, of course—and after your sixth beer you won't notice. But these are the times of peace. Now, if the house caught fire, it would be a different thing. Here's to you, friend."

I had now resigned myself to listening. I was in no hurry, and it was a new experience.

"Now, where was I?" he went on. "Oh, yes. We're all the same, really. No offense, I hope, but you're the same as me. Look, suppose a man had just left the bar and, after he'd gone, I said to you: 'That man's just done three years. Like to know what for?' You'd say, 'Yes,' wouldn't you?—instead of letting the poor man live it down. Well, I will tell you a story anyway. About a burglar. I expect you'd like to hear about him?"

"Go on," I said.

"Well, this one lived in the Middle West. That is to say, he lived there when he wasn't in prison. Which wasn't often. He wasn't much good, and they usually caught him after he'd been out a month or two. He got legitimate jobs from time to time, but he couldn't stick to regular work, and like most criminals, he always thought he wouldn't be caught this time. He was considered a lazy good-for-nothing rascal and a public nuisance. Well, he got caught in the Missouri River floods. And what does he do? Spends all his time rescuing people and animals. Day and night he worked. Exhausted himself. So this man who couldn't do an honest day's work labors forty-eight hours nonstop for nothing. Well, perhaps that isn't so surprising. Burglars have often made good soldiers. And there was a war on this time—against the floods. But this is the queer thing. When he'd done all he could, he went off to the dry land. And on his way, he passed house after house he could have looted to his heart's content. The police were doing what they could, but they couldn't be everywhere, and our burglar friend could have had the time of his life. *He didn't touch a thing.* But as soon as he got into normal country, he chose a likely house and up the drainpipe he went. He slipped as he got through the window and woke the household. The householder had a revolver and a strong aversion to burglars.

" 'You filthy little rat,' he said. 'Don't move or I'll shoot. I mean it.'

Stranded, her husband and her lover faced death on the icy summit. Only one had to return alive.

The Good in Man (continued)

"And so in due course, our friend finds himself in court. There he is addressed by the judge. 'You are a pest to society,' he says. 'It's obvious you've never done a decent day's work in your life. You never have been any good, and you never will be,' and he is sent up for twelve years. He never thought of mentioning what he'd done in the flood country. Not that it would have made any difference. He *was* a pest to society and the judge was quite right in putting him away. But I like to remember what he *didn't* do in the floods. And I've got that photograph up there to remind me. Does this bore you? Or would you like some more?"

"Go on, please," I said. "But another beer first, and whatever you're having."

"Thanks very much. Glad you got into the swing of things so quickly. Here we go.

"My next story involves the eternal triangle—the husband, George; the lover (also called George); the wife, Clarissa. The husband George was a good man. He trusted his wife implicitly. The lover George hadn't *all* the vices, but he was selfish and unscrupulous. He was a friend of George the husband, but he did nothing to resist the temptation provided by Clarissa. On the contrary, he yielded to it and was soon determined to steal Clarissa from George the husband as soon as he could. But there was a difficulty. Lack of money. Clarissa liked (in moderation, but very definitely) the good things of life. George the husband could provide them. George the lover could not. Clarissa would have been quite happy to live with either George; indeed, she made the best of living with both Georges, but she did find it rather unsettling. And it was so easy to make a mistake. Every now and then she had to try to explain a remark that she accidentally made to George the husband instead of to George the lover. Once she said to George the husband: 'Oh, you've had that mole removed,' before she remembered that it was on George the lover's back. George the husband was not in the least suspicious, or, if he was, he did not show it. But the time came when Clarissa began to say to George the lover: 'You really must make some money and take me away, or go away yourself. I'm getting bored with all this deceit.'

"'But I love you,' said George the lover.

"'Yes, yes,' said Clarissa, 'we all know that.'

"'Not George, I hope?'

"'Well, he will if you don't do something about it. I shall tell him myself, and he'll kick you out. I'll give you a month to make arrangements for us.'

"A week later they all went up to vacation at a mountain resort, and one day the two Georges went climbing together. They got caught in a freak storm, George the husband broke his ankle, and they were out all night. The search party that tried to find them had no success. The bad weather continued, then came fog, and they had another night out. The cold and lack of food began to tell. Unless they could get back that day, they would almost certainly die. George the lover knew he could get back by himself, but trying to get George the husband back with him would be extremely dangerous. It did, just for a moment, occur to George the lover to give George the husband a friendly push over the side when he wasn't looking and then go for help, but he dismissed this unworthy thought immediately. Instead, by dint of the most tremendous exertion, he managed to bring George the husband to safety. I keep that picture, 'Cutting the Rope,' to remind me. Your glass is empty and so is mine. Now, that really is most kind of you."

"Next case, please," I said.

"I'll tell you next about Mr. Thompson, the clerk with the invisible ink. He had a most ingenious system of robbing his employer and had for years succeeded in avoiding detection. I won't tell you the details of his methods, because although I'm sure it wouldn't put ideas into your head, you might tell someone else who was less scrupulous. Anyway, the auditors never discovered a thing, and after seven years, Mr. Thompson had succeeded in putting away a nice little pile. The company had a large turnover, but it was a one-man business and had no pension scheme for its employees. So Mr. Thompson had made his own, with the assistance of his little bottle of invisible ink. When I say invisible, it looked like ordinary ink when you first used it, but in half an hour, it disappeared. Well, one day Mr. Thompson's employer came into the office in an obviously troubled frame of mind. It was his wife. She was terribly ill. Nothing physical. Psychological. A trip round the world—at least six months—with her husband was prescribed. Now, Mr. Thompson's employer couldn't afford the voyage. So what happens? Mr. Thompson advances his employer the money out of his own—well, everyone thought they were his own—savings. Off goes the employer round the world, and during the whole six months, Mr. Thompson never once uses his little bottle of invisible ink. Eventually the employer returns with his wife. She's completely

cured, and he is a happy man. He's even happier when he finds the profits the business has made during his absence. He raises Mr. Thompson's salary, thanks him warmly, and starts repaying the loan by monthly installments. And Mr. Thompson expresses his pleasure at the recovery of his wife, waves aside the grateful thanks—'It's nothing at all. I assure you. I was only too pleased'—and then gets out his little bottle of invisible ink. Of course, you can say he only did it to avoid killing the goose that laid the golden eggs, but I'm quite sure it wasn't that. The crisis came, and Mr. Thompson, like the ordinary man he was, responded automatically to the call within him. The crisis over, Mr. Thompson, like the ordinary man, returned to his normal mode of living. I see your glass needs refilling. And so does mine."

"I've got time for one more," I said.

"Good. Well, perhaps I'd better add up your bill—in case you leave in a hurry. No insinuations, I assure you, but accidents do happen."

I handed him some money, and he handed me some change. I have no idea whether he cheated me or not.

"You're very trusting," he said. "You didn't count your change."

"There was no point," I replied. "I don't know what the price of beer or whisky is in this house. I imagine it's an unreasonable price—except, of course, in an earthquake. And, in the circumstances, I must say I'd rather pay the full price than rely on a thunderbolt.

"How well we understand one another," he said. "It's been a pleasure to take your money." He smiled at me. "You know, in an hour or so this bar will be filled with greedy good-for-nothings, all trying to do each other in, each wanting to know the worst about the other. All of them selfish and lazy—but the spark in every one of them, just the same. Sorry, I seem to be ranting."

"That's quite all right," I said. "I see your point. But I'm afraid none of these things really happened. You see, you couldn't have told the last story unless you'd been Thompson himself—and he would never have told it."

"Well, I may have had to draw on my imagination for some of them. But the principle's there just the same, isn't it? Today a man is a greedy scandalmonger. But tomorrow, who knows? Anyway, one of those stories is true."

"Which?"

"Well . . . Clarissa is upstairs now."

"Then you must be—?"

"That's right," he said. "I'm George." And he smiled pleasantly at me.

THE END

A COSMOPOLITAN COMPLETE MYSTERY NOVEL

UNTIL DEATH DO US...

Death is never welcome, but at a wedding party it is a particularly gruesome guest

BY SEBASTIAN BLAYNE

Murder. People talk about it, they write about it, but it's not like a book when it happens to you. To *you*. Death is awful—it's never quite the right time to die, in a ditch or a battlefield, in a bed or a bar. We say we're not afraid, but we are, everyone is, even in a nice clean hospital with pills, hypos, no pain. But with murder, it's different. It waits for you at night, peering in the window, becomes a face on the other side of the glass, becomes a hand on the light switch, a presence in a crowded elevator. It tells you the one who is waiting is there—in the hotel, the store, the street, the subway—there in the same house. It won't let you sleep, and it makes you do very silly things . . . as Maggie McMahon found out that first summer day in Canfield, only two hours by rail from New York City.

They were sitting in the club car, a girl in a black linen dress with crystal buttons and a tall young man in a gray

She removed her robe and descended the stairs to where her husband lay in agony.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT PATTERSON

The house looked unlived in, the blinds drawn, shutters closed. Its face was blank. It was a monstrosity

worsted single-breasted Saks Fifth Avenue job. Smart, successful-looking, interesting-looking. You could guess what magazines they read—there was culture on the coffee table. Well-bred, manicured hands and emeried nerves. They were acting like people in a play, overrehearsed actors on opening night.

"What's the matter, darling?"

"A little tired or a little tight." He shrugged. "What did you think of the send-off?"

"Sweet of them to give it for us. For you, actually. You must be doing very well down at the laundry."

"Oh, very," he said in the artificial tone they used for making jokes in their private jargon. They liked to converse in bad Coward, worse Hemingway, and terrible Fitzgerald. The brittle business was funny to them and false. They weren't the lost generation but the new young people of the atom age. There was no gilt-edge security anymore, no tomorrow, no yesterday. "Shall we celebrate?" Curt asked in his own voice, which was softly slurred, educated, and curiously melodious.

The girl frowned, removed her black straw cartwheel, pushed back damp bangs, ran her fingers through golden hair worn straight to the shoulder and curled under at the ends like the coif of a De Medici princeling. "We don't want to get there high."

"Don't we?"

"Would you like me to kiss your mother and father first or simply fall flat on the station platform?"

"Don't worry about that," he said casually. "They won't be at the station."

"Oh?" There was a little silence filled by the streamlined train. "Why not?"

"Hard to explain one's family, isn't it? I mean—" He fumbled with the tablecloth, folding and unfolding the edge. "They're just not the type who meet trains."

The girl leaned her cheek against the cool sheet of glass which shut out the heat of the afternoon sun shimmering on the river and the fields rushing by them. "What are they like, darling? You never talk about them."

"Oh, I suppose they're about like anyone else—just everyday kind of people—only—" He stumbled, and stopped.

"Only, they don't like meeting trains."

"It's not what you think. It's not you." He turned toward her, turned his somber Spanish face and the eyes that went black when he lied. "I didn't write Mother. They don't know we're coming."

"But you said you would," she answered in a shocked, little-girl voice.

"These last few weeks have been so frantic at the factory. I couldn't seem to find time to write the proper sort of letter."

"So we're throwing a surprise party? She won't care for that, and I don't blame her. You don't understand the mechanics of housekeeping, pet." Pet was an endearment she reserved for moments of fury.

"If you mean good-Lord-what's-in-the-refrigerator and fixing up the spare room and all that sort of thing—"

"All that sort of thing, sweetheart, to a woman who is meeting her future daughter-in-law for the first time is like—" Maggie could think of nothing drastic enough. "Anyway, it's not polite to catch people with their pants down."

"You don't know Mother," Curt replied sweetly. "She's never had her pants down, dear."

After the bleak descent at Canfield, while others were being met with laughter, hugs, and station wagons, Curt had found a cab. As it took them away from the station, Maggie permitted herself a moment of acute anguish and doubt. She was in love with the man beside her, wasn't she? A leading question, followed by another and another, rigged for the right answers. She and Curt Martel were going to be married, weren't they? Earlier on Park Avenue, driving to Grand Central, on that blistering hot afternoon, there had been no hesitation in her mind, had there? Or . . . had she always been unconsciously concerned about Curt's mental state, those headaches, the spells of black depression?

She heard a train whistle far off. Was it their train? Why weren't they in a brightly lighted dining car ordering mountain trout, a tossed salad, and Rhine wine? When we are really almost there, she thought, he will put his arm around me and tell me how he used to play ball over on the vacant lot. But Curt had remained frozen and remote on his side of the seat, until he started sobbing for breath in dry, shuddering spasms.

When the taxi turned into Elm Street, Maggie guessed it was the nicest street in the old section—with generous lawns sloping down to the curb, green unscarred grass divided by cement walks that led to old-fashioned front porches. And then she saw the big house on the corner. What had she been bracing herself for? The idea that Curt's family lived on the wrong side of the tracks in a tumbledown shack? She was not prepared for this antique splendor, a three-story monstrosity surrounded by giant elm trees.

In the dying daylight, Maggie got the impression of impenetrable gloom. The house looked unlived in, the blinds drawn, shutters closed. Its face was blank. It was an old horror, but like a beauty of a bygone era, it was frightfully well-preserved. It was imposing in its ugliness and somehow stately. He must be proud of it, she thought suddenly, and yet he dreads walking in the door.

That was the moment of her presentiment, while she paid the driver, asked him to carry the bags and help Curt to the veranda. The rest of her mind was attending to something else entirely. For an instant or two—she could never have said how long it lasted—there seemed to be a strange light pervading the house, and because of it she could see what the

place was really like. She could see into it, somehow, into its heart. *Presentiment is that long shadow on the lawn, indicative that suns go down. . . . Darkness is about to pass. . . .*

Had she been wrong to force Curt into confronting Dr. and Mrs. Martel? Her reason still protested it was the sensible course of action. But her intuition told her something else entirely. Why was he gasping and wheezing? Was he allergic to the sudden heat after the refrigerated club car? the pollen in the country air? or sickened by the sight of 1812 Elm Street? Maggie pulled the bell. No one came.

Curt had begun to laugh through his hacking cough. From around the corner of the porch a woman appeared. "Auntie Maud, darling!" he cried, throwing his arms about her.

There was much kissing and hugging before Curt remembered to introduce Mrs. Maud Gorms from next door, who produced a key from the mailbox and led them into the house. "Pauline's at a party, and the doctor's out on his evening calls. But at least I can feed you."

Maggie groaned inwardly when she saw the downstairs—the hall, the parlor, and the dining room were an impenetrable forest of furniture: massive sideboards, Morris chairs, platform rockers, footstools, hatracks, overstuffed divans with tatted lace antimacassars, cut-glass vases, souvenir wood carvings from Lucerne, a clock built into a Swiss chalet, Venetian mosaic boxes, and photographs in Italian leather frames. Enclosed bookcases bore the weight of Bulwer-Lytton, Dickens, and Thackeray, the complete works of Scott, Balzac, and Trollope, all of Shakespeare, and the Harvard Classics. The wall was covered by dim oil paintings, seascapes with curling taffy waves, landscapes of autumn trees. There was even an original Maxfield Parrish with tall-blue-urn and naked-boy-gazing-at-pink-sunset. Under the inevitable etching of a canal at Bruges, the console television cabinet seemed frivolous, a drink tray with Scotch, seltzer, and highball glasses an indecent mockery of the solid, respectable past. This was no prefabricated home put together overnight. This was the rock of ages, the Statue of Liberty, Teddy Roosevelt. A world we never knew, Maggie thought. All the chairs were cater-cornered.

"Oh, Lord," he said, "isn't it awful?" Curt turned to survey the room slowly, as if he were in a museum. "All these slip covers and draperies and the lamps are new—but underneath it's the same as it always was."

"This is an improvement?" Maggie attempted the light touch.

But Curt's attention was not on her. His eyes were gazing into the distance, into another place and time far beyond the parlor. "My father's coffin stood over there in the hall. I can still smell the flowers. Lilies. You knew, of course, that Dr. Martel is my stepfather?" He spoke in a different voice, strained and boyish.

This was news to Maggie, but she nodded.

"The day of the funeral, I was sick in bed with a high fever. They thought I didn't know what was happening, but I sneaked part of the way down the stairs and saw—" The voice waited while Curt's face remembered. "I saw everything that went on."

"Darling, stop. Please—"

He motioned for her to be quiet. He wanted the record to keep on playing back. "My head aches. It always does when I try to remember. There was a big round table—" He got up and walked slowly to the center of the room. "Just here—with an embroidered cover. I used to hide under it." He stretched out his hands like a medium conjuring up a ghost table while a kind of shudder went over his body. Mrs. Gorms reappeared to turn on the television set.

"You two entertain yourselves while I fix some supper. It's nearly time for Sebastian Blayne in 'Detective Quiz.' We're all mad about that program. Pauline never misses it."

Grateful for the interruption, Maggie said modestly, "I know Mr. Blayne." It was the understatement of all time.

"Not really?" Mrs. Gorms turned new eyes on Curt's fiancée.

"She's his secretary," Curt said. "Or was until today."

"He's so terrific on television, what's he like—as a person?"

"To meet him he's the original Marble Faun," Maggie said, "but actually he's just a sentimental squash. Neddy answers all the letters he gets, and he really takes people's problems very much to heart." To his familiars, Sebastian Blayne was Neddy.

"Curt's mother is always quoting him. Pauline simply loves that man."

"Most women fall in love with Neddy," the younger woman said quite seriously.

Curt was half-jealous of Blayne and disliked him intensely. "Anyway, let's catch his show. The old boy does know his psychology," he grudgingly conceded, "and it's pretty good entertainment. Not that I agree with the theory behind it. If a criminal type heard his own symptoms described—" The young artist shook his head solemnly. "Might be just the spark to set him off."

"Mastermind." Maggie made the mistake of laughing. Actually, she loved the Curt who was fair-minded in his appraisal of Blayne's work, but Neddy was such a sore issue between them that neither Maggie nor Curt could be at all natural about him. Then, with a flip of the dial, Sebastian Blayne in a white dinner jacket was facing them.

"I'm quoting William Sheldon," the armchair criminologist confided to the camera as he selected a book from the table beside his chair. "To try and predict criminality from these charts"—Blayne indicated a certain page— "would be like trying to predict where a bullet will strike by describing only the gun and the bullet and powder charge. You still have to deal with such variables as how the gun is aimed. But to know the latter variable without knowing the former, which is the *constitution* of the weapon itself, leaves you equally without predictive knowledge."

"You mean parental background?" the minister on the panel asked.

"Exactly. It would seem, according to hundreds of cases reported by social workers and agencies, that *like produces like*. Parents are delinquent in the same way their children are delinquent,

"I'll be patient, baby," she said quietly. "I'll be anything you want me to be." She clung to him for a moment.

"I know you and Curt have been living in sin," Mrs. Martel said. And Maggie, who knew all the answers, could not reply

or vice versa. Another fascinating discovery: frequently one or both parents were reported to have grown 'very heavy,' 'full-bodied,' 'of massive physique,' 'grossly obese,' 'of ample proportions,' et cetera. Usually it was the mother."

"I think social workers are inclined not to like the mothers of their clients," the authoress on the panel shrewdly observed. "Nowadays we tend to hold Mom responsible for all sin everywhere."

"Good point," Blayne said. "Mothers have been far too convenient for unloading blame. The Oedipus complex—"

Abruptly Curt got up and turned off the television.

"What did you do that for?" Maggie asked, annoyed.

"I'm sick of this Oedipus thing. It's so old hat."

"But that's exactly what they said."

Auntie Maud saved them from an argument by announcing supper was ready. Deviled-ham sandwiches, egg salad, and iced tea. The food was delicious, but no one was very hungry. By nine o'clock, when Maggie asked to be shown to her room, neither Dr. nor Mrs. Martel had returned.

That night in the strange old house, Maggie lay awake, wanting Curt and paradoxically wishing she were back in New York in her own air-cooled hotel-apartment with its switchboard. Somehow the house frightened her with its little noises and whisperings. Locusts and fireflies hit against the window screen

There is a secret here, she thought sleepily, a secret the house knows and wants to tell me, but I won't listen.

Maggie reached for her initialed case on the bedside table and lit a cigarette. She advised herself to be rational, unemotional. No one was forcing her to marry Curt, that clever young commercial designer begging her to do just that. He was long and thin and tan from the sun, and sensitive, with the matador hands of a death-dealing gambler, an artist, a cape-and-sword man who meets death in the afternoon, not the little death of boredom at Picket-Whinney & Philbert after lunch at the Automat.

I must want him, she argued, or I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't have gotten myself into this spot. I didn't know this marriage was being in a spot. Even your best friends couldn't tell you . . . not that they didn't try hard.

But why hadn't Curt written his family? Why did he dread coming home? What is there about this house that terrifies me so?

She slipped her cigarette case into the pocket of her blue satin housecoat, and tiptoed down the hall to Curt's room. "Darling," she whispered, "it's me." She tried the unyielding knob.

Suddenly the door was flung open, and there was Curt with a blaze of light behind him. "I thought you were Mother."

"Sh." She closed the door quickly and leaned against him, her arms around his waist. Nothing mattered but this, to have him close. The night no longer existed, the world, the house, nor anyone in it. There was only the instant. Now. It was as near as she would ever get to heaven. Strong or weak, a success or a failure, it didn't matter. She was smart enough, fast enough, to fight for both of them. He needed her, he needed help. The answer was here, something to do with his family and the house, something she intended to find out.

"I was coming to your room," he said, tightening his embrace. "We'll get through this yet, darling, if you'll just be patient."

His embrace relaxed, and she pulled away gently. She reached for her case, took out a cigarette, and set the case down.

"I'll be patient, baby," she said quietly. "I'll be anything you want." For a moment, there was silence as she clung to him.

Then there came a knock at the door.

"Curtis, dear, it's Mother."

Their kiss forgotten, Curt froze. "What shall we do?" He took her unlit cigarette and threw it in the waste basket.

Maggie did not say, "Ask her in, of course."

Why shouldn't I be in your arms? We aren't doing anything so dreadfully wicked. But instead she allowed Curt to push her into his closet, knowing even in that instant of indecision that it was a mistake.

"Wake up, darling. I just got home."

Then the bedroom door opened—just as the other one closed. Maggie found herself in a stifling, small place where

UNTIL DEATH DO US... (continued)

Sometime I'll show you what it feels like to smother to death.—Would an impulse like that be insanity?

she crouched, heart hammering in her throat, hidden behind winter coats and garment bags smelling of moth spray.

They built houses to last in the old days, and closet doors were not flimsy panels, they were two inches thick and solid from top to bottom, jamb to jamb. The faintest sliver of light showed through the keyhole. For all practical purposes, it was a sealed closet. Only the lilt of their voices reached her, no words. Gradually Maggie gave up trying to listen. Her legs were trembling, and the heat was overpowering. It was like that torture on Devil's Island.

Where had she read that? Think of something. Hold on to it. Say your prayers. Count to a hundred. Mustn't faint. Look through the keyhole. White shirt, that was Curt. Swallow the moth smell and the sweat and your throbbing heart. It hasn't been five minutes, really, it hasn't been long.

The swimming white shirt was replaced by a sea-green dress, and then, for a moment, a face. Maggie almost laughed out loud because of what she saw through the tiny aperture. Why had she been so unfair? What had she expected? A stock movie mother-in-law? A silver-cord Mom out of Wylie? A clinging vine? A dominating clubwoman? Pauline was very like Curt, a feminine edition with a hundred pounds added, darkly handsome with flashing eyes in a vigorous face.

For a moment, Pauline Martel's eyes turned toward the keyhole. Only then did Maggie remember her cigarette case beside the bed. Evidence, largely initialed. But evidence of what guilt? Her heart hammered, and she let herself sink under the warm waves of the billowing bile-green sea that kept coming and coming and breaking over her with the thudding of blood bursting inside her head. For the first time, Maggie realized she was suffocating. She reached for the doorknob and turned it. The door wouldn't open. "Curt!" There was no answer. She hammered with her fists, screamed, kicked at the door, clawed at it with her fingernails. She sobbed and screamed until . . . she realized the keyhole was dark. There was something in the lock. The answer came to her slowly . . . a key.

In New York City that same night, Sebastian Blayne slept fitfully. It was dawn before he began to snore. And still the elevator refused to descend all the way to the basement, the only place he could escape the boredom of being Sebastian Blayne. He pressed all the buttons, but the elevator was stubborn. It sank a few floors and stopped on the landing where his characters lived and the props were kept, all the masks and tricks and jokes neatly catalogued. There were his files on human behavior and psychological motivations, room after room packed with analytic notes, obscure facts, sexual research, a vast storehouse of information. At the very end of this chambered labyrinth was a small closet with a large lock. Signs said: PRIVATE. DO NOT ENTER. The boxes inside were sealed and covered with warnings: HANDLE WITH CARE. FRAGILE. OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES.

Every Sunday from five-thirty to six P.M. Blayne suffered for a worthy cause, namely to help delinquent youth by analyzing the psychoneurotic aspects of criminal behavior. Believing that a potential criminal's behavior patterns can be recognized and corrected, and that crime should be prevented rather than punished blindly after it is committed, the playwright had gone on television with a program called "Detective Quiz."

Abruptly the elevator shot up to the top floor. There was a tantalizing aroma of coffee in the air. Blayne opened his eyes. "Where did you come from?"

Across the room, by the window, sat a very attractive young woman. "Coffee, my sweet?" Maggie asked, rising.

"There's nothing sweet about me. You should know that." He surveyed her with cold poise but accepted the cup.

She propped up his pillows and patted the top of his head. "You're not making this easy, Neddy."

"You deserted me in my need," he said. "No one else can read my vile writing. But you're looking marvelous." She wasn't, though. Her face was tense and drawn under the make-up, and he had never seen her so nervous. "Sit down, angel, and relax. Why did you come?"

Maggie fished for a handkerchief in her purse and a groan came out of her throat—not like a woman's sob—like an animal without pride.

"Oh, Lord, don't do that." It was the first time he had ever seen her cry. "Come to Papa." Neddy flung his arms around her. "Tell me what's wrong."

"There's a lot wrong, Neddy. You know I wanted to meet Curt's family first. Well, I have—in a manner of speaking." She recounted the events of the previous night.

Since Neddy wanted nothing more than to prevent Maggie's marriage, he leaned over backward in the opposite direction.

"Curt found you?"

"I don't know. I think so. When I came to, things were rather complicated. Dr. Martel was giving me artificial respiration, and Curt was rubbing my feet with ice cubes."

"Was the mother there?"

"No. Evidently she slept through all the commotion. The doctor suggested we keep it our little secret. Those were his words. He's nice, really rather a lamb."

"What's he like?"

"Tall, with cheekbones," Maggie said inadequately, "and kind of beaten-looking." She found it impossible to describe Stefan Martel—his crumbled suit that was somehow distinguished, the weary set of his shoulders. "He must have been handsome once, dashing even, before life defeated him. I think you'd like him, Neddy. He has a vein of irony."

"And the mother?"

"I didn't talk to her, of course, but

she's very handsome and imposing and authoritative. Like an empress."

"A lamb, an empress, and the man you love. Take your pick."

"Sounds like utter nonsense when you say it, but last night it wasn't."

"What about the next-door neighbor? What did you say her name was?—Something ghastly."

"Maud Gorms, Auntie Maud." Maggie shrugged. "I liked her."

"Now, see here, chicken, it has to be someone."

Blayne's former secretary nodded, but her eyes were averted. Maggie did not realize that she was hiding from herself the true point of conflict. It had to be someone, yes, but not someone she knew and liked, not someone she loved.

"Could it have been the mother?"

"If Pauline saw my cigarette—" she suggested.

Blayne cocked a skeptical eyebrow. "What about Curt?"

She laughed, a sickeningly false laugh, "Naturally I'd *know* if it were Curt."

Blayne patted her hands and kissed her on the cheek. "Then, my dear, I think you'd better go back. There's nothing wrong except your vivid little imagination. You are at heart an ingénue, darling, quivering with qualms and suffering from a very old complaint—bride's twitch."

Whereupon Maggie began to cry again while peeling carnation polish off her thumbnail. "Neddy, if someone had a choking spell and you weren't awfully sympathetic—for instance, with an asthmatic—if you let this person feel that you disapproved because his trouble was probably psychosomatic—and suppose he resented it, unconsciously, mightn't he think: *Sometime I'll show you what it feels like to smother to death.* Just on impulse. Not meaning any real harm, not meaning to kill you. Would that be insanity?" That was what she had come all the way to New York to ask him, but she couldn't utter the words.

Curt and his mother were sitting on the side porch when Maggie returned late that afternoon.

"So this is Maggie," Mrs. Martel said graciously, as she rose to kiss her future daughter-in-law.

Maggie somehow managed to arrange her features in a smile, while an icy chill ran down her backbone. Curt put a Scotch and soda in her hand, but Maggie was not aware of what she was drinking. She was entirely occupied in making the right responses to Mrs. Martel. It was like the ancient Chinese ritual of tea. There were certain remarks to be made in the proper order. Pauline was saying all the things Maggie had imagined her saying—the day before. Then she would have loved it. But now . . . The phone rang, and Mrs. Martel went to answer it. As soon as his mother was out of earshot, Curt demanded to know where she had been.

"I wanted to talk to Neddy, but let's not go into that now." She could hear his mother's charming voice saying something about chairs. "Not the gold ones, Mr. Kuntz." How oddly the light voice contrasted with her massive body. "They're much too elaborate for a garden wedding."

A kind of paralysis came over Maggie. "What does she mean, a garden wedding? We've got to stop her."

"Too late now. She's been on the phone all day inviting people for next Sunday."

"But that's only a week." How could she say, "I don't want to marry you?" Where could she begin?

Curt stroked her hair gently.

"It's supposed to be a present," he explained.

"How awful. I simply can't . . ."

"Isn't that rather selfish? I mean, it doesn't really matter to us where we're married, does it? It's stuffy business, pet, but look, we could get married twice. Why not? The second time your way. You see, in a little town, someone of mother's position— People expect . . ."

"Don't tell me. She was a Curtis. Everyone knows what to expect of the Curtises."

"I know it's stupid, but how else can I make up to her?"

"For what?"

"My disappearing act. I ran away. . . ." He left it in the air. But when she said nothing to help him, he continued. "Mother must have had a lot of explaining to do all these years."

"So you want to play the prodigal son."

"I thought you'd approve. Maggie, you know how people talk."

"No. How do they talk?" Her voice was thick with swallowed anger.

He turned to walk away, then paused. There was a line around his mouth, and his voice was flat and cold. "My father's name was Curtis. James Harrington Curtis. This house belonged to his family. My mother came here as a bride. After my father's death, she married Dr. Martel, who legally adopted me. When I was fourteen, I ran away. After that, they kept me in boarding schools and college. Then I was a remittance man, until I could take care of myself. I'm here because you forced the issue, but now I intend to stay and do the thing properly. Any questions?"

Maggie could not speak. She looked at him as if he were a stranger, and he returned her gaze with a level stare that was almost insulting, he was so sure of her. To keep from crying, Maggie fled up the back stairs to her room.

A few moments later, she had an unexpected visitor.

"I just wanted to return your cigarette case," Mrs. Martel remarked calmly.

It was unfortunate that Maggie had flung herself across the bed and was already fighting tears. She could think of nothing to say.

With elaborate casualness, Pauline placed the case on the bureau. "I think we should have a little chat, don't you?" She crossed her large, shapely legs and smoothed the skirt of her smartly tailored pink gabardine.

What kind of woman was this, Maggie wondered, who could so frighten her son that Curt could be reduced to a childish subterfuge? Grown-up people don't hide in closets.

"I am aware that you and Curt have been living in sin, my dear," Mrs. Martel remarked calmly.

"Oh, but we haven't." Maggie blushed helplessly.

"At any rate, let's not argue." It was

as if Pauline were waiting for the girl to sit up and say something clever in rejoinder.

But Maggie decided in her sophisticated way to be simple. "It's this mother-daughter-in-law thing. Couldn't we just be ourselves?"

"Be ourselves—or be honest?"

This was a real antagonist, Maggie saw.

"I'm not the possessive type, or had you guessed? I haven't wanted Curtis to stay at home"—she smiled—"and become a mama's darling. Why did you make him come back?" Maggie started to speak, but the mother held up a commanding forefinger. "Oh, yes, I know you are responsible. That's what puzzles me."

"Before we were married, I wanted Curt to be sure of himself," Maggie explained, "to stop running away from—from whatever it is he's been escaping all these years. I thought there might be something in his childhood—" She saw Pauline was watching her with shrewd detachment.

"I'm so tired of Freud," Pauline said. "Even in Canfield, in my set, he's considered passé. The idea now is dynamic acceptance. You should listen to Sebastian Blayne. This isn't an ideal world, parents aren't perfect, and no state can be made Utopia. So if Curtis' subconscious is worried about getting spanked, I'm sorry, but it's done, dear, and let's not cry about it."

Maggie had rarely in her life been so deflated. This woman was much too clever for her. "It might be more serious than that," Maggie said. Hadn't Curt told his mother that she was Sebastian Blayne's secretary? Or perhaps she was simply being rude.

"I was a bride once myself," Pauline continued, "and my mother-in-law wasn't as kind to me. I'll tell you now, without making you wait for it, there isn't any money. If there's anything else you want to know about us, I wish you'd come to me—"

"Isn't it a little late for that?" Maggie was aghast.

"My dear, have I hurt your feelings? We have no reason to be enemies. You can't expect to enter completely into someone's life, their memories, their private griefs. We've had our troubles like any family." Pauline sighed. "But I know you won't blunder in where even angels hesitate."

Maggie understood then that she had intruded. And despite her cleverness, Pauline had been clumsy, for the girl had received the distinct impression that the wedding was not the real issue. Mrs. Martel, try as she might to hide the fact, was not pleased over her son's return.

The next morning, Maggie McMahon was sitting out in the sunshine worrying. She was doing her worrying in blue denim shorts and a white shirt, and looked perfectly beautiful. Somehow Curt was going farther and farther away from her, she thought, sinking into himself. Every moment that brought them closer to a formal union seemed to increase their emotional separation.

"Darling, you should have on dark glasses," he called to her from the bay window in his mother's room on the second floor. "Wait, I'll throw a pair down to you. Stay right where you are."

So Maggie had obediently waited, standing under the window, looking up. Then, almost simultaneously, she heard two sounds: a slight ping quite close at hand and, from the street, a short beep from an automobile horn. It reminded her of Blayne's M.G. As she swung around to look in that direction, the six-foot sheet of plate glass from Pauline's window came shivering down in a jagged cascade, slabs and splinters of glass, every splinter a dagger, the heavier splinters falling with the deadly finality of a guillotine. Maggie's blonde head should have rolled to the ground.

One movement, one step toward the street, had saved her. The sun sent a million prisms sparkling through the shattered pool of glass. The M.G. horn went beep-beep again. And Maggie fainted.

Later that afternoon, Maud Gorms, the Martels' neighbor, came over to survey the wreckage on the lawn. Of course, there was nothing to see. But Maud thought it was an odd and interesting phenomenon that an enormous pane of glass should go to pieces like that without any visible reason. Had the old house sagged at that moment and settled a bit? Enough to crack the glass?

The Martels said Maggie had mentioned hearing some sound. A little ping. Now what could cause a little ping? Was the window subjected to a sudden and unusual stress? A blow? A baseball, for instance? If a ball had been thrown from across the street . . . A stone would be better, not so noticeable. Maud had to remind herself this had been an accident. But glass couldn't shatter of itself, could it? Something had caused the accident. —Or someone.

Maud turned and was walking back to the opening in the hedge she had come through when she heard Pauline.

"I called Harry Lee to clean up the mess of broken glass," Pauline said unnecessarily. "The man from the hardware store will be here any minute to install another pane."

"How is Maggie?"

"Taking a nap. She's perfectly all right. I'm the one who's upset."

"I don't wonder. When Maggie wakes up, tell her she's invited to my house for a cocktail, will you?"

"Certainly, Maud dear. What time do you expect us?"

"It isn't a community invitation, Pauline darling. I simply want to get acquainted with Maggie." Mrs. Gorms smiled but remained firm. The two friends separated, and Maud walked on to the tunnel in the tall hedge that separated their houses.

Soon after, Maggie arrived at Maud's and reassuring Maud that the morning's events had not upset her, she sank back in one of the ice-blue chairs in the living room.

"Do you mind if I ask a rather leading question?" she asked.

"That's why I invited you alone, my dear. I know you must be popping with curiosity."

"Your frankness," Maggie said, "is a relief. What I'd really like to know is—why does Curt dislike Dr. Martel?"

"Does he?" Mrs. Gorms was thumbing through a magazine, and answered without looking up. "Curt's always been difficult about his stepfather. I doubt he'll change. People don't, you know."

"That is a truly horrible thing to say."

"Perhaps I'm a truly horrible woman. Do you mean to change Curt? It's the wrong way to start married life, they tell me."

"I've watched him grow up in the past year. Now, in just a few days . . . Have you any idea *why* he ran away?"

"I've often wondered what got into him," Maud said. "Of course, he was a sickly child and they spoiled him. I remember he used to run a temperature every year about this time." Mrs. Gorms started to say something more but switched the subject, her guest thought. "Probably an allergy—everything's an allergy these days."

"I've been wondering if you'd talk to Dr. Martel?"

"After all, I'm only a neighbor."

"You've known them so long," Maggie said. "Do the Martels strike you as a mysterious family?"

"Everyone in the world is mysterious, really," said Maud, "when you get to know them."

Maggie could feel this reply like a slap, and the blood swept into her face. "Forgive me for presuming on our brief

acquaintance, Mrs. Gorms. I wasn't trying to extract information for the FBI, anything incriminating, that is, which would invade your Constitutional rights."

"Oh, mercy me," Maud said, "you're not Irish for nothing. Why don't you go back to New York and take Curt with you? You don't think that window's falling was an accident?"

Maggie had goose flesh. "Do you think anything ever happens by accident? I mean—of course—" She fumbled for time. "It was just cause and effect. Probably the window was loose and something or other caused it to jiggle and—"

"But what?" Maud asked, looking directly at the girl.

Maggie had made her decision to play safe, to play dumb. In that split second, she lost her chance.

Maud likewise buttoned up. "I thought maybe some kid in the neighborhood might have been shooting arrows. They all have those archery sets." Mrs. Gorms was vague again.

Her visitor seemed not to be listening. When Maggie spoke again, she said, "Tell me something about Curt's own father."

"Well, the Curtis family had been wealthy until poor Jim's time. Mrs. Curtis, Curt's grandmother, was really an awful old monster. She was always lumbering off to Europe to 'take the waters,' she said, but we found out later that she never went abroad. Just holed up in some dreary boardinghouse in Brooklyn. She had invested practically everything the old man left her in some mining shares. I know it sounds silly to you, but it used to happen very often in those days."

"And there wasn't any gold?"

"There wasn't any mine. It was a hole in the ground—but no one in Canfield knew this. When Pauline married Jim Curtis, he was the catch of the countryside. She found out afterward."

Maggie said, "Whoo. The stock was worthless?"

"The mine was worthless. But the well had oil in it, or at least that's the way Harry Gorms told it. After Jim's mother passed away, Pauline came to Harry with these old mine certificates she'd found in Mrs. Curtis' bureau. It was some wildcat outfit called the Lucky Horseshoe Diggings. He bought them from her, although he was sure they weren't worth the paper they were printed on. He figured he'd like to help her out. He left town soon after that—very suddenly."

In New York City that same afternoon, Blayne awakened from his nap with the idea that someone had been crying his name. A vague premonition of disaster troubled him. "The voice was terribly urgent," he told his valet. "I was driving the M.G. and was thrown through the windshield. It wasn't a traffic accident exactly, but my head was severed from my body. And yet I felt, somehow, that I wasn't the victim. Someone else needed my help. The voice was very clear."

"Could you recognize it, sir?" the servant asked.

"Whom do we know who might be in danger?" Blayne asked.

"Most of the people in New York," Beppo, the valet, replied dryly, "lead rather perilous lives, one way or another."

"No, it was someone I love. Someone close to me. I think I shall drive down to Canfield and see if Maggie's all in one piece. I've been a little worried about sending her back there. Still, I can't believe she's in a den of psychotic maniacs."

That evening, after he had registered at the Empress Hotel, in Canfield, Blayne called Maggie. "I can't talk now, Ethel," she told him in a hurried, guarded tone. "But I'll try to slip off and meet you next door in about half an hour."

"Where?" Neddy demanded as she started to hang up.

"Eighteen-fourteen Elm Street, Maud Gorms's house."

Maud and Neddy got on from the first moment. "I don't quite know why I'm here," he said, "but it's charming of you to take me in." While they waited for Maggie to arrive, Blayne adroitly led Mrs. Gorms to speak of the household next door. She volunteered information freely in answer to his probing questions.

"Of course, Maggie would be the best thing that ever happened to Curt. He's always been rather—not weak exactly, but spoiled."

Then came the story of the sheet of glass falling that afternoon. Blayne turned white.

"I can't believe it was an accident," the ugly but interesting Maud said quite casually.

And, privately, Blayne agreed with her. The more he thought about it, the more fascinated he became in solving the puzzle of these people's lives. But to do that meant staying in Canfield and at the Empress Hotel, a hostelry that was certainly not the Park Carlton.

After a highly unsatisfactory interview with Maggie, Neddy left Mrs. Gorms's house, feeling that a hot tub and a quiet fifth of brandy were indicated for purposes of meditation. This was Blayne's method of de-tensioning and detecting. The whole process was done in his head and then scrawled in his little black book, to be studied and added up later.

"Maggie wildly nervous," he was scribbling a half hour later. "Fearful the Martels would discover her absence. She can't seem to put into words how she feels about Curt, how consuming her fear is. She won't admit that he is mad, but underneath the speech level, I think she is convinced of it. Unfortunately, I have never met the young man.

"Mrs. Gorms tells me that Curt dislikes his stepfather. His own father's name was James Harrington Curtis. After his death, when the child was about six, Pauline married Martel, who adopted the boy. At fourteen, Curt ran away from home and never returned. They kept him in boarding schools, college, and art classes in N.Y.C. Queries: Why didn't they want him around? What did Jim Curtis, the first husband, actually die of? Was Martel the attending physician?

"From what Mrs. Gorms said, I suspect she and Dr. Martel were lovers. Stefan Martel, a Basque, is a strange mixture of Old World charm and New World opportunism, I gather. Apparently, he thought Curtis' widow had money, just as Pauline had earlier

Like a guillotine, the sheet of glass came shivering down in a cascade of splinters, each splinter a dagger

been deceived by the family's reputation. With all the local talent to choose from (including Harry Gorms), Pauline had picked the wealthy mama's boy.

"Maud and Harry Gorms had a rather sticky divorce, she told me, and he gave her a cool million alimony, money she now thinks was rather hot. Query: Where did it come from? One fine day Harry Gorms left Canfield very suddenly. As she filled me in on the Curtis background, I was wondering if there might be a murder somewhere in all this. But we have only one death, that of Jim Curtis. And one has to remember that no crime has been committed yet. I can't ask questions in Canfield about something that hasn't happened, but there is the past to be sifted. Applied psychology before the fact is the only answer. Diagnosis and treatment before the sick personality is turned loose on the community. We can't wait until a man kills to cure him."

Sebastian Blayne spent the following morning at the courthouse going over the records of the coroner's inquest into the death of James Harrington Curtis. Later he wrote in his little black book: "Prior to 1932, a coroner's inquest in this county was a very careless affair. The coroner could question witnesses as much or as little as he liked, admit or withhold any statement he wished. It seems there was no hint or question of foul play. According to the law at that time, if foul play had been suspected, the coroner could ask the district attorney's office to be represented; it wasn't mandatory. But the D.A. couldn't attend the proceedings without such a request.

"The sheriff of the county was a witness. The coroner was a Dr. Ben Thompson. As I sat there in the basement of the courthouse reading those faded carbons in a great red ledger, I was suddenly attending the inquest. I could hear the voices, see the faces of those people as they were twenty years ago—and I knew suddenly that *something was being concealed* and all were party to it. A prominent family was involved. The townspeople were loyal. Suicide was never mentioned, much less murder. The verdict was 'accidental death.' Sheriff Rainey made this statement concerning the fingerprints on the gun: 'They were Jim Curtis', all right. We checked them.' But no photographic prints were submitted in evidence. Nor was the bullet that had killed Jim Curtis produced.

"Query: Did the coroner probe for it and find it? What caliber gun was used? Why, if Jim Curtis shot himself with his own gun, has no one thought it necessary to tell Maggie? Not even Curtis. Is it possible he doesn't know?"

Pauline's bedroom was another world—gray carpeting from wall to wall, soft pearl-gray space to move about in, uncluttered space. Money had been spent here, if not on the rest of the house, which old Mrs. Curtis still dominated. The room might have been a show window in a department store, a lady's room. "Do you think we're passing the test?" Pauline inquired of her son almost absently, gazing out the window at Elm Street, quiet and still in the hot sunshine.

"What test?"

"We're all on approval, aren't we?"

"You don't like her, do you?"

"I think she rather resents me," Pauline equivocated.

"Isn't it the other way round, darling?"

Mrs. Martel did not look her age even in the morning light. She had the sort of face that had never been young and innocent, and probably would never be old; it was too strong a face to crumple with age. Her black hair, parted in the middle, was combed straight back and clasped by a wide gold bar at the nape of her neck, the knot coiled into a chignon. She was a massive but tremendously handsome woman. She sat down in the violet satin armchair at the foot of the chaise-longue, where her son was lying. "I suppose you've talked to Maggie a great deal about us?"

"We've never talked about our families."

"And said things about us that—"

"That what?"

"That weren't true."

"But I haven't."

"Never mind," Pauline continued suavely. "I should like to know exactly. You must tell me."

"This is stupid," Curt said, and got up.

"Your dislike of your stepfather would undoubtedly color any of your childhood memories. Sebastian Blayne says—"

"You know what you can do with Sebastian Blayne!"

"He says people—even quite ordinary people—often imagine things that haven't happened. Did you tell this girl we didn't want you here?"

"Her name," Curt said carefully, "is Maggie."

"She has so much curiosity about us, Curtis. Haven't you noticed how she keeps nagging at Stefan, getting him to talk about the old days?"

"I've noticed they get along very well."

"Too well." Pauline snapped out the words, momentarily forgetting her audience. "I won't have this probing and prying and poking around in the fireplace—" She saw the look on her son's face and stopped short.

"The fireplace?"

"I've no idea what it was all about. I only happened to overhear them this morning. You know how the sound carries in these old flues. They must have been standing in front of the grate downstairs. It was something to do with an old notebook of Stefan's. The maid had burned it up by mistake with the trash."

Mrs. Martel rose and crossed to her desk, on which there was a photograph of Dr. Martel when he was a young man.

"Why not let this affair run its course, darling?—but take her back to New York. We can still call the wedding off. Quite easily. Why do you have to marry her?"

Her son gestured with one long fastidious finger toward the photograph of the

handsome foreign physician. "Why did you have to marry him?"

That evening Maggie and Curt were lying in the swing on the porch. It was dark, no moon, no scent but honeysuckle, no sound but crickets and the train coming round the Shebawgah River bend. They lay in each other's arms, her face against his shoulder. "Darling," she whispered, "will you listen to me about something awfully important? And not interrupt?" She put her hand over his mouth, and he kissed the soft inside of it. "And not get mad? Cross your heart?"

His hand promptly went to his shirt front and made a cross. "Hope to die."

This was the responsive Curt she loved. "Don't say that. Please don't." She pressed closer to him. "Curt, people seem to think that what you don't know doesn't hurt you. I believe it does. Ignorance isn't bliss, it's hell."

He sighed. "And we were having such a nice time. I suppose you're going to start quoting Sebastian Blayne again. Between you and Mother—"

She held his hand. "There's been something kept from you, darling, that's hurt you always. Do you know what your father died of?"

"Heart failure. He came home one day and—just dropped dead."

"Yes, that's the story everyone agreed on, but it's not true. You can ask Maud, or anyone who lived here then." She tried to hold him again, but his body drew away from her touch. "Please listen to me, darling. You see, when it happened everyone joined in a sort of conspiracy of silence to help your mother. That's why you weren't allowed to go to public school or play with other children—for fear you'd be told."

"Stop." He moved to the far end of the swing.

But Maggie went on. She had to go on. "Your father committed suicide. I learned that this afternoon from Stefan. I asked him point-blank."

"No." It was a violent, choked cry.

"You found him."

There was a long interval with no sound from the other end of the swing. And then she knew, without touching him, that he had collapsed, with his face in his hands. "Yes," he groaned. "Yes. I found him in the hall."

"You remember it? You were sick for a long time," Maggie said gently, "and when you recovered you seemed to have forgotten the entire incident. It was never mentioned in your presence."

Curt got up from the swing and lit a cigarette. She could see his face when the match flared. His expression was unfathomable but certainly not distraught. "I want to see Mother. There are so many things that aren't clear. I want to ask her—"

"Pauline isn't here. Why don't you ask the doctor?"

"No. There're things about that day only she can tell me."

"Stefan would know."

"No! I don't like him," he objected childishly.

"But you don't know him, Curt. He wants to be friendly."

"It's too late now. Mother and I are—so much closer. I'd rather talk to her." He stayed at the end of the porch with his back to her, smoking and looking at the faraway stars through the vines.

"Curt," Maggie said, breaking the silence, "what is this spell you're under? I've felt it ever since we came here, as if you'd been put to sleep a long, long time ago—and you've never waked up. In the storybooks, love could do it." She stood behind him holding his shoulders, laying her cheek against his back.

Abruptly he swung around and caught her in a hard kiss. His mouth was brutal and devouring, for the hunger that was in Curt had no other means of expression. By imposing his will physically he became momentarily master of the situation. He said *I want you*, but that wasn't it; he wanted strength.

Silence, long and black, fell upon them. Finally she realized he was on his knees, crying, his face in her lap.

"Maggie," he whispered, "Maggie, I do love you. Come back, darling, come back to me."

But when she answered, he didn't seem aware of her. He spoke thickly, and his hands clutched at her clothing. If her throat had been between those hands . . . But he didn't reach for her, and she managed not to stir, not to breathe. Gradually his body slid down to the floor. "It's right for you to go. You'll be safe. You're not part of this. I am. There's something in this house I have to find and kill." He staggered to his feet and fumbled around the porch. He acted like someone hypnotized, a man walking without a will of his own. On one elbow, she watched him and waited, panting softly while Curt lurched toward the front door.

"If I could only remember," he whispered. "Ever since I came back I've known something was going to happen to me, something terrible. Something the house has planned. It's waiting, it's always been waiting for me."

After his session in the courthouse, Blayne called Dr. Ben Thompson, requesting a medical check-up for life insurance.

"Say 'ninety-nine,' " Dr. Thompson requested as he placed his ear on Blayne's bare chest.

The patient said "ninety-nine" and then asked the doctor if he happened to know anyone in town by the name of Martel.

"Yes, certainly. They're old friends of mine."

"Then I shall doubtless see you at the wedding, as the bride is a friend of mine."

"That's right, Pauline's boy is getting married, isn't he?" The doctor kept on listening to his patient's chest, but his attention had wandered; he was remembering the little boy who had screamed, Pauline's boy, who had stood crying in the hall. They couldn't get him to leave his father's body. The child had retreated to the stairway, thrown his arms around the newel post, and held on like a demon.

"Wasn't there some scandal connected with her first husband?" the patient asked.

"Scandal? Not that I know of. Cross your legs, please, and relax as I tap the knee."

But Dr. Thompson was lying. He recalled that day, that awful day, perfectly. It was Maud Gorms who had phoned

him and said, "Come at once." She hadn't said there was another doctor already present, a new doctor in town by the name of Martel. Later Maud had explained, "I ran outside for help, and there was Stefan. He'd just driven up. But there was nothing he could do. Jim was dead when Pauline and I found him —I'm sure of that. He must have died instantly." . . . Why hadn't Stefan Martel been willing to sign the death certificate?

"Wasn't there a murder or something of the sort?" Blayne inquired.

"Now, relax, or I can't get a normal reaction. It was one of those tragic accidents. He was cleaning his gun. Don't stiffen up, sir. Your reflexes aren't good."

Benjamin F. Thompson had been called in as a private physician and might not have scrawled his signature across the last line of the printed form if it had not been for a motive he now questioned as more romantic than clinical. If Pauline Curtis, who made a remarkably beautiful patient, though several months pregnant, had not begun to miscarry within hours after Jim's death, would Ben have signed? Had the diagnosis of emotional shock been purely sentimental? Now, after years of medical experience, would he have reached the same conclusion? Pauline was still attractive. Ben Thompson still found the decision difficult. The body of his friend Jim had lain on a slab in the funeral home where he had been called in again to perform an official autopsy as coroner. Surgery had never been his strong point and to carve up an old poker partner . . .

The coroner's jury found that James Curtis had died from heart failure by reason of a bullet wound in the left ventricle. Accidental death. As coroner, he had determined the cause of death. Who held the pistol and pulled the trigger was not up to him to decide.

After his patient left, Dr. Thompson sat quite still and thought harder than he had for many years. Wasn't this fellow too curious about Jim Curtis and the Martels? From his window on the tenth floor of the Medical Arts Building, the doctor could look down on half the town of Canfield. The right half. Ben's suite of offices represented a long, hard climb.

The past was not a corridor, it was an instantaneous opening of a door, he thought. At any moment he chose, he could open the door and see Pauline standing there, just as she had that afternoon so long ago, wearing a purple suit and a little bunch of hothouse violets.

Her tears were beautiful to Ben. Since high school, he had longed to possess this high-tension creature, but he was no dynamo, Ben knew that. Better to be her physician than nothing, better to listen to her troubles and hold her hand and pat it.

As Sebastian Blayne mounted the steps of 1812 Elm Street on the day of the wedding rehearsal, he could see in the glass panes of the door a small, slender figure wearing a plain brown alpaca suit with a brown-and-black striped tie, a pongee shirt, and white buck oxfords. In his lapel was a white carnation and in his glinting pebble eyes a look that meant "Cry 'Havoc' and let slip the dogs of war." Maggie came to the door herself, and they shook hands rather shyly. "The late Miss McMahon, I believe?"

"Lately your secretary or behind the times?"

"No, dear, I mean you look recently deceased. What have they been doing to you?"

"That would take some time to tell. Besides, there's no place we can talk."

While they stood in the hallway, Blayne was wondering . . . If the father had not committed suicide, if murder had indeed been done, *why at that particular spot*, just as he stepped inside the house? Was it even faintly possible that the bullet could still be in Jim Curtis' body? One part of his mind made a note to phone Lieutenant Fennelley in New York and inquire about the penalty for illegally exhuming a corpse. Meanwhile, Neddy patted his former secretary's hand and asked, "What do you think you're proving by staying? That you love Curt?"

Maggie started to protest.

Blayne interrupted. "You don't. But if you still believe you should be a martyr and marry him, you can do it in a far simpler fashion next week at the city hall."

"I can't run out on him now."

"How many windows have to fall on you? Who wants this garden wedding, anyway?"

"Pauline, I suppose. By the way, she's absolutely insane about you on television. Wait until I tell her you're going to give the bride away."

"I'll never give you away, *Margherita mia*. And I don't feel at all like your uncle. But now let us meet the mother of the bridegroom."

Mrs. Martel was almost overcome by the great Sebastian Blayne. "I've read your books and seen your plays and now we're following you on television, but I had no idea until very recently that you were Maggie's employer." Pauline was deliberately giving him the works in her own grande-dame fashion. "Someone told me just the other day that you were visiting in the vicinity and doing research at the courthouse, but I didn't believe them. Of course, you'll come to the party tonight? Although everything's falling apart at the seams. There may not even *be* a party. The punch bowl is broken, the lanterns have been mislaid, the refrigerator's acting up and we'll probably have no ice cubes— And this is my son," she finished, as Curt came out to the pergola, where they were sitting.

Curt acknowledged the introduction and then announced, "The mousse has melted, the caterer's assistants have tramped all over the flower beds, and as a final blow, Mother dear, I have news for you. The hot-water heater has blown its top or something. I called the plumber."

"I can see this is no place for me," Blayne apologized.

"Please don't go. Tonight is only the rehearsal, you know. The ceremony will take place on Sunday."

The entire conversation seemed so improbable, it simply couldn't be happening. And what was worse, he found himself liking Pauline and Curt. Later, when the doctor came in for luncheon, Neddy was amazed to find that he, too, was not at all sinister.

That night the paper lanterns on the pergola were flowers and butterflies and fish that swayed eerily in the breeze. The women in long, frothy pastel dresses and the men in dinner jackets were drinking champagne cocktails. Maggie was wearing a diaphanous gray organza and a permanent smile. Did her feet hurt? Girdle too tight? Or was it to conceal her constant gnawing fear? Neddy's heart ached for her.

Without seeming to watch, Blayne's shoe-button eyes glided everywhere. Why hadn't he thought of planting a tape recorder in the shrubbery? It would be interesting to know what these old friends were confiding to each other. The conversational groups melted and changed, new patterns of people formed under the glow of the nodding lanterns. Everyone said, *What a lovely party*. Champagne corks popped. The waiter refilled the hollow-stemmed glasses. Music throbbed softly through the trees, a waltz from "Der Rosenkavalier" came from the radio in the house.

And the one who was waiting seized the moment.

Who had suggested it? Afterward Blayne could not recall, but someone planted the idea: *We really should fetch a shawl for the minister's wife, who suffers, poor dear, from arthritis.*

It was Maggie who responded. "I'll be glad to—"

In the house, she found Curt. She

leaned away from his outstretched hands. "What are you doing in here all alone?"

"It fascinates me," he said. There was a silence between them filled by soaring violins carrying the melody of the waltz. "This is where my father's coffin stood. If I can remember that much, why can't I remember all of it?"

Maggie shuddered involuntarily, sensing the dark passages in his mind, cellar under cellar, sealed and bricked over by time. Would Curt ever find his way down to those forgotten corridors and explore them? Then, with passionate pity, she kissed him, really kissed him, and told herself she would stay with him always in spite of what they called his headaches.

He smiled. "It's all right now. I'm glad you came in to find me."

She lied a little. "I missed you and—and I thought I should get a shawl for the minister's wife. She's complaining of the night air."

"I'll find one. Go on back. Can't have the bride and the groom both do a fade. I love you, darling."

"And I love you very much," she said. Maggie rejoined their guests under the pergola, and Curt went to the hall closet, where the wraps were kept.

The Rosenkavalier music played on. The Japanese lanterns dipped and danced in the summer night. Fresh wine sparkled in glasses raised to celebrate. Time passed, and still Curt did not rejoin the party with the wrap he had promised to bring.

Finally Maggie said, "I'll go see what happened to him."

She looked down through the open closet door and saw Curtis Martel lying head downward at the bottom of a twelve-foot shaft, drowning in a foot of water. The trap door that served as the floor of the closet was propped open. There was just enough space in the pit to accommodate a ladder, the old-fashioned water heater, and a man's body.

Curt's neck was broken.

After the moaning whine of the ambulance's siren had died on the night air, Blayne stayed on for several hours at the Martel house to comfort Pauline. Maggie and Dr. Martel had gone to the hospital with Curt. It was nearly three in the morning before Blayne returned to the Empress Hotel and was able to weigh the psychological aspects of Curt's fall.

In his usual scalding hot tub with a cold towel wrapped around his head, a beaker of brandy on the toilet seat, the naked author made notes on the evening.

"I called the hospital. Curt still unconscious—in a cast from head to hips. Dr. Martel afraid there may be some damage to the frontal lobe of the brain. Maggie refused to talk to me over the phone.

"How does this crime compare with the others? A water heater out of order. A trap door propped open. A closet without a floor. Maggie sent to fetch a shawl for the minister's wife. . . . Please step this way, my dear, open the closet door and walk into oblivion. . . . The *trap door* may have been a *trap* set with malice aforethought and all too conscious mockery. Someone was intended to *drop dead*, to be the *fall guy*. A locked closet, a shattered window, and now a defective hot-water tank. All are casual crimes. The occasion is arranged, the opportunity is there, the rest left to chance.

"If Maggie was to be the victim (she may have been the target three times out of three), what motive? Why Maggie? Curt has been paid to stay away. Maggie brings him back. Let us assume the murderer quite naturally does not want anyone new in the picture. For that reason, he wishes to eliminate either or both Maggie and Curt from the drama so that only the docile, unquestioning old cast remains: Pauline Curtis, Stefan, Maud Gorms, Harry Gorms.

"*Mrs. Gorms swears (to me, anyway) that she was with her friend (?) Pauline when they heard the shot fired. It seems they were in Maud's kitchen chatting about a recipe and ran next door to find Jim Curtis dead in the hall.*

"Could Harry Gorms have killed Jim Curtis? Mr. Gorms not only coveted money, he lusted after his neighbor's wife. But Pauline Curtis was not cooperative. Then Harry discovered that the object of his affections was neither frigid nor respectable. She had a lover, Stefan Martel. This was all a man like Harry needed to force himself on a woman. Suppose the husband walked in on this scene?

"What about *Dr. Ben Thompson?* He was the coroner who examined Curtis but failed to probe for the bullet. He signed the death certificate and was instrumental in leading the jury to reach a polite verdict so that the entire affair was given a genteel coat of whitewash. If the case were reopened, it could ruin Dr. Thompson's practice.

"Nowadays even laymen are familiar with basic psychological principles, but fifty years ago young Dr. Freud was just beginning to be published in Vienna. Twenty-five years ago the average person had read little if anything on the subject. Since the Curtis crime may not be contemporary, the murderer might have had no real understanding of the factors involved and thus been careless of the consequences. But a murderer can't take a life without paying for it with his life, his freedom, or his peace of mind. What are the characteristics of a man or woman with a cancerous conscience? He lives with fear, sleeps, walks, talks, with fear. A psychotic constantly on guard, constantly beset by conscience.

"Say the murderer has always lived in Canfield and was once a fairly ordinary person, not underprivileged or exposed to a crime-breeding environment. Then, on a certain day, the murderer *did* something out of the ordinary, something unusual, outrageous. A certain day. What kind of day? Was there brilliant sunshine, fog, rain? And what were the circumstances which for years had been gathering quietly like guests at a surprise party, waiting in the dark to pounce?

"What changed the murderer from an ordinary person into a monster? If action is crystallized thought, the thoughtless man doesn't know what he intends doing. Any action we take transforms us in the doing of it and in the consequences. *The moving finger writes; and, having writ, moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line,*

UNTIL DEATH DO US... (continued)

He ran to the man lying on the floor. "Daddy, you know the game, too." The man shuddered, sighed, lay still

Nor all your Tears wash out a word of it. The act of murder is so shocking that the deep mind refuses to take it in. The conscious mind doesn't want it, either. The subconscious keeps trying to vomit it up while the upper level says, swallow it, damn you, and forget it. This chewing of a poisonous cud that cannot be digested goes on and on. Guilt can be suppressed and repressed and compressed just so long—depending on the will. The ultimate in compression is explosion.

"The murderer could be Pauline or Stefan or Curt Martel. In which case, Maggie merely sparked the dynamite.

"I have a notion to do something on my TV program that may set a trap for our potential killer. I will go back to New York tonight and film tomorrow's session."

The rain began tentatively but soon became a steady downpour. In Curt's hospital room, Maggie sat by the window watching the rivulets run down the black pane. The nurse had gone to the diet kitchen for a quick cigarette. Dr. Martel was lying down in the X-ray room at the end of the corridor.

Is hell like this? Maggie wondered. Timeless? And yet every instant infinitely prolonged? Only six hours since the party. Impossible. I must have been in this place for years. Curt is in what is called a coma. Where do we go when we're unconscious? Is it like sleep? They say he may never come out of it and still live. I can't pray. That is the most awful part. I can't pray for him to live, and I can't pray for him to die. I keep saying "Thy will be done," but it's only words. They've managed to keep Mrs. Martel away by telling her she'd only upset Curt, but I don't imagine she'll buy that excuse for very much longer.

They had been waiting for hours for Curt to speak. In a frontal lobotomy the surgeon deliberately severs certain connections to bestow peace of mind on the patient. But sometimes the patient, on returning to consciousness (his new medically limited state of consciousness), is a semimoronic automaton. They say a man can live quite comfortably in this state. A man can also live with a broken neck and walk around in a steel-and-leather brace.

"It wasn't murder. I jumped."

Goose flesh traveled over Maggie's entire body. It was Curt's voice but very changed. A light whisper with no effort in it, no strife. His eyes were open. "What is this place?"

"The hospital."

"Yes, it would be. I've been so far away."

"Darling, you sound wonderful."

"You've been crying, Maggie."

"A little. Do you want the nurse?"

"There's no pain. Will I—live?"

"Of course." Maggie brushed his forehead with a kiss.

There was a silence. He licked his lips. "I hope not. My head feels remarkably clear, and I want to explain to you and the doctor while I still can. Will you get him?"

"Who, dear?"

"Stefan," the pale lips whispered impatiently. "Stefan, naturally."

"You've never called him that before."

"Just get him. Please."

A few moments later the doctor managed a grotesque little smile as he followed Maggie into the room. "How's our patient?"

"Hello, Stefan."

Then Stefan really smiled. "Hello, son."

"I haven't much time. Let's make it count. You asked me once to take that truth serum—"

"Sodium pentothal?"

"Yes. I want to do it now. When I stood there in the closet looking down into that pit, there was no end to it. Somehow, for a second I knew what life was all about—the way they say your whole life goes past your eyes. Well, it's true, only not like a camera. It happens in a flash. Suddenly you *see* it!"

The doctor objected automatically. "The strain might—"

Curt laughed. "Do you think I care now after what I've seen? Next time I'll get through. But first I've got to remember it all. I've got to tell you the truth—"

It was almost dawn when the doctor held up the hypodermic syringe and squeezed out a tiny bubble of air. Stefan's tired shoulders seemed to sag a little more as he took his stepson's wrist, counted the pulse, watched the eyelids twitch. There was only one shaded light on the bedside table. "Go to sleep, son. Just sleep now and don't fight it. Take it easy. Yes . . . easy."

While he waited for Curt's breathing to become regular, the doctor made some notes. "Patient, male, 26 years old. Son of maladjusted parents. Mother remarried. Patient resented stepfather. Suffering from extreme nervousness and hysteria. Partial amnesia. Recently has had insight into possibility that his present condition may be related to past anxiety. Treatment, narcosynthesis."

Suddenly there came a voice from the bed, a voice Maggie recognized. It was the little-boy voice. "I won't. I promised I wouldn't."

"Wouldn't what?"

"It hurts. I'm a coward."

"What hurts, Curt?"

"To go back. I won't go home. I told Maggie."

"You are home, son."

"Oh, yes. I've been sick. I remember now. I have a fever. They won't let me come downstairs."

"What gave you the fever?" The doctor began recording in his notebook.

"I'm not going to tell," he said stubbornly, and his face lit up with a wary, knowing smile. "I might say the whole thing."

"What is it you're afraid to say?"

He could not move within the cast, but his eyes were angry. "It's just that people make me nervous. I'm not clever enough. Mother always expected so much of me." The belligerent tone gave way to tears. "I hate my mother," he cried. His

lower body writhed beneath the sheet.

The doctor laid a hand on the shivering legs. "Yes, I know."

"Do you? How do you know that? They'll punish me for telling you."

"Who are they?" the doctor asked.

Curt spoke primly. "I shouldn't have said that. She's the best friend I have." Then the young boy's voice came forth in terrible bitterness. "No, no! I hate her. She whipped me once when I asked her to play the game again." The legs trembled and the eyes turned wildly from wall to wall, looking for a way out. The voice was whimpering now. "They might try to kill me the way—the way—"

"I promise you—you can tell me. It's safe."

Then the eyelids closed, and there was no more. When the voice came again, it was very faint. "I can't remember now."

"You can't put it off any longer, Curt." The doctor waited. The answer would come now . . . or never.

"It was there in the hall," the little boy's voice said shyly. "Daddy was away an awful lot, and he worried about Mother. He told me to take care of her. So we made a game out of it." The voice brightened and gave a funny hiccupy giggle. "Daddy didn't know about it, and we always played it when he went away on trips." Curt went on and on explaining the game, while the rain drummed down the tin gutters into the courtyard of the hospital and the gray dawn became morning.

"The table had an embroidered scarf on it, a Spanish shawl, I guess it was. Anyway, I could hide under it like in a cave."

He remembered the cave so well it was like being there again. He *was* there. He could hide from the thunder and lightning. He was safe. And his mother was there, too, in her rocking chair, rocking and sewing, mending one of his father's shirts. He could even smell the sweet, pungent perfume of the violets she wore pinned to her purple suit.

"Mother—"

"Yes, dear?" she answered, but did not look up from her work.

"When is Daddy coming home?"

"I don't know just when he's coming home, darling."

"Will it be pretty soon?"

"It might be," his mother said, looking at the brass clock on the mantel.

"Pretty soon, pretty soon—" He made a song out of it. Then he came out from under the table with a better idea. "Let's play burglars!"

"I told you, that's a very special game. We mustn't play it too often or tell anyone about it."

"I know. It's our secret. Suppose . . . suppose there were real burglars? Could there be?"

"Would you be afraid?" Pauline Martel put down her work and held the little boy between her knees.

"No!" Curtis shook his head repeatedly.

"You'd take care of Mother and do just as I have told you? You wouldn't forget and run away if you saw a real one?"

He shook his head vigorously. This was all a delicious preliminary to the game. Then the phone rang and spoiled everything. He heard his mother say something about long distance and Daddy, but she was gone so long he forgot about it and laid his cheek against the window pane. His breath made it all foggy. When his mother came back from the hall, she didn't sit down again with her sewing. "Burglars aren't ever real, are they?" he asked.

"Be quiet, Curtis," she said, walking up and down, working her hands as if they were wet and she wanted to make them dry.

He thought she was crying, and he ran to her to hold on to her legs in the purple skirt, but the doorbell rang and she went off into the dining room and closed the door. It was Uncle Harry, and they seemed to be talking very crossly about something.

It was a long morning, and it rained, and they never did have lunch, and when he awoke from his nap, Mother was talking to Auntie Maud on the telephone.

"Hello, Maud, this is Pauline. Isn't it a dreadful day? I'm so bored I thought I'd try that recipe. No, I'll come over for it. Thanks, dear." Then she hung up and glanced at her watch.

"All right, Curtis. We'll play the game now. I'll hide this time. Remember you mustn't look." But he did peek and saw her go to the hall closet where he kept his toys. "Be careful," she said unexpectedly, as she gave him the gun.

"Oh, it's a new one." He stuck it in the pocket of his overalls.

"Now, close your eyes and count to a hundred." Her voice faded as she tiptoed toward the front door.

When he opened his eyes, he looked under the table first, then behind the Chinese screen. "Come out, you mean old burglar," he yelled, but no one came out. He trotted all around the room. He searched behind the heavy draperies and lifted the cushions on the couch. He became more baffled and uneasy at each failure. "Come out. I'll find you. Please come out." He tried to be brave and not cry.

The game had never gone on and on like this. It was all wrong. She was supposed to appear now from behind the screen or the big wardrobe in the hall, step out like a burglar and try to run away.

But nothing like this happened. "Mother!" He ran from the parlor to the dining room and back to the hall.

"I don't want to play anymore," he sobbed. Then the front door opened, and a real burglar stepped in.

Blind with tears and frenzy, the child ran forward. The agony of finding himself alone in the house found instant release. "Hands up!" he shrieked, and shot.

The next moment, Curtis saw what had happened and was delighted. He ran to the man lying on the floor and knelt beside him. "Daddy, you know the game, too!"

Instead of hugging and kissing him, Daddy sighed and lay still.

"But now you wake up—" He dropped the gun. "Daddy, it's time to wake up now. Don't play anymore. Please wake up. It's me."

His mother came running in. "Curtis, what is it? What's the matter? I didn't mean to be gone so long—"

A moment later Auntie Maud followed. On her knees beside the body, his

mother kept saying, "Jim, Jim, oh, Jim—"

Auntie Maud gasped. "Is he—?"

"I don't know," his mother said. "Get a doctor."

Mrs. Gorms ran out the front door. Curtis had retreated to the stairway and clung to the newel post, sobbing. "Tell him to wake up." He saw his mother place the gun in his father's hand and clasp his fingers on the trigger. Then she let it fall to the floor and pushed it with her foot to the right spot a few inches away, where the child had dropped it originally.

While she was attending to this business, Pauline talked to her son the whole time, tenderly, in a low, comforting voice. "You mustn't cry, darling. It wasn't your fault. It's all a bad dream. You imagined it. Tomorrow you'll forget all about it. Do you hear me? You were only playing a game." She came and sat on the bottom step, and put her arms around him. "Let's wash away those tears. Wash it all away. Do you hear me, Curtis?" She whispered the words in his ear. "It's all gone now, all gone. It was just a bad dream. It never happened."

When Auntie Maud came back, she was followed by Stefan darling, whom his mother suddenly called Dr. Martel.

The doctor knelt beside Jim Curtis, and they waited. "It's no use," he said. Pauline began to cry, but the little boy had stopped. His mother leaned on the doctor's arm. Curtis' eyes were dry and staring.

Auntie Maud saw this and went to him. "What is it, Curtis?" But the boy wouldn't answer. He hid his face in Mrs. Gorms's lap.

The patient lay still, looking trustfully at the man he had always despised. "I'm all right now, but what will she do when she finds out I've told?"

"Told what?" the doctor suggested blandly. "It was an accident."

"No, it wasn't."

"Oh, yes," Martel said carefully. "Your mother was out of the house when it happened."

"But she knew about it, didn't she?" Curt insisted.

"It was an accident, Curt," Martel reiterated firmly. "When you wake up, that's all you'll remember. You won't feel guilty any longer, or afraid. You did nothing wrong. The next time you see your mother—listen to me, son—your manner toward her must be the same as it has always been. Do you understand? You are very fond of your mother. Now . . . you must be quiet . . . and rest. . . ." Softly, monotonously, he kept repeating this until Curt began to breathe deeply. He was dropping into a normal sleep, when a knock came at the door.

It was a light knock that both Stefan and Maggie knew. The doctor tiptoed hastily across the room, pushed Maggie behind the screen in the corner, and opened the door a crack. "What are you doing here?"

"I couldn't rest without seeing him," Pauline Martel said.

"You can't see him now."

"I thought I heard voices."

Martel stepped out into the corridor and closed the door behind him. "What did you hear?"

She gave him an odd look. "How did you make him talk to you?"

The nurse on duty in the corridor turned her head in their direction with frank curiosity.

"I used a drug." He sensed that the nurse was listening. "If you awaken him suddenly, it could be very dangerous. Please, my dear, don't go in there." Martel was also thinking of Maggie behind the screen.

"How could it be dangerous?" Pauline objected.

Dr. Martel steered his wife toward the waiting room. "Surely you remember your training? I gave him some sodium pentothal."

Pauline shrugged. "That's since my time. Of course, I've heard mention of it on Sebastian Blayne's program."

"I've been trying," the doctor said wearily, "to erase certain mistaken ideas about you from Curt's mind. But if you disturb him now, I cannot guarantee results."

Pauline picked up a magazine from the waiting-room table and leafed through it. She and Martel rarely looked directly at one another. "I don't trust you."

"Whatever I did, I did for your sake," he said, staring out the window at the rain.

"For my sake?" Her eyes lifted from the page and studied his back shrewdly. "Or to satisfy your own curiosity?"

The doctor sighed. "Everything will be all right, darling, if you'll come home with me and not interfere."

"Darling?" Pauline closed the magazine. "Darling," she savored the word. "You haven't called me darling—since we were married." Then she laughed. "Sorry, but I am not impressed by your bedside manner. I shall certainly speak to my son and find out what you've been up to before I go home." She seemed determined to have her way.

The doctor turned, and they stood face to face. "You will ruin my experiment, and you won't like what you hear." His voice blazed at her in a whisper.

"I heard enough from the hall." The glassed-in room was soundproof, but they were both mouthing their words. "For heaven's sake, Pauline, be sensible. When Curt wakes up, he won't remember anything."

"I don't believe you." She gazed into his eyes for a moment and then shook her head. "No, you're not telling me the truth."

"I think I have succeeded in erasing the whole matter," he pleaded urgently. "The slate is wiped clean."

"You can do that?" she asked numbly, and sat down, deep in thought.

"I could have saved you a great deal of anxiety long before this—if I'd only known."

"This is some trick," Pauline murmured, staring absently at the gold catch on her purse, shutting it, opening it, shutting it.

"You needn't worry any longer," her husband said gently. "All these years you've blamed yourself for having left the child alone in the house when you went over to see Maud—blamed yourself because he found the gun. My dear, don't you know accidents like that happen every day?"

"Yes," she moaned. "Oh, Stefan, I'm so glad"—sudden tears spurted out of her eyes—"so glad that someone knows at last."

"It wasn't your fault." He put his arms around her shoulders.

She looked straight into his eyes. "You believe that? You do? You must."

While Curtis lay dying, with Maggie by his side, Sebastian Blayne was returning to Canfield. In the Martel home, the doctor and his wife were spending a strange evening together.

"All the years we've wasted, Stefan." She was wearing a long Chinese robe of red silk patterned with white dragons.

Martel looked at her, thinking that she was still magnificent in spite of her age and weight. He had once been extravagantly fond of her long dark hair and flashing eyes. "Shall we have a drink together? It seems so odd to be alone." Martel went to the refrigerator, got out ice cubes, put them in a bowl, and found a bottle of seltzer.

"Stefan." She had followed him to the kitchen. "If you've stopped being my enemy, just let me be close to you."

"I am not your enemy any longer," he said, and added privately, *I am your executioner.* Then he had to hold her and feel those voluptuous lips opening, fastening on him.

"Why didn't I trust you, darling," she murmured. "But how could I guess that you'd take my side?" Her arms tightened

around him. The robe fell open, and she was wearing only a thin batiste nightgown. The shocking thing was that she was able to arouse him, although he wanted no part of this passion she had summoned up from the past. "Aren't you going to kiss me?"

The doctor took a bottle of Scotch, and they went upstairs together. She kissed him passionately, and he pushed her away from him with an involuntary gesture of repugnance. He knew better than to do this. It was a fatal mistake, but it was done . . . and she understood.

She sat down, looking at her husband calmly. "A woman scorned." She lit a cigarette, and exhaled a long trail of smoke. "Well, I've had a good many years to get used to the idea. How could you be so stupid? Did you think I wouldn't know? You haven't changed, Stefan. But I have. At least I'm not a phony. I got rid of my husband because I wanted you."

"How did you happen to pick on me? Why not Harry Gorms?"

"I wasn't in love with the vulgar little man."

"He was rich."

"Not at the time," she reminded him. "Besides, money had nothing to do with the way I felt about you." She smiled sarcastically and sadly to herself. "I thought you were the only pure thing that had ever happened to me. I was wrong, wasn't I?"

The doctor began to smile. "We were both wrong." He chose that moment to tell her Maud and Harry Gorms's secret; the stock for which old Mrs. Curtis had starved, for which Pauline had sold her priceless youth, had profited, of all people, her next-door neighbors. For Harry had found oil, not gold, in the Lucky Horseshoe Diggings. Pauline had thought when Harry sent her a thousand dollars in payment for the Curtis stock, that he had done so out of his funny, unrequited love. She had swallowed her pride and his money—to learn now the joke, worth millions, was, after all, on her. If it had happened to someone else, it would have been funny.

Stefan saw the change come over her face. Horrified disbelief gave way to a momentary wild amusement, and she laughed. The laugh soon became a cry, a scream of pain, and the doctor saw a human being cross that fine line between sanity and that other thing that lies beyond the pale of society. But like most people, he refused to face what one part of him knew beyond the shadow of a doubt.

"Just tell me why you did it," he asked.

How could she tell him, tell anyone, what her life had been when she didn't understand it herself? What had set the pendulum going? Harry's visit that rainy morning with his unspeakable proposal? Really, she was not that kind of woman —or hadn't been in the beginning. What had come over her? What had put the thought of murder into her mind? It had never before occurred to her to kill Jim. She had only wanted not to see him, not to sleep with him, not to live with him. She hadn't trained the child to shoot his father, she hadn't planned it. There was no way of making anyone believe that now. Perhaps it had been Jim's long-distance call to say he was on his way home. Or the thunderstorm. The rain beating down on the eaves of the house, the old lady's house, the ill-tempered old woman she had nursed for years. No, it hadn't been any single thing, not even the discovery that she was pregnant again. And Stefan didn't want her anymore. Their affair was over. He'd made that clear in many ways. The meetings on back-country roads, the appointments after office hours, were a thing of the past. He had avoided her ever since he'd found she had lied to him about the Curtis money.

And then the final humiliation of finding out, quite by chance, that it was Maud he wanted—foolish, funny, not-at-all-beautiful Maud. "It's amused me all these years watching you and Maud—the sick looks you two give each other," Pauline said.

"I love Maud," he answered.

"You shouldn't have said that, Stefan." Her cheeks were inflamed, but she kept her voice down and her eyes were frozen into blankness.

"I promised myself that you would be punished. You had your little game of hide-and-seek—now I'm going to have mine." The doctor helped himself to another drink.

Pauline plumped up the pillows behind her head and watched him. "So we're playing games. I thought we might. What's yours, darling? What do you intend doing about me?"

"Nothing tonight. Or perhaps tomorrow. Or the next day even. Perhaps not ever." He sat down on the couch.

"Because there's nothing you *can* do, actually."

"Nothing in a courtroom, perhaps—"

"Courtroom. You couldn't prove anything. What would you tell the jury? That you tried hypnotism or narco-something-or-other on my son? You forced him or led him to remember what a child of six saw and interpreted with a child's mind. His interpretation might be very far from the truth. Do you think any judge would buy that? They'd send *you* to a doctor. Your case would never stand up."

"I think I'll have another drink," Stefan said. "Will you join me?"

Pauline shook her head. "Don't be a pig, dear. A few won't hurt you, but not too many." Her criticism sharpened his thirst—as she knew it would.

"There are a number of people I want to see tomorrow," Martel said. "Dr. Thompson, Mrs. Burton, Judge Rainey, and the minister's wife, to mention a few. I'm going to tell them about the game you and Curtis used to play and ask their advice. The story will get around. I shan't be accusing you of anything. I shall merely be discussing my problem. Should I ignore this thing Curt told me? What is my duty to the boy? To you? To the community?" The doctor gesticulated with his glass to emphasize each point. It was obvious that he was getting drunk.

"They'll laugh at you."

He shrugged. "Let them. I don't think they will."

"Have another Scotch, dear, and dream on. You'll never make it stick."

"I'll make a damned good try. I want

Horrified disbelief gave way to wild amusement. The laugh soon became a tortured cry, a scream of pain

to get you where it will hurt most, Pauline—your pride. You'll be ostracized by the whole town."

Pauline got up and fixed two drinks. Dr. Martel accepted the glass she handed him. Looking up at her, he said, "At this moment I almost admire you. You never lose your head, do you?"

"Be careful you don't lose yours, Stefan."

His tongue was getting thick, but he was enjoying himself too much to notice. "An actual prison wouldn't do for you. But to be a prisoner here . . . The grocery boys will leave your order on the steps and run, because they've heard you're a murderess. You'll live alone here, shut up in this house, alone with your thoughts, Pauline." His movements were wavering and uncertain, but he managed to get to his feet. "I feel ill. I've never passed out in my life. I don't see how—" He fumbled for the decanter and examined it.

Pauline watched him with detached amusement. "I put something in it. Amytal."

He started for the bathroom but couldn't make it, and dropped into a chair. "How many?"

"All there were," she said pleasantly, "in the little bottle."

How many had been left? He couldn't remember. Four would do it, six could be fatal . . . black coffee, an emetic . . . The doctor's mind was getting sluggish. To make coffee he would have to go downstairs to the kitchen. The phone rang, but when he tried to reach it, he stumbled and fell to the floor. The ringing sound gave a strange feeling of urgency in the quiet room. Pauline stepped over Stefan's body and picked up the instrument.

It was the hospital. "I'm sorry," she told the head supervisor, "the doctor's out on an emergency call."

The nurse asked if she were speaking to Mrs. Martel.

"No, she's not here, either. I'm just a friend of the family."

The voice at the other end of the wire sounded relieved. "Then I can tell you, and you can break the news. The son passed away a few moments ago."

Stefan Martel muttered something, got to his knees, and tried to make himself heard. He called, but not loudly enough to be heard over the phone.

"I'll deliver the message," Pauline said as she watched her husband crawling across the pearl-gray carpet. Doggedly Stefan persisted, swayed to his feet, reached the door, and opened it. Clinging to the railing, he dragged himself to the stairs, faced the descent, and reached for a support that wasn't there.

When Sebastian Blayne answered the phone, all Maggie said was, "Come for me. It's over."

Half an hour later she was in his suite at the Empress Hotel. It was nearly dawn before she stopped crying and remembered to tell him about the game.

"Then I guessed right. It had to be Pauline. I knew she had used the child and probably Martel, but how? Are you sure Martel wasn't in on it?"

"Not from what I heard." Maggie looked stricken. "I like that man. I don't think he's the type. . . ."

"I'm not sure about Martel. Of course, the woman is unbalanced. Almost anything could upset her tightrope act."

Maggie shivered. "Were all those accidents her doing?"

"The window was probably an accident. I've discovered that a number of small boys in the neighborhood do have archery sets. And you said you did hear a little ping."

"The closet—?"

"That must be put down to Pauline. Sheer improvisation. She saw your cigarette case, the closet, and seized the ready-made opportunity. Really a spectacular personality. Brilliant like most of the burgeoned types."

"Burgeoned? Pauline's no spring blossom," Maggie said. "She's a sadistic monster."

"Not when you understand her. These overpowering women tend to become very massive but not necessarily masculine. Nor monsters. However, they rob their husbands of authority and become the potent factor in the household. The person who wields the authority. A burgeoned mother usually has a rejected son because she also robs the boy of any male ego he may try to assert. Her sons are rejected by her, and she in turn is rejected by them. The boys are usually schizzy types—the shy-and-lonely-child pattern, like Curt."

Maggie covered her eyes. "Poor Curt. He never had a chance."

After several hours' sleep, Pauline Martel awakened feeling refreshed. It was a beautiful Sunday morning, nearly noon. Rising, she tied back her long hair with a ribbon, removed her robe and nightgown, and descended the stairs to the landing where her husband lay. She examined him dispassionately and was a little surprised to find him still breathing. His left leg was broken below the knee. She saw at once that there was a great deal of tidying up to do. The decanter and glasses would have to be emptied and a half bottle of fresh Scotch substituted for the original mixture. This she attended to with dispatch, being extremely careful to wash only the inside of the decanter and glasses so that the fingerprints would remain undisturbed. It suddenly seemed funny to Pauline to be wandering around the house without clothes on, and she giggled. While making the liquor switch, she allowed herself a ladylike nip. Then she remembered to clasp Stefan's fingers around the empty amytal bottle, which she placed beside his glass. When everything was in readiness, Pauline went back to the landing to wake her husband.

For a long time the voice that reached Stefan Martel was a blur, a word or two, then the sound receding. He could not identify the voice or make any sense of what it was saying. The

woman was talking over his head, literally over his head. . . .

"I shan't call a doctor to fix your leg, dear, until you agree to my plan. You tried to take your own life, Stefan, by swallowing a bottle of sleeping pills. I must remind you there is a law against attempting suicide in this particular state. Anyone who does such a thing and survives is automatically considered irresponsible. You must remember that legally you have no standing now, my darling. You won't be allowed to make decisions involving property and financial matters, much less practice medicine. There was a case of something like this several weeks ago on Sebastian Blayne's program. It gave me the idea. Now, when you really wake up and decide to be sensible, I'll phone Ben Thompson to come over and have a look at your poor leg. Until then I'll wait. Do you understand?"

But Stefan only groaned.

"Then I'll keep on repeating it. . . ."

At the Empress Hotel, Blayne and Maggie were having luncheon in his suite. "I refuse to allow you to cry about it anymore. Your eyes look like red oysters. Now, stop it, darling. We have work to do today."

"Don't laugh at me, Neddy, but all day I've had this terrible psychic hunch about Dr. Martel. I think he's in some danger and needs us."

"Remember my TV experiment? We've got to give it a chance to work. If we arrive too soon—"

"All right," Maggie gave in reluctantly, "but the Irish in me says we ought to go now."

The swelling of Stefan Martel's leg was enormous, and the pain was too much to be contained. The splintered bone protruded through the torn flesh and muscle. But he was awake now, awake enough to drag himself with agonizing slowness from the landing down the stairs to the hall, descending like a baby on his buttocks. He had just reached the phone and lifted the receiver from its cradle when the dining-room door opened noiselessly. Pauline stood watching him. "Operator—" He clenched the inanimate black object as if it were alive and could come to his rescue. He clicked the button on the phone repeatedly, but nothing happened.

"You forgot to dial O," Pauline said. She got him to the couch and propped him up with pillows. When he was settled with an afghan—for she had noticed that he was shivering violently—Pauline dialed and got the supervisor. "We have illness in the house," she explained. "Please disconnect the phone until you receive further notice."

"But the hospital—" Stefan protested.

"Curtis is dead," she said, plumping up more pillows behind his head. She seemed pleased and happy as a debutante after the ball is over.

Martel decided his only chance would be to fall in with her mood and flatter her. "You're really a very clever woman, Pauline."

She winked at him as if they were comrades in a debonair adventure. "You're being sweet again, Stefan. Why? You must want something."

"I want to know your plans for me."

"Ah." She tiptoed to the French doors to make sure there was no one within earshot. "I thought I heard someone outside."

After this demonstration, Martel knew his only chance was to play up to her. As long as a sick mind feels safe, he is safe with others; the moment the splintered personality feels himself or his plans in danger, he becomes dangerous. Martel decided to play along with the deranged woman.

"Do you recall," she asked, "how you planned to keep me a prisoner?" Pauline said it quite gaily and laughed. "Now you're it. I don't see why we can't settle down and have a rather pleasant life. I should write Mr. Blayne how nicely everything has worked out. This would make a good case for 'Detective Quiz.' Which reminds me, this is Sunday afternoon, darling. With all our excitement, we don't want to miss him."

"If you don't want to live with me, darling, there're so many things that could happen," Pauline said, as she reentered the living room. "So you will be a good boy and not try to tell anyone else about Curtis and our little game?"

His body was drenched with sweat, and the pain was not merely in his leg now. It was total and unbearable. "What game?" he managed to say.

"Ah, that's better. Now would you like a drink and a cigarette? Then I'll call Ben Thompson for you." Mrs. Martel lit a cigarette and poured a straight Scotch for him. "What do you say, Stefan? You must remember your manners and say *thank you.*"

But he remained speechless with pain.

"You're not being nice anymore. When you're not nice I shall have to punish you." She slapped his face with the back and front of her hand, four stinging blows. Then the mad woman leaned her cheek against his. "Does it burn? I'll make it go away." She covered his cheek with tiny kisses. "Do you love Pauline a little? Why won't you talk to me? Shall I turn on the television for you? Oh, yes! It's just about time for dear Mr. Blayne. If I weren't in love with you, Stefan . . ." She smiled to herself as she fiddled with the dials. "But of course he's much too short." The black rectangle became white, the white became a man's face, the face of Sebastian Blayne. Pauline immediately sat down in front of the television set, watching her favorite performer with enraptured attention.

". . . And so 'the play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.' Our play this evening is the story of 'A Guy Named Pete,' whose father liked to take him hunting as a little boy. One day . . ."—Sebastian Blayne's face faded for an outdoor scene—"a spotted pointer galloped across a field to a barbed-wire fence."

"You're not watching the picture," Pauline said.

"On the contrary—" But Dr. Martel was preoccupied. It had seemed to him there was a face outside the French doors, a face with a finger to its lips in a gesture of silence.

The man on the screen parted two strands of barbed wire for the little boy to crawl through, the dog barked, the child tripped and fell against his father's

shotgun. The gun went off and the man was killed. The drama continued for several minutes.

The face did not reappear in the French doors. Martel knew that he had imagined it. No one was coming to his rescue.

"In the play," Blayne's voice went on explaining, "I wonder if you noticed that Pete—or the character we have called Pete—as a grown-up young man struck one as a very fine chap. Pete was actually a superior type, but he suffered from an acute sense of guilt he could not pin down. This anxiety is the most terrible punishment that can hang over a man's head. The deed he had innocently performed as a child had left an unhealed wound or psychotic trauma. It may be that he did remain under his old nurse's influence all those years. You remember she told him that it was a bad dream, that the hunting accident never happened. Hypnotic suggestion. And it worked. Pete, in a state of shock after shooting his father, was told by his nurse to forget. But some part of him refused to accept this. You may call it his conscience or his subconscious or his soul. At all accounts, this deep self rejected his nurse who was the mother symbol. In fact, he hated her and hated himself. He was in love with the girl in the drama, Josie, and wanted to be good enough for her. The pressure of wanting to confess, to speak the unspeakable, *I killed my own father,* was too much for him. Society would not forgive him, or so he felt. He would have to give himself up and be punished for his crime. I am afraid that Pete may choose to judge himself. If he so chooses—that is, to do away with himself—who can say whether he is right or wrong? Is anything ever *either-or?* The wrong was done the six-year-old child, but the old nurse had not even the faintest conception of what she was doing to the little boy. Ignorance. Not-knowing-better. What devastation lies in the wake of simple ignorance. Our little play showed you how many lives were affected.

"For pity's sake, or rather compassion, let us teach people that murder is not momentary, it goes on and on. A crime is a pebble dropped into a pool. The pebble goes to the bottom, the reaction keeps on spreading." The camera traveled in for a close-up of Blayne's face, his enormous eyes stared straight into Pauline's.

"Me," she screamed. "Me!"

Throughout the program, the French doors had been opening with infinite precaution, ever so slowly. Sebastian Blayne stepped into the room followed by Dr. Ben Thompson, as Martel fainted.

Sebastian Blayne and Dr. Thompson wrapped Pauline in a blanket and tied her hands. "Simply a precaution," Blayne explained to the general practitioner. "There's nothing to fear from her now. Go along with anything she says. You won't have any trouble."

They put her in Thompson's car.

"Thank you for volunteering," Blayne said, as he closed the door and turned away from the sight of Pauline's ravaged face. "I know it is a painful task for you, Doctor. But somehow I think you're the right person."

As Pauline and her old beau, Ben Thompson, drove down the highway, she snuggled close to him. "How do you like my new suit?" she asked coyly.

"Wh—what suit?"

"Silly! Can't you see? It's purple."

She leaned against his shoulder. "You know, Ben, I think the whole trouble is money. Nice people won't admit it, but the lack of money determines most of our lives." She laughed a little, indulgently. "Did I tell you—Harry has an oil well? What a joke on me. What a tremendous joke the whole thing is, Ben darling."

The man at the wheel shuddered inside his overcoat when she called him darling. How could he love this raving, ruined woman? For he did love her, and his heart ached as if there were a stone in his breast. "Why did you do that to Stefan?" he asked, almost in spite of himself.

"Because a lot of it was his fault. People do things to each other. We don't live alone." She looked out the window at the rain. "It's a lovely day for a ride, isn't it? Will we have a picnic or just drive?"

"Just drive," he said, without taking his eyes off the road.

After a long silence, she spoke again, softly. "Ben, can you remember how I used to be?"

He could, indeed, but said nothing. There was nothing he could say.

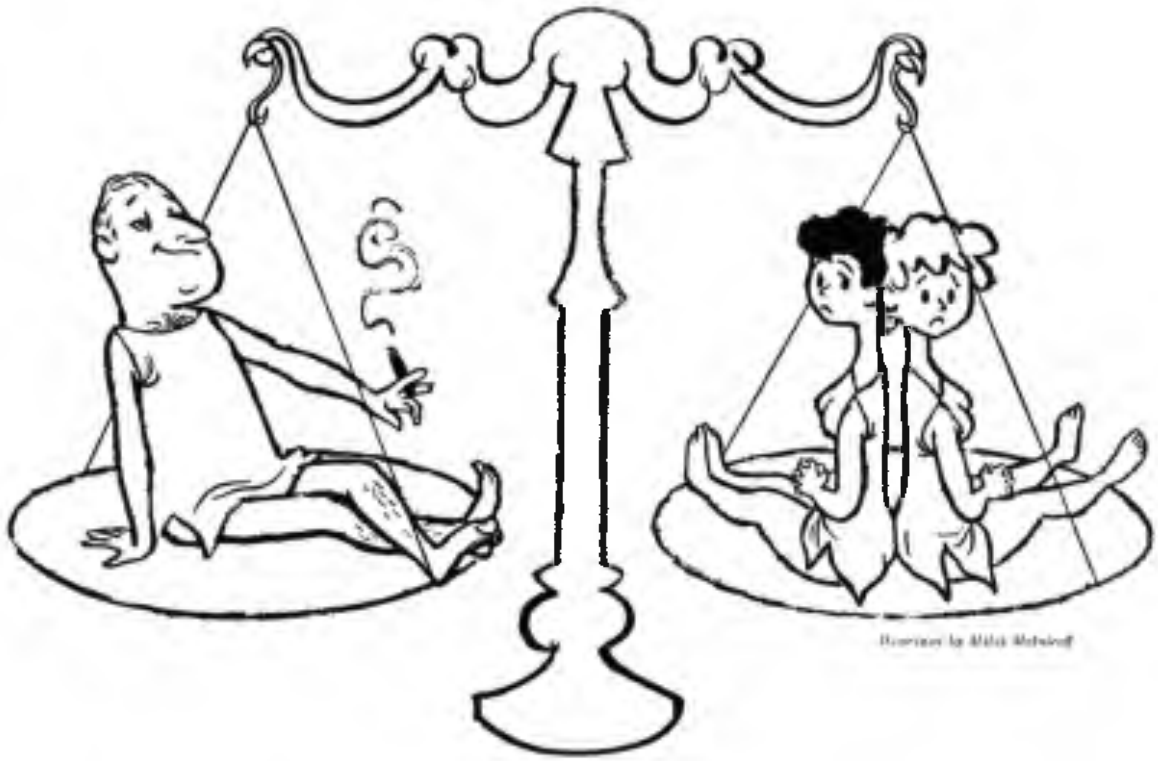
"It's odd, but I can't remember what I was like before all this started. Quite an ordinary person, I suppose. But I'm not anymore. You do see that, don't you, Ben?"

The knuckles of his hands gripping the wheel were white.

"This thing has changed me. I've got through to something else. Now all I have to do is understand it. You'll go on living just as you did before, Ben—living without seeing any meaning in it. But I won't. I can't now. I'm different. Actually none of this hurts because I died a long time ago."

Once more she began to laugh, and there was a sort of joy in her face. Not smug, but as if she knew a secret. A light had been turned on inside. Her long hair blew Medusa-like around her tear-streaked face. "Yes," she said once more, looking out at the rain, "it's a lovely day. Where are you taking me, Ben?"

"To the country club," he said. As they turned in the stone gates, she was still laughing. THE END



Is One Man Worth Two Women?

No, you say. But when the ladies line up for their paychecks, they get less than half what the men pull down. What's the reason? Employers confess, "It's cheaper"

BY MORTON SONTHEIMER

Women hold three out of every ten jobs in this country. Yet the average woman's salary is less than half the average man's.

The number of working women has taken a big jump in recent years, but their pay hasn't kept pace. In 1939, the average employed woman earned 59 cents for every dollar the average employed man received. In 1950, it was 45 cents.

Pure prejudice is the reason for most of this discrimination. Edward Corsi, New York State Industrial Commissioner, calls it "as bad as, if not worse than, any other discrimination, because it affects more people."

Like sunshine and motherhood, a square deal for women in business and industry seems to have the support of everybody. The United Nations has gone on record for the principle of equal pay for men and women. So has the National Association of Manufacturers and the CIO, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the AFL.

All of which was small comfort to the women in a Michigan plant whose maximum rates were lower than the minimum rates for men doing the same job. Or to the Indiana girls receiving 50 to 58 cents an hour for soldering jobs that paid the men alongside them 70 to 90 cents.

Don't think it just happens in industrial plants, either. Department stores are worse than factories in discriminating against women employees, according to the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor. Women household workers, sales workers, and personal-service workers get the worst deal of all. Even the elite of working women, the professional people and the clerical group, aren't making two-thirds of the incomes of their male counterparts.

In most fields, of course, women are outnumbered. But in those professions where they've held a majority for years, like teaching and social work, they still have to accept less than men.

Women aren't working for fun today. They work because they have to. Six out of ten are supporting dependents, and about half that number are supporting two or more people. The majority of working women are married. Dr. Henry A. Bowman, of Stephens College, says, "Most girls have to keep on working after marriage to meet expenses."

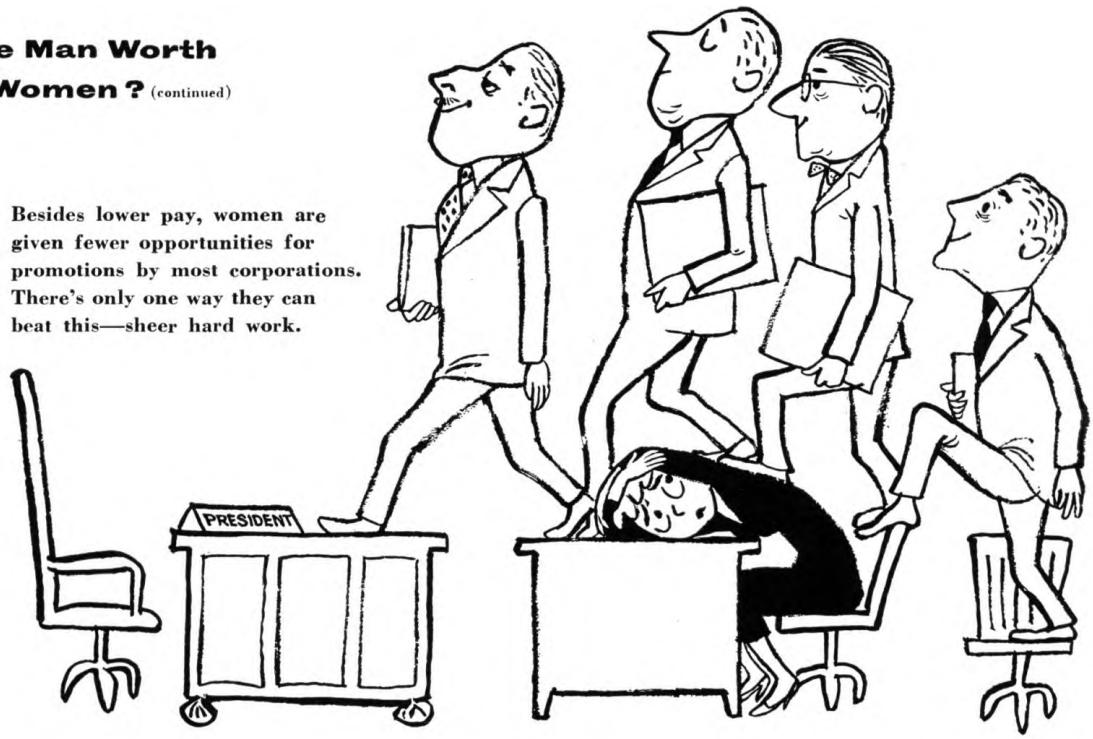
When a woman pays the rent, it isn't any cheaper because she's a woman. When she buys groceries, she pays the same prices as men. Yet when she goes out to get a job, she finds specifications like this—an actual letter to an employment agency from the manager of a broadcasting company:

"We have an opening here for a combination program director and salesman. This position can be filled by either a

(continued)

Is One Man Worth Two Women? (continued)

Besides lower pay, women are given fewer opportunities for promotions by most corporations. There's only one way they can beat this—sheer hard work.

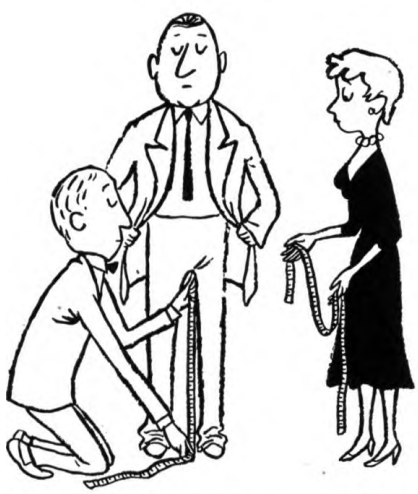


man or a woman. We will pay a woman $20 a week for doing the office work and give her $10 a week drawing account, thus guaranteeing her $30 a week. We will also pay her 20 per cent commission on all sales.

"We will start a man at $30 a week for doing the office work and $30 a week drawing account, and also pay him 20 per cent on all sales. . . . The person who fills this position must have at least a year of experience."

Or an ad like this one from the help-wanted column of a newspaper: "Bookkeeper, male or female, high-school graduate, minimum two years experience. Beginning salary—Male, $50 a week. Female, $40."

Why does such an injustice exist?



Biggest loophole requires women to do exact same work as men to get equal pay.

"Women can't do the heavy work," is a common explanation. That may apply to some jobs, but very often it's a blind. Field workers for the Women's Bureau found a steel plant where women crane operators received 11 cents an hour less than men. Why? Because women were not supposed to oil or repair the cranes. The reason sounded good—until inquiry revealed that neither were the men. Regular maintenance crews took care of the servicing.

The perfect squelch for the less-pay-for-women philosophy came from the personnel manager of a San Francisco department store. He was listening to the complaints of a display artist who thought it was a shame that women artists were paid the same as men.

"They have to have a porter carry their models for them, and we men carry our own," the man said.

"Okay," said the personnel manager. "We'll pay porters' rates to the men for the time they spend carrying the models and display artists' rates for the time they spend on artistic work."

Then there's the old contention that "men have to support the family." But there's one question that demolishes this argument: "Then, why shouldn't bachelors get paid less for doing the same work as family men?"

Most department stores sincerely believe that men are worth more in certain departments, such as men's furnishings and shoes. They argue that men should be able to sell more shirts, ties, and pajamas because they wear them. Bess Bloodworth, former vice-president in charge of industrial relations for a big Brooklyn department store, says she tried to break down this belief for years, but it persisted even in the face of figures showing that women outsold men.

Another argument is that generally women don't have as much work experience as men. That may be true, but it doesn't account for the fact that, according to Government statistics, women begin earning less than men, right from the start. I found stores offering part-time college students 80 cents or a dollar an hour. According to the jobs filled? No. According to which sex they were.

The claim that men are more permanent than women and more likely to develop into executives is certainly half true. Women rarely get the opportunity to become executives and unquestionably have less incentive to remain on the job.

A New England mill owner told me that he had found both his men and women employees disliked women foremen. It's a fact that many women don't like to be bossed by women. But it doesn't justify discrimination against women any more than the existence of anti-Semitic Jews or Negro-hating Negroes justifies religious and racial intolerance. Psychologists tell us that wherever a group is singled out for abuses, some members of it will hate the others out of resentment of their own suffering.

Do Women Dodge Responsibility?

Many executives echo the explanation a banker gave for paying women tellers less than men. "You can't place a woman teller alone in a branch bank," he said. "She doesn't want that much responsibility." If women are guilty of shunning responsibility, it shouldn't be hard to find the reason for it—they have had

precious little chance to get used to it.

Probably the most honest answer to why women get lower wages for the same work came from the owner of a small factory. Asked to account for the double pay standard in his own plant, he said, "Tradition, I suppose." Then he quickly added, "Besides, it's cheaper."

The first law to make employers pay equal wages to men and women for the same work was passed by Montana in 1919. Under pressure from women's organizations, Alaska and eleven other states have passed similar laws. It is now illegal to pay women less for the same work in California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Washington.

A national bill to forbid unequal pay in interstate commerce has been before Congress since 1945, but despite the strenuous efforts of women's organizations, it has never come up for a vote.

Where equal-pay laws are in force, honest companies have adjusted their pay rolls to comply. Many employers, though, particularly smaller ones, don't even know such a law exists.

Thousands of underpaid women don't know that the law gives them any protection, either. Even if everybody did know, the laws wouldn't end pay-roll discrimination. Many women don't complain, for fear of jeopardizing their jobs.

Besides, some of the state laws have loopholes big enough to drive through an army of lower-salaried females. Various states exempt hotel workers, domestic servants, farm workers, and employees of nonprofit organizations or small businesses. Greatest dodge of all is a provision in many states that a woman must be doing exactly the same job as a man.

That's hard to prove. A saleswoman in a clothing store thought she had a good case for collecting the same salary as the salesmen. She did the same work as the salesmen, and she sold more clothes. But the store's lawyers brought out that she couldn't measure male customers for trousers—so she lost.

A beauty parlor, however, found that it couldn't get away with paying women less by calling the men "hair stylists" and the women "operators." The girls showed the work was the same and collected $2,700 in back pay.

A Michigan firm argued that its women employees should have less pay because they had two fifteen-minute rest periods a day and a special restroom. But the judge ruled that since the women had to turn out the same quantity and quality of work as the men, they deserved the same salary.

The Campaign to Plug Loopholes

The women who put over the equal-pay laws are now working to plug up the loopholes. They want the laws to require equal pay for *comparable* work, with no such technicalities as *identical* work.

All over the world women come out on the short end of the pay roll. English women have more cause to complain than American women, and they've been doing it, loud and long. A royal commission investigated and reported that the reason women workers were paid less than men was because they were less efficient. In the uproar that followed, 500 women stormed the House of Commons demanding equal pay, and police were rushed in to protect the members of Parliament.

No commission in this country has dared report that American women are less efficient. American women could cite too many cases proving just the opposite. An electronics firm that rated all women's jobs at two-thirds the pay-roll value of men's jobs admitted to the War Labor Board: "If men were to be substituted for women on the so-called women's jobs, there would probably be a very real loss in efficiency and productivity."

But there's a problem that looms even larger: inequality of opportunity.

Women simply don't get the important jobs. A man reaches the peak of his earnings at the age of fifty. A woman reaches hers between thirty-five and forty-five, and the peak isn't so high.

You can't force an employer to promote a woman instead of a man. Fair or not, the only way women will ever get a crack at the top jobs is the hard way—on their own.

But they've already come a long way on their own, and there's no reason to believe that there won't be a lot more high heels firmly planted on the top of the employment heap in the next few years. It was only a generation ago that a woman doctor was considered a freak, women who pioneered in law were being told to go back to their kitchens, and a woman executive was almost unheard of.

Until 1917, women who worked were the exception. They clustered in a few occupations—teachers, salesladies, "typewriter girls," and factory workers.

The shortage of men during World War I opened opportunities to women in business and industry, and World War II opened still more fields, even the armed forces. Industrially, it completed the transformation of Bertha the Sewing Machine Girl into Rosie the Riveter, capable and unabashed by "men's work."

Few women are aware of laws making it illegal to discriminate against them.

When women first started to work, the only way they could get jobs was to work for less. Now commerce and industry can't get along without them. As much as women need jobs today, jobs need women still more.

Several more states are now considering equal-pay laws. But meantime, a greater law is working to iron out this injustice to women—the old unbeatable law of supply and demand. THE END

The Last Word

FORDS AND DODGES

Detroit, Michigan: In the June issue, I note an article "The Model-T Jackpot." I do not object to any article written about Mr. John Francis Dodge, but it

John Dodge

John F. Dodge

seems only right that there should be a picture of Mr. John Francis Dodge and not *any* John Dodge. The photograph you ran was not of John F. Dodge, the brother of Horace Dodge.

—MATILDA K. WILSON
FORMERLY MRS. JOHN FRANCIS DODGE

Sorry. The correct John Francis Dodge is shown above (right). We must have stripped our gears. —The Editors

THE WHITE HOUSE

Boyce, Virginia: Your discerning article "Who Really Runs the White House" [July] I have read with great interest. You have presented a side of White House life of which the general public knows nothing.

I appreciate the pleasant references you have made about me and my White House career. —EDITH HELM
FORMER SOCIAL SECRETARY OF THE WHITE HOUSE

NATURAL CHILDBIRTH

Visalia, California: I want to congratulate you for your wonderful article "The Case for Natural Childbirth" [July]. I had my second child the natural way. It was a great experience. It is about time the public was educated to natural childbirth. —MRS. GENEVA PHILPOT

CLOWN KELLY

Coral Gables, Florida: Please send me a reprint of the color picture of Emmett Kelly as offered in the June issue.

—MRS. H. GEORGE FINK

Rochester, New York: We intend to frame these for our YMCA branches.

—WELDON HESTON

Whittier, California: These are wonderful for the classroom.

—RICHARD G. BURRESS

The popularity of the full-color reproduction of the painting of Emmett Kelly

Emmett Kelly

prompts us to offer it once more. For a reprint suitable for framing, send 25 cents to Dept. C-653, 959 Eighth Avenue, New York 19. —The Editors

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Looking into October

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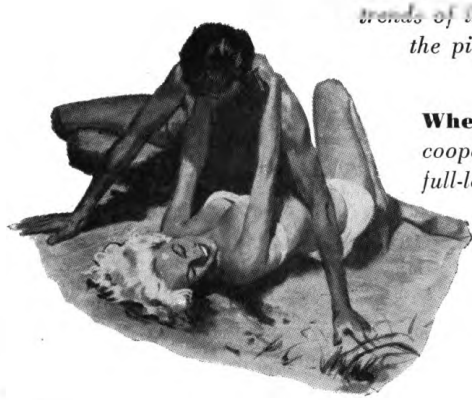

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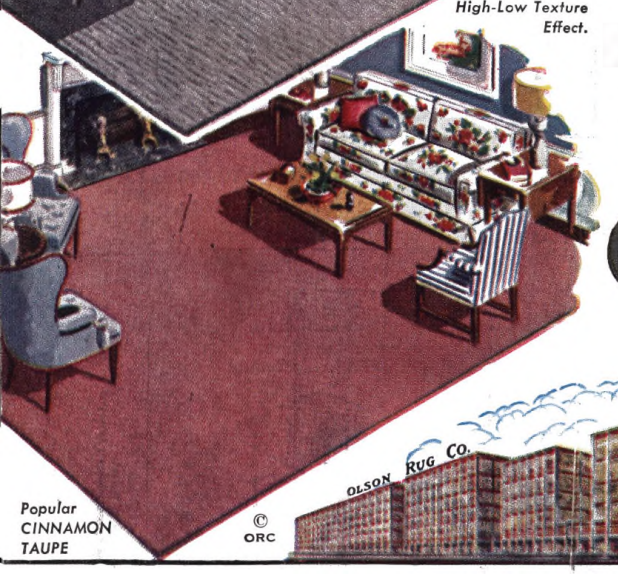

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