

OCT. 25¢

*Spicy*

# DETECTIVE

STORIES



**DANCE HALL DOOM**

*by C. C. Spruce*

# Spicy DETECTIVE STORIES



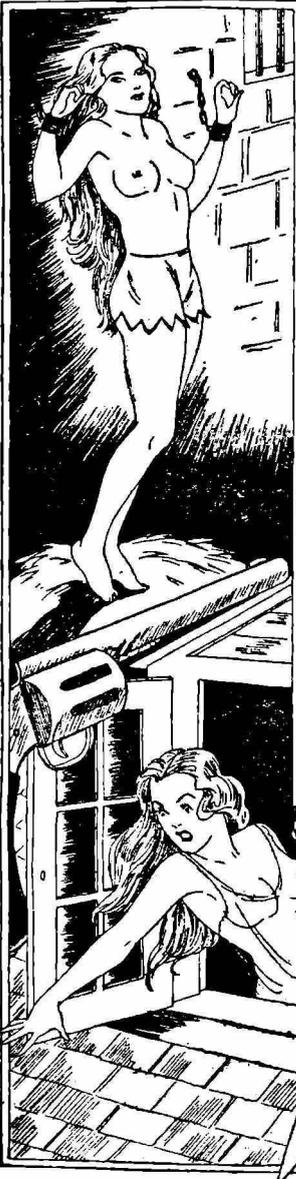
October, 1935

Vol. 3, No. 6

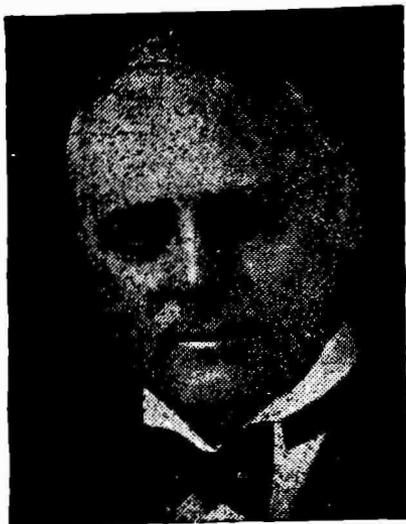
## CONTENTS

- ✓ DANCE HALL DOOM..... 6  
*C. C. Spruce*
- DEATH'S BRIGHT HALO... 18  
*Robert Leslie Bellem*
- LOVE IS A CANNIBAL..... 30  
*John Bard*
- A HUNDRED GRAND..... 38  
*Mort Lansing*
- THE MAN WHO WAS  
HANGED..... 46  
*Colby Quinn*
- SALLY THE SLEUTH..... 54  
*Barreaux*
- CRIME CAMPAIGN ..... 56  
*Frank E. Marks*
- INDISCREET CORPSE ..... 68  
*Ken Cooper*
- DEATH RIDES AT ANCHOR 80  
*Jerome Severs Perry*

SPICY DETECTIVE STORIES is published by  
the CULTURE PUBLICATIONS, INC., 900  
Market Street, Wilmington, Delaware.



# NEW GLAN HEALT FOR ME PAST 40



Scientist's Discovery  
Re-Stimulates Im-  
portant Prostate Gland

**Used by Anyone at Home . . . Brings Am-  
Relief from Getting Up Nights and  
Other Weakening Symptoms**

**W**OULD you like to again enjoy life with youthful strength and health? Now science has made an amazing discovery for you—a new home treatment for the prostate gland—a most essential gland in men.

Do you suffer night risings—pains in back, legs and feet—fits of weakness and discouragement? These symptoms are traced in untold thousands of men past 40 to decline of this vital prostate gland. Now comes Thermalaid. No drugs, diets or exercises. Safe and easy as washing your face. Endorsed and used by many doctors. Used by over 100,000 men; thousands praise it in glowing reports. Sent on trial with this understanding: If you don't feel ten years younger in 7 days, you pay nothing. Write for offer and daring free book of facts for men past 40.

W. J. KIRK, Pres.,

The Electro Thermal Company

3194 Morris Ave.

Steubenville, Ohio.

**Confidential  
Book . . FREE**



W. J. KIRK, Pres.,  
The Electro Thermal Co.,  
3194 Morris Ave.,  
Steubenville, Ohio.

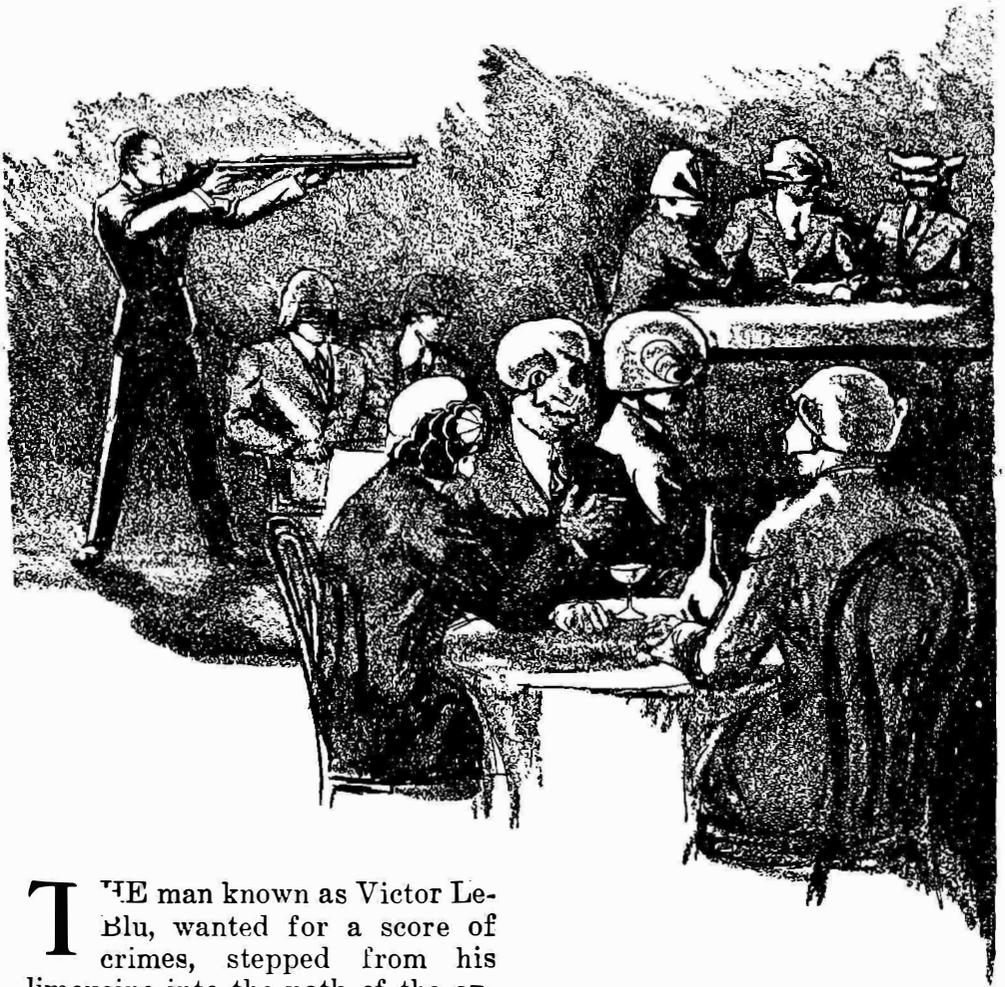
Without obligation to me, send my copy of your confidential book "Why Many Men Are Old at 40," with details of your simple home treatment for prostate gland weakness and 7-day Trial Offer.

Name.....  
Address.....  
City.....State.....

If you live west of the Rockies, address The Electro Thermal Co., 500 Win. Fox Building, Dept. 31-B, Los Angeles, California. In Canada address The Electro Thermal Co., Des Yonge St., Toronto, Canada.

# DANCE HALL

*Girls were the stakes on this great gambling wheel, and for his last night on earth the detective was permitted to try his luck*



**T**HE man known as Victor Le-Blu, wanted for a score of crimes, stepped from his limousine into the path of the approaching girl.

"I beg your pardon," he said in his hoarse, curiously muffled voice. His quick eyes noted the street was deserted.

"What do you want?" She qua-

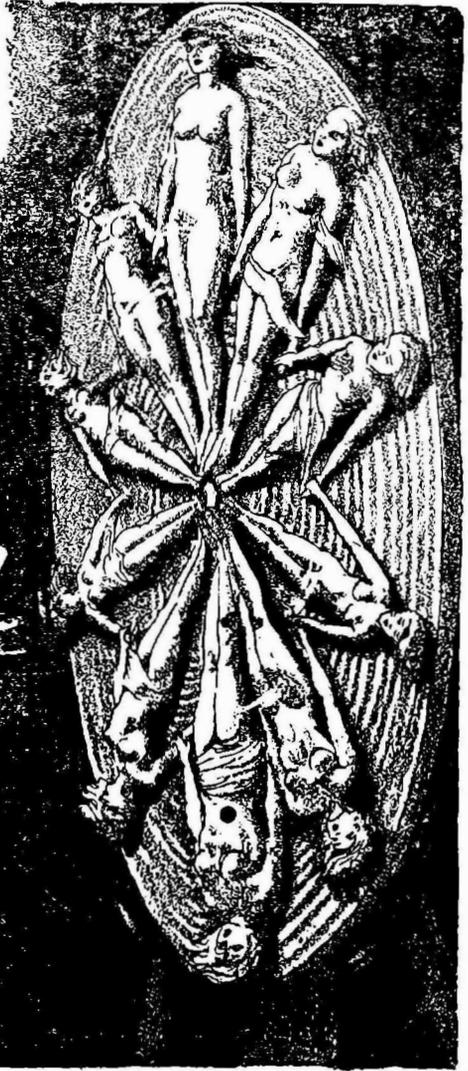
vered. Then she saw his mask. She started to scream.

Hands clamped over her mouth. She stopped struggling as if paralyzed with fear. Suddenly one of

# DOOM

By C. C. SPRUCE

*The detective aimed. It was hard to draw a bead on Sally.*



the man's hands swept downward, ripping away the whole front of her dress.

She began to struggle then. Her movements only served to accentuate the beauty of her body. Breasts tumbled from the tatters of her clothing. Even in the murky glow of that dimly lighted street, even in the hideous terror of that moment, it was a body of breath-taking perfection.

LeBlu spoke in his hoarse mutter. "You. It is you I want. I need

you for my dance hall." As he spoke, he cupped one rounded breast in a black gloved hand. It rested there like some jewel on the velvet of a display case.

A man spoke from the dark interior of the car. "The police, master. They are warned."

LeBlu laughed. He whipped cords from his pocket for the girl's wrists, adhesive tape for her mouth. Almost before the sound of his evil laughter had died away he and the girl were in the back seat. The limousine pulled away silently.

Victor LeBlu looked back. A long, powerful car swung around the corner, matching its speed to that of the sedan. He leaned forward and tapped the ape-like shoulder of the driver.

A hairy hand pulled an ear phone from one ear.

"Well?" asked LeBlu.

"It is as you said, master. Detective Horn is in the car following us. The orders are for us to pass to our destination undisturbed. All roads are closed in case the following car is lost."

Victor LeBlu nodded. "See that our friend Horn does *not* get lost, Axel."

**T**HE chauffeur grunted, slipped the ear phone back into position. The car surged forward, keeping to semi-deserted streets on the way out of town.

LeBlu turned his attention again to the girl. Above the cruel strip of adhesive tape her blue eyes stared at him piteously. Her hat had been lost in the scuffle and her blonde hair was tumbled around

her face. LeBlu brushed it back with a gloved hand that was deceptively gentle. He turned on another dome light. "The better to see you with, my dear," came his ingratiating, hoarse whisper.

She tried to writhe so that her body might be more covered. Her bound hands twisted. Her efforts were useless. LeBlu had ripped her garments too well. The rounded, curving stomach, the luscious thighs rippled with the play of muscles beneath clear skin. Her breasts rose and fell with her frantic breathing.

Victor LeBlu's hand closed on her arm with a force that stopped all her movements.

His hoarse voice carried a snarl of hate. "And as for you, Miss Detective Sally Morgan!" He watched her blue eyes open wide with surprise. "Of course, I know you! I know, too, that you *were* bait for a police trap. Notice I use the past tense?"

"You are still bait, but the situation is changed! Through you, I will show the meddling police what they may expect from me. From me, Victor LeBlu!"

**I**N THE pursuing car, Detective Jim Horn hunched over the wheel. His eyes were glued on the red and green tail-lights of the limousine. His ears were filled with half-heard orders from the police radio. From time to time he snapped a few terse words into his transmitter as the first car changed its course.

Jim Horn was worried.

This night marked the fruition of months of planning. Ever since

the abduction of the first girl the entire force had been looking for the mysterious kidnapers who chose only dancers for their victims—and never asked for ransom! Fourteen such cases were on record. Fourteen young, beautiful dancers without family, who had disappeared as if the earth had swallowed them.

Even the police had to admit they did not know how many others had been unreported. They had to admit they had absolutely no clue. They spoke of LeBlu.

The newspapers scoffed at that, pointing out that every unsolved crime committed during the last few years had been laid to the door of that mysterious and, as they thought, mythical figure.

Desperate, the police had hit upon a desperate plan. Sally Morgan, Follies dancer, had agreed. Jim Horn had objected at the time. He had known Sally nearly all her life, had kept an eye on her when her family died and she had to make her own way in the world. Sally laughed at his fears, had insisted on making the attempt to find her sisters of the foot-lights.

Theoretically, Jim Horn should have been delighted at the success of the scheme so far. In spite of the skeptics at headquarters who had pointed out the number of girls in show business, and the improbability of a certain one being kidnaped, it had happened.

Yet now, as Jim's high-powered car burrowed through the night, he felt it had been entirely too easy. He couldn't put his finger on anything very definite, but something was wrong. Things moved too

smoothly. It was too simple—this trailing of a car with one red and one green tail-light! The abductor had been almost too brazen, as if he knew the police wanted him to lead them to the spot where the other girls had been taken!

Jim Horn's lips set. He tried not to think what might have happened to those girls, tried not to think of the girl who had been bundled into that speeding limousine. He tried to give his whole attention to his duties.

Suddenly he slapped on the brakes. He had just reported his position so he could concentrate on the strange actions of the car ahead.

IT SLOWED, seemed about to come to a complete halt, and then swerved from the rain road to the right. Jim started speaking into his transmitter. His receiving set began a discordant buzzing, then broke into blaring jazz. The words of the police announcer could not break through that barrier of sound.

Jim Horn told his position. He knew he was doing that in vain. Someone was broadcasting on the carefully guarded secret wave length the police had decided to use. Jim knew what that meant. The wave length had been changed every day, was not given out until the officers went on duty. It meant that the kidnapers were well informed. It meant—

Jim Horn cursed. It meant a leak somewhere in the department. It might mean death to Sally Morgan. He did not think of him-

self, he, the only one who knew of this last turn-off!

Jim Horn swung his car from the road. He stopped long enough to toss a few articles from the car, then accelerated in pursuit of the limousine.

For fully an hour the strange chase went on while the police radio emitted nothing but jazz. True, Jim tried many different wave lengths on his transmitter. Someone he knew would catch his signals. Yet there would be a delay—.

The car ahead rumbled across a bridge. Now Jim could catch the tang of salt air in his nostrils. He started across the bridge slowly. His foot jammed down hard on the throttle. The car fairly leaped across timbers that were shaking now as if in a high wind. The whole bridge jumped and swayed.

His front wheels hit hard road just as the structure slipped into the river with a grinding crash of timbers. Rear wheels ground into soft earth, spun—then caught. The car seemed to be clawing for a foothold. Slowly, slowly, it began slipping backward. A patch of gravel gave it impetus. It lurched to the roadbed, stopped in safety.

Jim Horn mopped his forehead. He turned to look back at the wreckage which had so nearly been his grave.

Horn sensed rather than saw the shadowy figures darting toward him from either side. His fingers closed on his service thirty-eight just as a blackjack caught him on the temple.

**H**ORN lay motionless for a while after he recovered consciousness. Hearing no sound, he ventured to open his eyes to slits. A preliminary survey convinced him that he was alone in the small, brilliantly lighted room.

He swung his stocky body to a sitting position. He stifled a groan, fought down nausea. His head was whirling like a top. His teeth sunk into his lip. His grey eyes glared redly from his face. The pallor of his skin emphasized his heavy beard.

Horn never had laid any claims to beauty. Now the streak of blood down one side of his usually good-natured face gave him an especially villainous look. Still in his middle thirties, his years on the force gave him the appearance of greater age.

There wasn't much in the room to see. The bare walls, ceiling and floor were white. The only article of furniture was the bed on which he had been stretched out. It was clamped in place.

"Humph," Horn muttered. "I'm not even tied. Looks like nobody's much afraid of my getting away." Unconsciously he had spoken aloud.

"Quite right, my friend Detective Horn. Quite right." The hoarse voice seemed so close that Jim jumped.

"Victor LeBlu!" he snapped.

"By my voice—you know me. It is pleasant to be so famous."

"Yeah," snapped Horn. "Some day we'll know you so well you'll take a squat on the hot seat."

"Perhaps," came the unruffled voice. "But you at least will not

*Her struggles  
only accentuated  
her beauty.*



be present at that unfortunate occurrence."

"You never can tell," Jim retorted. His eyes were flicking

around the room, trying to find the source of the voice. His muscles were knotted with his desire to spring on LeBlu.

"You cannot get at me," Victor continued. "You cannot see me, you can only hear. I take the advantage. I know every move you make."

Horn stretched back onto the bed. "All right. Maybe you'd like to sing me a lullaby."

"Before you go to sleep—and it may be a deep, deep sleep, I should warn you that you are in a gas chamber. One push of a button on the control board beside me and you—well, you can guess."

Horn yawned. "I don't like guessing games," he said.

"And your little friend, Miss Morgan? What of her? Will you think of her as you drop off into a last sleep?"

Jim sat up again. "Damn you," he said flatly.

"Exactly," chuckled LeBlu.

Horn thought. "Well—what's on your mind? You aren't keeping me from—from my rest, just to pass the time of day."

"Quite right. Before I go any further I should warn you of one thing. Doubtless you left some word or sign when you turned off the road, just before the radio became so unfortunately blurred.

"Please do not count on that to bring aid here. You remember the bridge that so strangely collapsed? Well, it is properly guarded now by workmen. County employees—at least they look like county employees—with red lanterns and everything. They will report that no car has passed this way.

"You understand? Your friends can cruise around all night without locating this place. It is well hidden. You understand?"

JIM HORN did understand. Police cars approaching the fallen bridge would be turned back. Why should they imagine their quarry had crossed? Probably the one road by which this place could be reached was blocked. "I understand," he said.

"Good! You must die, of course. That is certain. But I am in a liberal mood tonight. You must die, you and Miss Morgan, so that your bodies may be shipped back to headquarters. But I am willing to grant you an evening's entertainment first. Perhaps even with the charming Miss Morgan."

"If what?" Horn wanted to know.

"If you will not create a disturbance among my guests."

Horn stood up. "Sounds easy," he admitted. "What've I got to lose?" He kept all emotion from his face, yet one ray of hope remained to him. "When do we start?"

"Right now," a guttural voice said.

Horn whirled around to face the ape-like chauffeur.

"You will notice." LeBlu's voice continued, "that Axel wears no mask. If the faces of the rest of my guests are covered, do not imagine that it is because I fear your escape. Oh, no. There are other reasons, as you shall see. Now please follow Axel."

Horn followed the chauffeur through the panel.

He was ready for almost anything but what he saw. A short corridor led from the gas-chamber. It opened on a large, high-ceilinged room softly illuminated

by indirect lighting. A modernistic black and chromium bar, bladed with tables and chairs, filled one end of the room.

At first glance it was a peaceful, usual scene. Men were leaning against the bar, men occupied some of the tables. They were drinking, smoking, talking, laughing. Everything seemed so usual—until Horn got a glimpse of their faces.

Those faces!

Tough as he was, Jim Horn shuddered. Every head was bald, misshapened, huge. Eyes seemed set too far back in those strange heads. Cheekbones and foreheads protruded or receded horribly.

Horn sucked in a deep breath. He remembered LeBlu's remarks about masks. These grotesque things were merely coverings fitting over the tops of each man's head, covering eyes and nose, but leaving the mouth free. Certainly no one could ever be recognized! No wonder they felt free to talk and drink with one another!

Horn walked over to a table, sat down, and helped himself to a copious drink from a bottle. He coughed, and had another. He felt better.

"Gentlemen!" That was LeBlu's voice.

This time Horn could see the amplifier. He stared at it as if he could discover some inkling of LeBlu's whereabouts.

"Gentlemen," LeBlu continued. "We have with us this evening a visitor. A detective."

A grumble which had greeted the first announcement rose to a first. Certainly that sound left

Horn in no doubt as to his popularity here. Everyone was glaring at him. The detective returned those glares coolly. He counted seventeen men.

LEBLU demanded silence. "Of course our friend shall not live to see the day. But I thought we might add a spice to our usual entertainment. You see, he is a dear friend of the new addition to our dance hall. I propose we give him a first shot—. Give him a chance to win the right of spending his last hours with his lady. What do you say, gentlemen?"

Apparently the idea appealed to the perverted fancies of those assembled. It all sounded like Greek to Horn, but he was willing to do anything for a chance to see Sally, willing to prolong indefinitely that time when he must—. He shook his head resolutely. No use thinking of that. He wasn't dead yet.

LeBlu continued. "I take it you agree. Give him a rifle. Let the dancing wheel be lowered!"

Horn couldn't believe his ears. "Give him a rifle?" If they did—!

He didn't have time to speculate. He just stared.

One end of the room was undergoing a transformation. The "wheel" was being lowered. Once again that horrid sense of familiarity came to Horn. This wheel was like those he had seen so often in booths at carnivals. He could almost hear the voices of the barkers, "Step up, gents, and try your luck. Hit the lucky number. Win your prize, gents. Step up and win your prize."

Jim Horn clenched his hands.

Perspiration trickled down inside his collar. This certainly was no carnival.

The huge wheel, measuring at least twelve feet in diameter, was divided into sections. In each section was a woman.

Gay streamers of gauzy material were their only covering. Flimsy drapes that fluttered and moved in some weird breeze. Silken banners that hid, or revealed, each woman's body from time to time.

Jim Horn swore.

Ten nearly nude women were fastened there. He got the impression of gleaming bare skin that matched in texture the revealing streamers. Bare breasts, thighs, shapely limbs. A "fortune" wheel—with women as the prizes!

He saw Sally Morgan.

She, like the rest, was tied spread-eagle in position on the wheel. She, too, was covered only by the ever-moving draperies. The pallor of her face, the sweetness of her body, displayed a fury to Jim Horn that left him cold as ice. When he spoke, his voice seemed to come from a distance.

"And now what?"

LeBlu's voice answered. "You will be given a rifle. When the wheel is revolving, you will fire. You will have as a companion for your last hours on earth, the woman you hit!"

**T**HE enormity of the suggestion nearly drove Horn into a maniacal fury that would not have stopped save with his death. He fought for control. He had to keep cool. He had to save Sally some

way! He—he was her only hope. And if there was no hope it was better that she die from a rifle bullet—.

The "rifle" was thrust into his hands.

Even though he should have suspected, Horn glared at the toy he held. It was a species of airgun which fired a stick with a vacuum rubber end. It would stick to whatever it hit. It would stick—to some unharmed woman.

Horn ground his teeth and stepped forward to the spot Axel designated. He tried to smile reassuringly at Sally. His hands clenched fiercely on the miniature gun when she smiled bravely in return.

The wheel began to revolve.

At first it moved slowly. Gradually the bodies, heads, limbs, breasts and arms of the women became an indistinct blur of gleaming flesh and gay streamers.

"Shoot!" snapped Axel.

Jim Horn went through the motions of raising the flimsy thing to his shoulder. He aimed, trying to follow the streamers colored like those Sally had been wearing. He pulled the trigger.

The wheel slowed down.

Slowly, slowly, each woman became distinct again. Jim Horn was dizzy with trying to follow its revolutions, trying to see where his missile had gone. He had some little idea of the torture those ten women underwent each time that dancing wheel was spun!

The wheel stopped.

Jim's eager eyes found Sally. His glance swept her from pale face to feet. There was no rubber-

ipped stick adhering to her body.  
 "Detective Horn wins number  
 seven," came LeBlu's voice again.  
 Only then did Horn notice his



*With his own hands he lifted  
 Sally from the wheel.*

missile fastened to the skin of a voluptuous black-headed woman.

He snapped a curse. "Sally!" he snarled. "I'm coming for you, Sally! I'm—"

That was as far as he got. The whole world, the planets, and all the constellations seemed to descend on his head.

**H**E COULDN'T have been out more than a few seconds. He was conscious when they half-carried him from that room, back through the corridor. They went far down that long hallway. A door opened.

Jim tried then to make some sort of a fight. He could only stagger limply across the room. He sank down in a luxurious chair. Blackness came again for a few moments.

A persistent voice was calling, "Jim Horn! Detective Jim Horn!"

He struggled to his feet, only half conscious, still trying to find some face to crunch with his balled fist.

"Jim Horn!" the voice repeated.

By its insistence it cleared the detective's head. His eyes, which had been glazed, began to focus again. He made out the figure of the dark-haired woman. She was sitting upright on the bed. Her body was half hidden by the silken coverings.

"Jim Horn," she repeated. Her face was strained, yet she managed to keep that even quality in her voice. A sane, even quality.

Horn grunted, shook his head. "I'm all right now, sister." He didn't waste any more time on her then. He raced around the room looking for some possible exit. There was a narrow slip of a window, and apparently no door at all. Jim stopped before the window. It was heavily barred and too small to permit passage of a human body even if it had not looked down on a sheer rocky cliff that fell into the sea. Heavy surf boiled at its foot.

"It's no use, Jim," the woman said. "You can't get out. The door can be opened only from the out-

side. It is that third panel." She pointed.

Jim Horn hurled his bulk across the room. The panel gave but did not break. Jim only made the one effort—then. He reeled back and sat down beside the woman.

"You're Vera Travers, aren't you?"

The woman smiled wryly. "I was," she said. "I'm number seven—now. I have been here for several weeks—years—I don't know how long."

"Well, Vera," said Jim, "you may be out tonight!"

She looked at him. She laughed bitterly. "Not a chance," she said. She moved a trifle closer. The coverings slipped down to her waist. She raised her soft arms pleadingly. Her breasts, the tempting warmth of her body and lips were very close and very enticing.

"You haven't a chance, Jim," she said softly. "I know. In a few hours they will come for you. You will die then. Why not spend your last few hours pleasantly? For the first time I will accept a man—willingly. We—we ten girls talked it over when we learned—what was to happen. We agreed to make your last hours—happy. Come closer to me, Jim. Kiss me—. Forget everything else in the short time you have. Kiss me, Jim—."

One of the man's hands strayed toward the woman as if moving with life of its own. Vera trembled as his fingers caressed her gently.

Yet when Horn spoke his voice was low, unconcerned with everything save his question, "Did—did

Sally agree to what you have just said?"

"Yes. Of course. She knew. She wanted you—. What in the world are you doing?"

**H**ORN had jumped to his feet. He ripped off the silk coverings, leaving Vera only a sheer sheet. He pulled the stuffing from the easy chair. He pulled up the grass rugs. In a short time that room looked as if a cyclone had struck it. And all the wreckage was piled against one wall. A wooden wall!

"What—what are you going to do?" Vera asked. For the first time there was a quaver in her voice.

"Listen, Vera, how long does that shooting usually take downstairs?"

"A long time. You see, the men bid for the right to shoot next. They are all as wealthy as they are depraved. LeBlu must make a fortune from this place. And the new girls—the ones he abducts from time to time—bring the highest prices. You understand?"

Jim nodded grimly. His hands opened and closed. "There were only ten," he reminded.

Vera nodded. "Some die. Some kill themselves—. You—can—guess—." She shuddered, hid her face in her hands.

"Where does this Victor LeBlu hide out?"

"I don't know. One of the girls says there is a little room just above the bar. It is built into the wall."

"O. K. Now listen. I'm going to set fire to this dump. There are

probably a hundred police cars within fifty miles of here. They'll see the blaze and they'll investigate." Horn laughed grimly. "They'll be glad to have something to look into if I know my coppers. You get the idea?"

"After you set fire to this room, then what? You going to stay in here and roast?"

"No. I can break that door down. Probably we won't get far, but at least we'll have a run for our money."

Vera considered. "We haven't been up here very long. I doubt if there's been another shot made yet." She shrugged her shoulders. "All right. Light your bonfire."

Horn struck the match. "This place ought to go up like tinder. The walls here are old as time."

Vera shuddered. "I hope so," she muttered strangely.

Horn came back and sat down on the bed. "We'll wait until it really catches before we break out. We don't want it put out." He watched the flames eagerly. They licked up greedily and with surprisingly little smoke. Yet in a few seconds the air in the room was choking.

Horn coughed. "Maybe we'd better go now," he suggested. "You get up and be ready to run when I break down the door."

"Good-by," said Vera calmly. "I'm not going anywhere."

Horn stared at her. "What do you mean?"

She threw back the clinging sheet, with no thought of the allurements such motions dis-

*(Continued on page 96)*

# DEATH'S

By ROBERT LESLIE  
BELLEM



**I**T WAS raining, and I was in a hurry. I was in my coupe, getting ready to pull out from the curb, when Sammy Weissmann hopped on my running board and poked his head inside the car.

I didn't like Sammy Weissmann. He was fat; he was greasy; and he

smelled of garlic. In his day he'd been one of Hollywood's ace agents; had handled the business of plenty of stars and near-stars. But in recent months he'd hit the skids. Now he was breathing garlic in my kisser and saying, "Listen, Dan Turner. I'll give you a

# BRIGHT HALO

*Those necklaces  
were as effective as  
a headman's axe.  
To pierce their se-  
cret Dan Turner  
finds his way into  
the house of miss-  
ing girls*

*Even as I  
watched, the  
m a s k e d  
man threw  
a switch.*



hundred clams to find Lorna McFee for me.”

I shook my head and said, “No soap, Sammy. I’m taking a little

vacation from the sleuthing business.”

Sammy said, “But, damn it, man, you’ve got to find her for me! I need her! N-D-N Studios have agreed to cast her in a swell role. It means dough in my pocket—and God knows I can use it! But Lorna McFee’s disappeared off the face of the earth!”

"She'll probably turn up in a day or so," I told him. "Maybe she's out on a bender. Give her a chance to sober up."

Sammy said, "You know damned well Lorna McFee isn't that sort!" He glared at me indignantly.

AS A MATTER of fact, he was right. Lorna McFee was a cute little brunette who'd recently begun to make a rep for herself in pictures. There was no trace of scandal in her private life. She didn't drink, didn't smoke, didn't run around promiscuously. But, hell! Looking for a missing dame in Hollywood is like trying to find a drop of butter in a kettle of boiling lard.

Several obscure film cuties had dropped out of sight recently; and Lorna McFee was just another name added to the list, as far as I was concerned. Besides, Sammy Weissmann had offered me only a hundred berries. It wasn't enough—and I knew he couldn't afford more.

So I slipped into reverse and gunned my engine. I said, "Sorry, Sammy. Be seeing you."

He had to scam off my running board to keep from having the keel of his pants scraped by the fender of an adjoining parked car. I heard him yell, "Damn you, Turner—I'll fix you for this!" He sounded plenty sore. He had a nasty temper anyhow.

I headed for Santa Monica Boulevard through the afternoon traffic. I was on my way to spend an evening with Jeff Truman, the extinct Western star. Once in a

while Jeff and I got together for a little Scotch-fest. I liked to drink with him because his capacity was the same as mine. We both usually passed out at the same moment, so that neither of us had to stay awake and listen to the other one snoring.

Jeff Truman had a beach house in an isolated section beyond Pacific Palisades, where he lived the year around. He hadn't worked in pictures for a long time. Contract trouble; all the studios had abolished him. Which struck me as a damned shame, because Jeff could out-ride, out-shoot, and out-act most of the he-men on the screen.

After a while I hit the town of Santa Monica and headed up the Coast Highway. And then things began to happen.

As a Hollywood private dick, I've heard of nudists and seen plenty of nuts. But nudists usually do their nuding in the good old summertime. They don't ordinarily go running across a rain-drenched strip of deserted beach in the middle of December, minus every stitch of clothing. Not even in Southern California. December in Southern California gets pretty damned cold.

Therefore, I decided, the dame who came racing stark naked toward me through the storm-soaked twilight must be bughouse.

But she didn't look screwy. She just looked scared as hell. As she got closer I saw that she was either a Chink or a Jap—anyhow, an Asiatic of some sort. She was young, and she was plenty good-looking. Her rounded little breasts

were too solid to jounce very much as she ran; and her ivory body was slender without being skinny.

She wasn't wearing a cockeyed thing except a silvery necklace of some sort. And a necklace isn't much protection when the thermometer is down around forty and the clouds are pouring potfuls of rain all over creation's deck.

**I** SLAPPED on my brakes and took a good gander at the gal. Naked Oriental women racing across deserted beaches aren't exactly numerous; and I've got my share of natural curiosity. The almond-eyed dame's wet black hair streamed out behind her like a dark banner; and when she spotted me in my jalopy she let loose an ear-splitting beef and swerved across the beach toward me.

I said, "What the hell!" and nose-dived out of my hack, forgetting to pick up my automatic roscoe which was on the seat alongside me. I could see that the Oriental frail was in trouble. She was running away from something that had scared the wadding out of her.

Her foot prints were crimson blotches in the wet sand, as though her feet had been lacerated by the sharp rock-particles. She swayed, tottered as she ran; and her trail led back toward a pretentious beach house near the ocean.

I recognized the house. It had been the summer home of Sammy Weissmann, the agent who had hung to my running board back in Hollywood an hour before. But the sheriff had taken the place away from Sammy. Money trouble.

The slant-eyed cutie was near

me now. And she was yelling her lungs out. I couldn't see anybody chasing her; but my hand dived for the .32 automatic I always carry in a shoulder-holster. Then I remembered I'd left the roscoe in my coupe.

Before I could spin around to get it, something happened. The Oriental dame stiffened in her tracks. Her hands went to that silvery necklace around her ivory throat. She clawed at the thing—tried to unfasten it. And then I noticed that *the necklace was beginning to glow like a blue halo!*

It seemed to be sputtering and spitting sparks. A puff of wind drifted toward me, bearing a wisp of smoke.

I smelled it. *It was the odor of roasting flesh!*

I've watched plenty of hoods getting blisters put in their pants in the electric chair. I know the characteristic, sickening odor.

I started running like hell toward the slant-eyed dame. But she didn't have a chance. I couldn't have saved her if I'd been Buddha. Before I could reach the girl, the blue-crackling necklace was an eye-blinding circle of luminous fire. The girl went down, writhing. And then her head fell off.

It rolled almost to my feet. Its almond eyes stared up at me and blinked, horribly. Reflex muscular action, of course. The severed head didn't bleed; neither did the decapitated corpse. Seared, roasted flesh doesn't bleed, any more than a well-cooked steak.

**I** STOOD there for a paralyzed instant, feeling sick. I had seen

death strike from nowhere, and I was plenty dazed. Then I heard a roaring sound behind me.

I whirled around. And then I jumped. My jalopy was a raging inferno of flames. Something told me to duck. I did. I was just in time. I went flat on my smeller in the sand, just as the fire reached my car's gas-tank. There came a *pfoof!* and a hell of a roar. That was my last seven gallons of ethyl all going off at once.

A cupful of the stuff smacked me in the arm, set fire to my sleeve. I rolled in the sand to put it out. Then I felt a single hell-hot spot of pain on the calf of each of my legs, under my trousers.

I slapped at myself, yanked up my pants-legs. The metal clasps of my garters were blackened, melted; and there were great big blisters on my flesh, as if I'd been broiled.

All of a sudden I was glad I didn't have any loose change in my pockets; glad I'd left my keys and my roscoe in my coupe. Because I suddenly realized that if I'd had any great amount of metal on me, I'd have been charred to a cinder. Somehow, from nowhere, the rain-murky dusk was charged with high-voltage electricity . . . and the death-dealing juice had hit the Asiatic girl's metal necklace, burned her head off her shoulders! Also, it had melted my jalopy into a crumpled mass of molten tin.

I got a grip on myself and staggered to my pins. I looked around me, trying to get my bearings. I needed a drink in the worst way—but my bottle of Vat 69 was in the burning wreck of my coupe. And I

wouldn't go that near hell for a drink, no matter how thirsty I was!

I started running up the highway through the gathering gloom. Behind me, the burning flames of my hack painted the dusk with leaping, hellish crimson light. I raced around a bend in the deserted road, there the Palisades jutted out. And then I saw Jeff Truman's little house.

It was a comfortable bungalow. A light glowed in the living-room window. I hammered hell out of my knuckles on the front door. After a while it opened. Jeff Truman stood there, munching a salami sandwich which would add a little more to the belly-pod he was already beginning to accumulate.

Jeff said, "For God's sake! Sherlock Holmes in person. Why didn't you let me know you were coming? And where in hell have you been?"

I said, "You guessed it, Jeff. I just came from hell. It's down the road about a quarter of a mile."

Jeff Truman stared at me suspiciously. "You're drunk. You didn't play fair. You got a head start on me!" he complained.

I said, "I'm not drunk. Something just set fire to my go-buggy. And the same something electrocuted a Chink dame. She was running across the beach, mother-naked. A shot of juice hit her and roasted the head off her shoulders!"

Jeff Truman grinned. "What about the vermilion turtles and the purple elephants?"

I blew my breath in his pan to

prove I wasn't tanked up. "For God's sake, get serious!" I told him. "Let me at your phone. The county cops have got to be notified."

He said, "Take it easy, Turner. Wait till I get a raincoat. I want to see this decapitated cadaver before we start calling for the cops." He crammed his sandwich into his face, grabbed a slicker, slipped into it. Then the pair of us lammed for the road.

**WE ROUNDED** that jutting bend. My jalopy was just a twisted heap of red-glowing junk

*Smoke rose from  
her neck and I  
smelled roasting  
flesh.*



by that time, and there was no more daylight. Jeff Truman said, "Well, you were right about your car burning up. But where's the naked corpse?"

"Right over here!" I told him. I led him to the spot. And then I said, "For God's sake!"

The naked Chinese girl's body had disappeared!

There was no sign of it; no trace of the severed head. Furthermore, there were no footprints around the spot—except my own!

"So she picked up her head, fastened it on with a hatpin, and flew

through the air like a bird!" Jeff Truman grinned at me.

"Good God, man!" I rasped at him. "There's been a murder here—and you crack bum jokes!" I grabbed his arm, dragged him a little farther. "Look!" I said. "There's the dame's naked footprints in the sand!" I hauled out my flashlight, snapped it on.

Jeff Truman looked. Then he cut loose with a laugh. "Those aren't human footprints, you dope!" he chuckled. "Have another squint!"

I did. And then I saw that the marks weren't human. It was as if they'd been made by an animal of some sort. A pretty big animal, maybe, but not a human animal.

I said, "Jeeze! Maybe I'm going nuts!"

"You've been seeing things. You need a drink," Jeff Truman said. "Come on back to the house."

I hesitated. Then I said, "Listen, Jeff. Have you got a rod?"

He looked at me. "A gun? Yes. At the house. Why?"

"I want to borrow it," I told him. "Mine got burned up when my car caught fire."

"Going to shoot somebody?" he asked me jocularly. I could see that he still didn't believe my story about that Chink dame.

I said, "No. I'm not going to shoot anybody—unless I have to. But I'm going to do some investigating. I'm going to that beach house where the Asiatic girl came from—Sammy Weissmann's old place. I'm going to ask questions!"

He shrugged. "You're being a damned fool, Turner. Why not ad-

mit that you had a hallucination and let it go at that?"

I said, "Hallucination, hell! I know what I saw!"

"Okay," he answered me, in a tone that indicated he doubted my sanity.

We went back to his place, and while he went into his bedroom to dig me up a roscoe I stayed in the living-room and downed three stiff hookers of Scotch. Then Truman came in and handed me a big Colt's .44 the size of a young cannon.

I jammed the gun into my pocket and started for the door. Jeff Truman followed me. I looked at him and said, "Where do you think you're going?"

"With you," he answered.

"Nix. This is my party," I told him. "You stay here. If I'm not back in an hour, phone the cops."

He gave me an argument. But I finally talked him out of going with me. And then his front door-bell rang.

**J**EFF answered the summons. I looked over his shoulder—and saw a girl standing on the porch. She was a brunette; and, Lord, what a brunette! She was diminutive, she was young, and she had everything.

Curling tendrils of coal-dark hair peeped from beneath her rain-wet little hat. Her eyes were deep, black, slumbrous pools of dormant passion. Her poppy-carmine lips brimmed with unspent kisses. And her body—

Well, she was wearing an oil-skin slicker; but it didn't conceal the lilting symmetry of her deli-

ious curves. Her breasts were twin arrogant prominences, high and firm. They made my fingers tingle with desire to caress them. . . . The slicker hit her around the knees, and I caught a glimpse of gorgeous, chiffon-sheathed legs that had me ga-ga.

In that first brief instant I thought I recognized her; thought I'd seen her somewhere before. And then it came to me. She was Lorna McFee—the movie cutie who had disappeared! The girl whom Sammy Weissmann had asked me to find!

And then I noticed something else. Around her throat was a silvery, metallic necklace *exactly like the one I'd seen on the Asiatic girl who had died on the beach!*

She was smiling. "I—I beg your pardon, Mr. Truman," she said to me. "I live in that big house down the beach. Our electric lights have gone out. We've got some lamps, but no kerosene. I—I thought perhaps I could borrow some—"

"Sure!" Jeff Truman said. "I've got a whole five-gallon can of it. Come inside while I get it for you."

He brought her into the living-room. Then he went on toward the kitchen, leaving the girl alone with me. She gave me a demure smile, unfastened her slicker and threw it back over her shoulders. She was wearing an evening gown of such daring décolletage that her perfect breasts were revealed almost completely. The sight of those creamy-white, smoothly-rounded hillocks of loveliness sent my heart bounding around like a lot of loose rubber balls.

She saw me staring at her; and she flushed a little. Myself, I was beginning to get all sorts of screwy ideas—like holding her in my arms, mashing her red lips with my mouth, holding her breasts in my palms . . . and other things.

I said, "You're Lorna McFee, aren't you?"

She went a little pale. "N-no," she answered hesitantly. "What-ever gave you that idea?"

I knew she was lying. And I wondered why. Also, I was wondering about that silvery, metallic necklace. It was fastened around her throat in such a way that she couldn't have removed it even if she had wanted to. There was a tiny, burnished padlock of case-hardened steel on it!

**B**EFORE I could frame another question, Jeff Truman came back into the room. He was lugging a heavy five-gallon can that sloshed and gurgled and smelled of coal-oil.

I took it out of his hand and tipped him a wink. "I'll carry this for the lady," I said. "You can't go out in the rain with that head-cold of yours."

He caught on right away. He knew I wanted to go with the girl, back to the big house on the beach. The kerosene would give me an excuse to get into the place. So he nodded and said, "Okay, Turner."

I carried the big kerosene can out of his bungalow, and the brunette girl followed me. It was raining pitchforks. We took a shortcut across the wet beach. After a while I said, "Sammy

Weissmann is looking for you, Lorna."

"Has he got a job for me?" she said. I'd caught her off-guard. Abruptly she recovered herself. "Er—I don't know anybody named Sammy Weissmann," she muttered.

"You still claim you're not Lorna McFee?" I shot at her.

"I . . . I'm not Lorna McFee," she answered me in a dead, flat monotone.

I looked at her as we walked through the wet sand. In the darkness, her face was very pale, very frightened, very beautiful. Away off in the distance, beyond the twelve-mile limit, there was a brilliant blotch of light on the ocean.

It was one of the gambling boats that infest the coast—an anchored pleasure-ship devoted to crooked games of chance and other forms of amusement . . . including girls. A vagrant thought struck me. A



*I squeezed the trigger and the hammer clicked on a jammed cylinder.*

I could see I wasn't getting any place along that line. So I tried another tack. I said, "I've been noticing your necklace. Odd sort of thing."

"Yes. Isn't it?" she agreed lifelessly.

"I've never seen anything quite like it," I told her. "Where did you get it?"

"You . . . mustn't ask me . . . that!" she whispered. There was fear in her tone.

girl as beautiful as Lorna McFee would command top prices on that pleasure-ship, I mused. . . .

And then we rounded that jutting cliff and reached the house on the beach—Sammy Weissmann's old place. It was ablaze with lights—bright lights. Electrics. The dark-haired girl said, "Goodness! The current must have come on again. You've had your trip for nothing, I'm afraid."

I said, "It was worth it. I like

being with you, even in the rain."

She flashed me a coquettish smile that struck me as being forced, unnatural. "Would you like to come in and have a drink?" she suggested.

"Sure thing!" I told her.

**S**HE produced a key and opened the front door. I left the can of kerosene on the porch and followed her into a big, comfortable living-room.

The girl slipped out of her slicker, tossed her hat into a corner. Then she got a bottle of Highland Cream and a glass. She poured a drink and handed it to me. "Here. This will warm you up!" she said in a loud voice. Then, "*Don't drink it, for God's sake!*" she whispered in a tense undertone that barely reached me.

I stiffened. What the hell was coming off? I wondered. There was something plenty haywire—and I'd blundered right into the middle of it. I stared at the girl. Then I raised the glass and poured the Scotch into my mouth.

But I didn't swallow it. I hauled out my handkerchief, pretended to wipe my lips. I spat the Scotch into the handkerchief in a thin stream; returned the soaking-wet linen square to my pocket. I had tasted a slight bitterness to the drink; realized that it had been drugged!

I put down the empty glass and grinned at the brunette girl. "Thanks!" I said. She was looking at me, wide-eyed.

Then, as though playing a poorly-rehearsed and distasteful part, she smiled at me and rolled her

lithe hips seductively. "Feel better?" she asked me.

I said, "Yeah. Some. But there's one more thing I'd like."

"What's that?" she wanted to know.



"A kiss," I told her.

She grinned, brazenly. "I've got lots of 'em."

So I grabbed her around the waist, pulled her toward me. It was evidently what she'd wanted me to do; because she pressed herself against me in a way that's got me hot and bothered right now. I planted my mouth on her lips and gave her the works.

Her dress was skin-tight, as if it had been tattooed to her delicious curves. My fingers played up and down her back, fondled the arched lushness of her hips, the silken smoothness of her thighs. I touched the upper halves of her

milky breasts, where they swelled out above her decolletage. I kissed her again.

*"Pretend to be drowsy!"* she whispered. *"It's your only chance!"*

I took her tip; yawned in her face. I smelled danger—plenty of it. And I knew that the girl was trying to save me from something damned sinister. We were probably being watched, I figured. . . . "Funny!" I mumbled thickly. "I feel—a little—sleepy—"

"Want to lie down and rest a while?" she asked me. Her eyes commanded me to say yes.

I nodded and said, "Yeah—if you'll keep me company."

"Come along," she grinned. But the fear in her eyes didn't match up with the smile on her red lips.

**I** FOLLOWED her upstairs, into a little room lighted by a single, pink-shaded lamp. I sat on the side of the sofa. Then, while I watched, the girl unfastened the shoulder-straps of her evening gown and shrugged out of it.

The garment fell to the floor around her tapered ankles. In the dim light I took a good look at her. And I could feel a tingle running down my spine when I saw the lilt-ing, arrogant rise of her unbras-siered breasts; the breath-taking, symmetrical loveliness of her young body. All she had on was a pair of tissue-thin panties. . . .

I captured her wrists, dragged her down alongside me. Then I snapped off the light.

In the darkness, she slipped a little unwillingly into my arms. I crushed her against me so that her

breasts jabbed into my chest. I kissed her, hungrily, forcing her lips apart until her hot little tongue-tip fluttered. My mouth wandered to the hollow of her throat. . . .

She made no objection when I put my hands on her firm, warm breasts. I caressed them. She quivered a little, and her arms went about my neck, drawing my head down. . . . Then I heard her whispering: "Listen! You must get out of here—through the window! Climb down—run for it! Otherwise you'll be . . . murdered!"

"Me? Murdered? Why, for God's sake?" I whispered back.

"Because the man who runs this place knows you witnessed the death of that Chinese girl! That's why I was sent to lure you here. I was supposed to give you a drugged drink and let you go to sleep in this room. Later, you were to be . . . killed. But I—I couldn't go through with it. I—I had to warn you."

I held her close to me in the darkness. I said, "You're really Lorna McFee, aren't you, baby?"

"Y-yes . . . and now—go! Hurry, before it's too late!"

"Okay. But I'm taking you with me!" I said.

She went stiff in my arms. An hysterical tremor shook her. "No—no! They'd . . . kill me!" she panted. Then she almost clawed her way free of my embrace, shoved me to the window.

**I** LET her get away with it, because I was beginning to have an idea. There were certain things

I wanted to investigate. So I opened the window very cautiously and slipped out into the rain.

My feet hit the roof of the front porch below the window. I ducked low and started for the edge. And then I stopped.

From another window I saw a crack of light and heard a girl's low moan of fear.

I didn't make a sound as I wormed my way to that second window. Gaining it, I glued my eye to the crack in the shade through which the light streamed. Then I saw red.

Inside the room five girls were huddled in a corner. They wore negligees—and nothing underneath. There was a gorgeous, cuddly platinum blonde with lush breasts and slinky hips; a cream-colored baby with black hair—an octaroon, probably, from the murkiness in her eyes; a slim, boy-breasted Japanese girl whose yellow skin was like polished ivory.

And there were two others—both pretty enough to have graced an Eddie Cantor chorus. *And every one of those five girls wore a locked necklace of silver, metal!*

Standing in front of the cowering girls I saw a masked man and a red-haired, hard-faced dame. The hard-faced dame was talking. "Now get this, you tramps!" she rasped at the undressed youngsters. "Tonight you're being shipped out to the pleasure-boat. The customers like new faces, new figures. And if you know what's good for you, you'll do as you're told! You'll be nice to the boys . . .!"

"Yeah!" the masked man

snarled. "Otherwise you'll get the same medicine we handed to that Chink dame this evening!"

When he said that, I knew the whole story. Those undressed girls in the room—they were some of the dames who had disappeared from Hollywood recently. They were white slaves, brought here to be sent to that anchored pleasure-ship! They'd been kidnaped—and now they were to be forced into a life of shame.

Like a flash, I squirmed back across the roof of the porch. I gained the window of that other room—the room in which I'd left Lorna McFee. I scrambled inside.

In the darkness, Lorna McFee gasped out, "Who's there?"

"Dan Turner!" I whispered to her. And then she was in my arms, trembling against me, her body cold and shivering. For an instant I held her close.

"You—you shouldn't have come back!" she panted, terrified. "You should have got away while you had the chance!"

I patted her. "Listen!" I whispered. "I'm going to ask you some questions. And I want straight answers. Maybe I can get you out of this mess. Now, in the first place, just what happened to that Chinese girl who was killed on the beach this evening?"

"She—she tried to run away," Lorna McFee told me falteringly. "And then . . . something terrible happened to her. The red-haired woman went out on snow-shoes a while ago and brought back the . . . corpse. Its head had been burned from the body. . . ."

(Continued on page 105)

# LOVE IS A

“HELLO, Eddie Pell.”  
“Hello, baby, what do you want?”

“You know what I want, Eddie.”

“Now, listen, baby, have we got to go into that again? You know how jealous Miriam is. If she ever found you in my room she’d . . .”

“Don’t keep me standing out in



*The Passionate Cannibal sends out evil tendrils, seeking human flesh. Eddie realizes it's his life or the girl's...*

# CANNIBAL

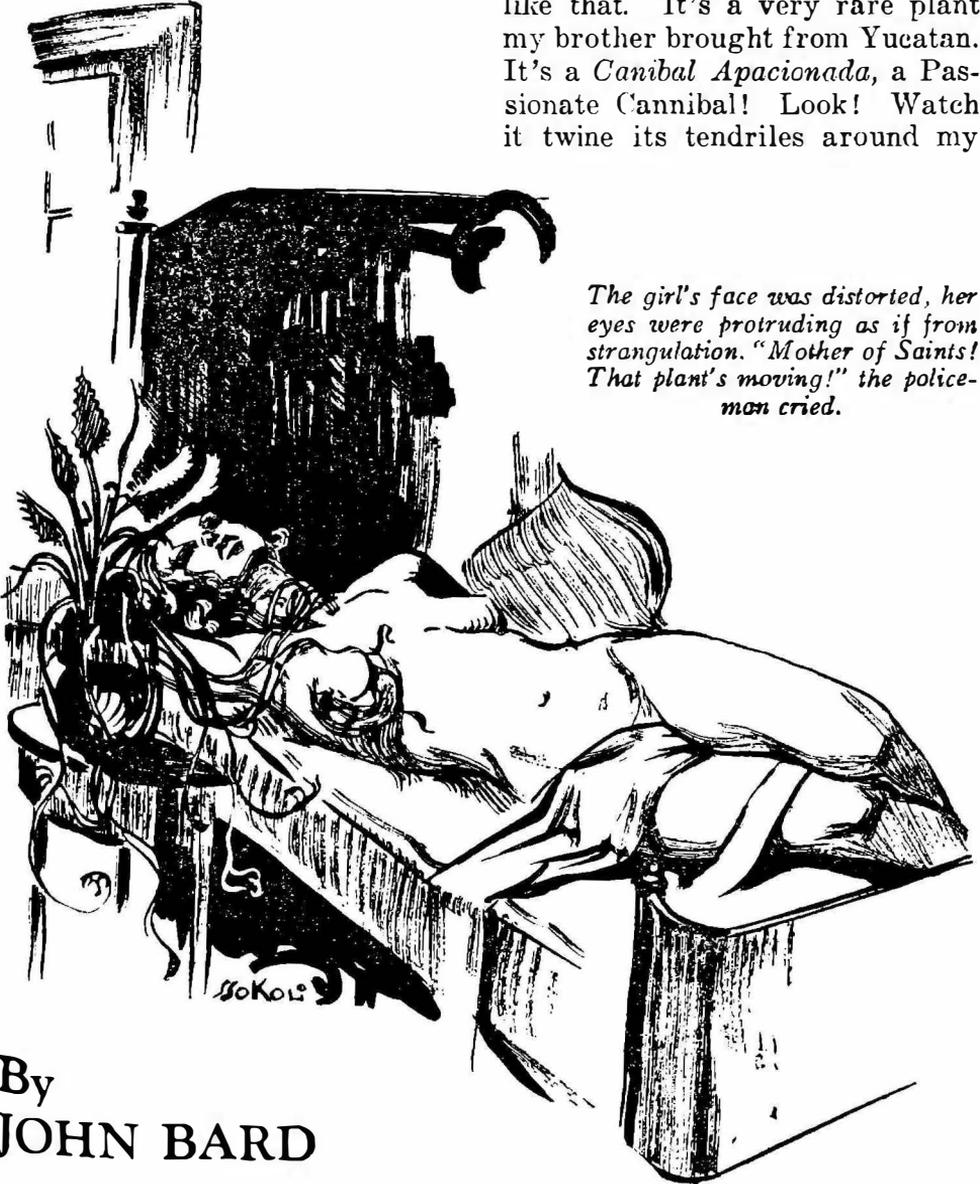
the hall, Eddie. Can't you see I've got a present for you? My arm's about broken from carrying it. . . . No, let me put it on the table; you might damage it. . . . There! Right

beside your bed where you can see it when you wake up in the morning. Unwrap it, Eddie. See . . . isn't it lovely?"

"Yeah. . . . What the hell is it?"

"Why, Eddie, you shouldn't talk like that. It's a very rare plant my brother brought from Yucatan. It's a *Canibal Apacionada*, a Passionate Cannibal! Look! Watch it twine its tendrils around my

*The girl's face was distorted, her eyes were protruding as if from strangulation. "Mother of Saints! That plant's moving!" the policeman cried.*



By  
JOHN BARD

arm. It loves the feel of human flesh. Oh-h . . . Eddie, don't *you* love the feel of human flesh?"

"Don't do that, Pearl! *Stop* it! Damn you, anyway, you little witch! . . ."

"Aw-w, Eddie . . . don't you think I'm beautiful? Isn't my body lovely? Lo-ook. . . Eddie, I . . . love . . . you. . ."

**SO WHAT** the hell could Eddie Pell do but look? And there they were, the two of them in that room. Eddie's whole body tingled and floated his tongue in a flood of hot saliva.

He tried to resist running his moist hands down her exquisite thighs, but the satin smoothness of her was irresistible.

He gasped from the impact of her wet molten lips as they closed possessively over his. Her searing tongue played across his mouth. . . .

"Damn it!"

"Oh, Eddie, you're not sorry!"

"Sorry! Hell no; sorry for what? It's just this cannibal plant. It's climbing around my neck and I don't want anything around my neck right now but you."

"Here, let me untwine it. It just loves you like I do, Eddie, only not as much. Honestly, Eddie, I love you so much I could die for you . . . or kill you."

Eddie held her away from him and looked down at her lovely flame-colored hair and red-brown eyes.

"I believe you could, at that." He wagged a finger under her nose. "But you mustn't kill Eddie Pell, Pearl. Four Detectives, Inc.,

would lose their best private dick."

"Aren't you going to thank me for the Passionate Cannibal, Eddie?"

Eddie took Pearl in his arms and crushed her against him. He smiled.

"Yes, baby; every time it tries to choke me I'll think of you. But be good now! Eddie has a job of work. And you've got to scam out of here. . . ."

"Eddie," ominously, "*is Miriam coming here. . . ?*"

"No, Pearl," he laughed. "Eddie is going there—"

Pearl turned swiftly on her heel and headed for the door. It closed after her with an ominous little bang and then immediately opened again. Her face, white and tense, appeared around the edge of the door.

"I love you, Eddie," she said huskily. "Don't forget to water the plant. The directions are on the side of the pot."

**E**DDIE watched the door close softly after Pearl and then stood for a minute thinking guiltily of Miriam. After all, she did have first claim on him, and here he was. . . .

He knelt down by the side of the table to read the directions on the pot and in doing so again came in range of the roving tentacles of the Passionate Cannibal. It immediately began twining with a firm grip around his wrist. Curious phenomena, this plant that could move—but, after all, a natural thing.

All plants move when growing.

This one had merely modernized its pace. . . .

On a slip of white paper pasted to the side of the red earthenware pot he read a simple statement. "Water at midnight on Wednesdays."

Eddie got up and, swinging his arm in a rotary movement to disengage it from the warm greenish-grey tentacles, looked at the alarm clock on the dresser. It was a quarter of nine. If he didn't hurry he'd be late for his date with Miriam.

And he had forgotten to send her flowers! Damn Pearl, anyway! He stopped suddenly in his tracks as if something of great importance had flashed across his mind.

"I'm a son-of-a-gun!" he whistled softly. "Today is *Wednesday*."

**"YOU'RE late!"**

"You're nuts. It's only twenty minutes after nine. Look what I brought you, baby."

"You've been out with that red-headed bum again, Eddie!"

"Now, Miriam, I haven't been out at all. So help me! I've been in my room ever since I got back from the agency. Look what I brought you. Isn't that *something*?"

"I think you're lying. You've got a tired look that doesn't come from working. . . . What in the name of mud is that thing? Why . . . it's alive!"

"That, my dear young lady," said Eddie, taking a stance like a lecturer before a group of sophomores, "is a *Canibal Apacionada* or Passionate Cannibal, a very rare and affectionate plant that

has been brought all the way from Yucatan just for your amusement. Note how fondly it encircles your hand and climbs toward your lovely neck."

"Why, Eddie, it's marvelous! . . . I've never seen anything like it. . . . Oh . . . you *are* sweet. It must have cost you a lot!"

"*Did* it! I haven't got the heart to tell you how much. Say-ay, baby, you look fetching in those sec-more pyjamas. But I thought we were going to see 'The Devil Is a Woman.' We've got just about time to make the second show."

"Kiss me, Eddie."

She swayed against him with a seductive movement of her hips. Her hot fragrant breath fanned his nostrils. He could feel the round, firm mounds of her breasts burning against his shirt.

"If we're going to the movies, baby, we'd better get started. . . ."

"Do you *want* to go, Eddie?"

Her breasts, pushed up from the recesses of her silk pyjama waist by the pressure of her body against his chest, were lustrous satin bubbles. Her lips melted between his like molten honey and touched his tongue with fire. He could feel every lithe movement of her glorious body through the thin, transparent silk of her pyjamas.

"Well, baby," he said huskily, "if you put it that way. . . ."

He cupped his hands around her breasts, caressing their smooth firmness, then with a gentle movement slipped the shoulder straps from her creamy shoulders. He heard the soft rustle of silk as the pyjamas crumpled to the floor. . . .

"Oh-h- . . . Eddie . . ." in a soft whisper, "I love you, I love you, I love you. . . . You're big and strong and . . . I just can't express it Eddie . . . but you *are*."

Eddie crushed her to him. The hot fragrance of her made his head reel. He felt that he was breaking her in half.

"Baby," he said in a hoarse whisper, "Eddie isn't going anywhere."

"**O**PEN up, Eddie!"

Eddie rolled over in bed, blinked the sleep out of his eyes and listened to the pounding on his door.

"Who is it?"

"Spode, Mister Pell, and you ain't goin' to be so glad to see me, but open up!"

Eddie shoved his feet into his carpet slippers and flung open the doo.

"What's the idea of routing me out this time of the morning, Spode? You know I'm never up until eight."

"Well, you're up now. Where were you last night, Eddie?"

"Am I still dreaming or are you giving me the quiz? Don't forget, sergeant, I used to be your boss."

"That's what I ain't forgettin'. Were you or were you not at Miriam Lord's apartment last night?"

Eddie strode over and put a hand on each of Spode's arms. His grip was like iron.

"What the hell's eating you, Spode? Has something happened to Miriam?"

For a long minute Spode

searched Eddie's face without speaking.

"Damn it, man, answer me," Eddie insisted.

"Eddie, you're either a sight better actor than you are a detective or. . . ."

"Spode," Eddie said ominously, "you tell me what's happened to Miriam before I sock you on the button."

"She's dead!"

Eddie made a sound like a fighter who's been hit below the belt. For a moment he stood paralyzed, then he began methodically to put on his clothes.

"You're a liar, Spode. She was all right at eleven o'clock last night." His voice was cold and unnatural.

"So you were there 'til eleven, Eddie?"

"Yeah. And if this is somebody's idea of a joke I'm still young enough to break an Irishman's jaw. Come on! Let's go!"

**I**T WAS fifteen minutes by taxi to the Madrigal Apartments.

When they got off at the third floor they found Patrolman Cardigan on duty at number 317. Eddie brushed past Cardigan into the living room. He had a horrible empty feeling at the pit of his stomach. He heard Spode's sarcastic voice behind him.

"In the *bedroom*, Mister Pell. Don't you remember where you left the body?"

Eddie stepped through the bedroom door. The early sunlight streamed through the windows at the head of Miriam's bed, turning her almost naked body, only par-

*She wailed with terror as his fingers closed.*



tially hidden by the sheet, into a carven ivory statue. From the flat expanse of her stomach up to the moulded dresden china breasts,

Eddie forced his stunned gaze.

Her lovely face was distorted, her eyes protruding as if she had died of strangulation. Around her neck was twined, in tight coils, the long tentacles of the *Canibal Apacionada*.

"Hello, what's this?" Spode strode by Eddie's stunned figure to the side of the bed. "That wasn't around her neck before. Cardigan! Cardigan! Who's been in this room since I left here?"

"Not a soul, sergeant. I haven't left the door for a minute."

"Don't give me that! *Somebody's* been here and wrapped the murder weapon around her neck. It wasn't there before. Mother of Saints! It's moving! Is it moving or am I crazy?"

"Yes, Spode," said Eddie quietly, thinking back to the night before. "It's moving. It's a cannibal plant. Don't you see that it grows from that pot on the table?"

The tentacles were slowly uncoiling and when the last coil disengaged itself from the frail white neck, it began reaching out, tentatively, snake-like, searching for the live flesh that it seemed to sense was near.

Spode stood speechless, transfixed, until a tentacle with a swift movement flipped a greenish-grey coil around his thigh. Then with a strangled cry he leaped back, tearing at the vine with his hands.

The movement jerked the plant to the floor and broke the red clay pot into a dozen pieces. The earth around the plant scattered across the floor, exposing a mass of intertwined blood-colored roots.

"For God's sake, what is it?" cried Spode, having finally disengaged the writhing tentacle.

**E**DDIE'S mind was still on the night before when Pearl had brought him the plant. He was thinking that this fate had been

meant for *him*, not Miriam. His nostrils dilated and his mouth hardened as he spoke.

"That's your killer, Spode. It's a *Canibal Apacionada*, or Passionate Cannibal. It's a rare plant from Yucatan."

"Yeah? How come you know so much about it, Detective Pell?"

"I gave it to her." Eddie was bending down and sniffing the soft earth that was scattered across the floor. It was damp from a recent watering. Carefully avoiding the searching tentacles of the plant, Eddie stood up and said softly to himself. "She remembered to water it at midnight."

Eddie felt the round imprint of the muzzle against the small of his back even before Spode spoke.

"Put 'em up, Eddie! I was wondering how you were going to get rid of this Miriam. She was a regular. You stuck to her longer than any other bisquit you ever had."

Eddie would have gone quietly if Spode hadn't made that remark.

"O. K., sergeant, let's get along to the station." He moved slightly as if to turn toward the door. His right foot shot up and back, striking Spode a terrific blow in the groin.

At the same instant he pivoted and laid four knuckles on the button. Spode sighed and crumpled in a heap. Eddie caught the six-gun as it fell and whirled on Cardigan before the patrolman knew what was going on.

"Just take it easy, Cardigan, and you may be decorated for bravery. Make a move for your gat and you may be decorated with flowers."

Cardigan gulped. "Sure, Mister Pell, whatever you say. I told Sergeant Spode you wasn't guilty."

"Well, thanks for the good word, Cardigan. Tell him again when he comes to. I'm afraid he won't believe you, but tell him."

"Yes, sir, Mister Pell! You rate pretty well with the department. Will you speak a good word for me to the captain?"

"Will I? And I'll tell you how you can help me catch the real murderer."

"How, sir?"

"When Sergeant Spode comes to, take the butt of your gun and sock him gently behind the ear! See you later, Cardigan."

**E**DDIE sprinted down the flights of stairs and slipped out a rear door of the Madrigal Apartments into the alley. At the end of the alley he hailed a taxi.

"Two-eleven Greenwich and give her the gun!" He flashed his badge.

As he jumped out of the cab in front of a two-story building he tossed the driver a buck. He looked at his watch. It was five minutes of eight.

"Won't be up yet," he said to himself as he climbed the flight of creaking carpeted stairs. At number 7 he knocked softly.

He heard a quick movement within and something that sounded like a gasp. Then he knocked again, more peremptorily. After a breathless pause a trembling voice said, "Y-es?"

He said, "It's Eddie."

This time there was a smothered gasp and a longer pause.

"Eddie w-who?"

"Listen, baby, how many Eddie's do you know?"

The door was flung suddenly open and two soft arms went around his neck. "Oh, Eddie Pell; it's *you!* Oh-hhh, I'm so relieved. I didn't sleep a wink all night!"

Eddie pressed her trembling body, hardly concealed by a filmy pink night gown, close to his own. A sweet, warm fragrance assailed his nostrils as she wriggled against him. Eddie looked down at her quivering white breasts.

"What were you worried about, baby?"

"Oh-h-hhh, about *you*, Eddie. I was so afraid something might happen to you and I love you so-o."

"Nothing ever happens to Eddie, baby."

"Did—did you forget to water the Passionate Cannibal, Eddie?"

"Yes, baby, I forgot. I'll water it tonight."

"Oh—*don't!* Just throw the nasty thing away! Eddie, hold me tight."

**I**T WAS a long time before Eddie said, "Do you still want to kill me, baby?"

"Oh-hhh, *no-ooo*, Eddie. How could I?"

Eddie took the automatic from his shoulder holster and laid it on the table.

"If you want to kill me you'd better do it now, because it's my duty to run you in for killing Miriam."

"Is Miriam *dead?* . . . I was so jealous I *would* have done it, Ed-

(Continued on page 102)

# A Hundred

*She confessed to Johnny that she'd killed a man. "Maybe," Johnny said, "but it stinks to me!" Thereafter Johnny stuck to the money trail*

*As he entered, she crumpled from a left to the jaw.*



leaned over the photo, straightened abruptly.

"That is not the man! That is not my brother!"

The man shrugged, tossed the picture back into the drawer. She followed its fall with worried eyes. There in the littered drawer, half covered, was a black revolver.

"Let's quit playing!" the man laughed suddenly. "You know why I got you up here! How's it for a little kiss?"

She slapped him, eyes angry slits. Again he laughed, paying no attention to the sharp blow, reached out suddenly to hook his fingers in the low vee of her gown. The silk ripped, torn to her waist. Her breasts, unfettered by bras-

"THERE'S a picture of him here somewhere!" He fumbled through the drawer of the heavy table. "Here it is!" The woman beside him

# Grand

By MORT  
LANSING



niere, sprang forth boldly, proud  
and upthrust, quivering in her anger.

Before she could scream he  
grasped her roughly, purposefully.

Back, back across the table he bent  
her, eyes hot, holding her helpless  
with the weight of his body, free  
hand caressing, fondling, burning  
mouth seeking redolent flesh.

Her hand slid into the drawer, fingers found the cold butt of the pistol. Suddenly he released her, blood trickling from his lip, struck at her viciously.

She sprawled over a heavy stool in a sudden flurry of silken legs, lay there stunned for a moment while his face flamed and contorted with anger. He kicked her cruelly.

"Bite me, will you! I'll teach you!" He drew back the foot again.

Her arm came slowly up, hate and fear in her eyes. The gun seemed to speak before it was half directed at the target.

Three shots—like slaps. Crack! Crack! Crack!

FOR a moment the man looked down at her, an odd expression sweeping over his face—staggered a half dozen steps—crumpled, clutching at his breast.

Slowly, painfully she arose, white-faced, wide-eyed, the gun thudding on the thick carpet. Hands covering her breasts she leaned over the fallen man. The white shirt front was slowly turning red.

"God help you, lady—you've killed him!" The valet stood in the doorway.

Sobs shook her half-naked body, hysteria threatened. The little valet knelt over the body of his master for a few seconds, then hurried to the woman.

"He was no good, lady! I saw what happened! He deserved to die!"

"But they'll hang me! They'll hang me!" Over and over she sobbed the words, the little man

comforting her as best he could, furtive eyes darting about the apartment.

"He deserved it, I tell you! I saw it all! Trying to assault you! Listen, I'll help you! I'll do it! We'll get the body out of here by the back way. We'll take it somewhere else and no one will ever know you killed him! We can get him out between us; if we meet anyone they'll think he's drunk again! Will you help me?"

She regained control with an obvious effort. "You—you—" her hesitant voice held just the trace of a foreign accent, "you would do this for me? Why would you do this?"

The little valet drew himself erect, looked righteous. "Because he was a beast—and I hated him!" He spurned the body of Thorndike, the dead man, with his foot.

LATE on the afternoon of the following day, Johnny Harding, tattler columnist of the *Daily Recorder*, got off the elevator on the fourth floor of the St. Helena, face grim and serious, as he rang the bell at the apartment of Niva Sorenson, newest importation of Gold Star Pictures, latest box office bet of Papa Manheim, whom Johnny Harding respected and loved for the shrewd but big-hearted movie magnate he was. A trim maid answered his ring, but stopped his abrupt advance sternly in the hall.

"No," she said, smiling faintly—they all smiled at Johnny Harding!—"Miss Sorenson isn't in right now!" She glanced at the card in her hand, smiled again.

"She isn't granting any interviews at present; I'm afraid you'll have to see her press department!"

"Gee," sighed Johnny, eyeing the shapely maid, "and the boss promised to fire me if I didn't find her favorite recipe for okra!" The maid shrugged, flushing beneath his bold stare. "Say," he continued hopefully, "if she isn't here maybe you can give me a recipe?"

She was gently but firmly showing him toward the door. Harding's hand emerged from his pocket, stubby fingers concealing the thin nail file. At the door he braced himself momentarily. "You're sure you don't know any?" he persisted, and she laughed as she shook her head. "You look like you know your okra!" cajoled Johnny as she began closing the door.

Still talking, still holding her with his eyes, he slid the slender nail file across the steel door jamb, and still laughing at his blarney she closed the door in his face. The lock clicked, against the nail file, which prevented the tongue from slipping into its groove.

He stood there whistling thoughtfully beneath his breath until the sound of her spike heels on the polished floor faded away. He turned the knob and stepped in.

No one was in sight. Softly he tiptoed down the shining hallway, made the thick rug with a little sigh of relief, knowing its very thickness and luxury would muffle the pad of his stealthy feet. Through three huge rooms he tiptoed, constantly alert but meeting no one, taking in every detail of

the magnificent apartment and mentally cataloguing the owner as a person of taste and discrimination. At a far door he paused, ear pressed close to the panel.

"I'm sure I don't know, ma'am," the maid was speaking, voice worried, "something about vegetables he said."

"Vegetables!" The answering voice was almost a shriek. "Vegetables! What did he look like? You tell him no I am not here?"

Johnny opened the door, smiling grimly. "How de do?" he said.

THE room was mussed, disordered, floor literally covered with flung newspapers, as if some one had been searching them impatiently. However, for the time being, Johnny wasn't interested in newspapers.

Against the long French doors leading to the balcony on the street side stood Niva Sorenson, romantic star of a score of European film hits, recently imported by Papa Manheim for the edification of the American public.

Johnny Harding proceeded to get edified first, for, clad as she was in a gossamer, spider web negligee, every enticing curve and contour of a perfect figure was outlined and accented against the light. Generous breasts faded to a thin, flat waist, flared again to svelte, rounded hips, tapered to columnar thighs. Johnny was well down onto a million dollars worth of Slavic legs when the maid came to.

"You," she gasped, starting toward him, "I told you—"

"Take it easy, sister!" There

was no laughter in his voice now, nor yet in his eyes, which were fixed on the movie star. Her own eyes flared with hate—or was it fear? Long fingers almost hid the mound of a breast while red lips drew back from gleaming teeth.

"I'm Johnny Harding of the *Daily Recorder*, and I've just been up to see Papa Manheim. Does that mean anything to you?"

"What you want? I do not know what you mean!"

"Okay, babe; forget the accent. You may be a Russian princess to some guys but to me you're just an umbay! I got a couple of questions for you about Papa Manheim and I'd just as soon spring them in front of the baby here. They've got something to do with a *hundred grand*! Does that burn you?"

The woman's face grew even whiter; her great eyes took on the startled look of the snared animal as she gestured the maid from the room with never a word until the door closed.

"What you want?" Her words were low, tense. "What you want to know about Meestair Manheim? What he tell you?"

"Forget the accent, babe!" Johnny's voice was disgusted. "And get the hell out of that light. I don't care if you've got a million dollar shape—I'm not interested. I want to know how come you put the bee on my friend Manheim for a *hundred thousand bucks*! Now talk fast!"

SHE lit a cigarette with trembling fingers, walking across the room to sink down on the deep divan before the little columnist.

Ivory knees emerged in turn from the negligee as she walked. The ripe beauty of her body was more than hinted at.

"Why—why—why—" her voice was tragic, "deed he tell you! He promise me no! no! no! he don't say nothing—and now—" She began to sob, head in hands. The dark valley between her breasts, the rising, pulsing mounds themselves worried Johnny. He shifted uneasily, spoke with sarcasm.

"Is this an act? Listen, sister, you're wasting time. I don't know you and I don't want to, but Papa Manheim is a friend of mine—a damned good friend! I'm sick of seeing every cheap hustler and panhandler on Broadway finger him for jack, and I'm not going to stand by and see you or anyone else rook him for a hundred thousand potatoes. That's money, important money! Now you listen to me!"

He pounded his fist on the table. "You're going to dig up the hundred grand he sent you this morning and you're going to lay it right in my hand, or I'll have you clapped so deep in jail you can't blast your way out! Maybe Papa made a little mistake—maybe he lost his head and played around you a little bit. But he's got a nice family and a hundred grand is too much jack! Believe me, hustler, I got influence enough in this town to keep that quiet—and I'll do it! You can't rook a friend of mine! You or any other cheap hustler from Brooklyn!"

"Hustler!" Her eyes blazed with anger. "You call *me* that, in whose veins flows the purest—"



him, worried, frantic, her cigarette making a blue cloud behind her. The negligee, clinging and seductive, was her only garment—and it was fastened only at the waist!

“No! No! I can’t get it for you! I haven’t got it!”

“What the hell could you do with a hundred grand?”

“I don’t know! I don’t know!” she moaned.

“A hundred grand! Great Godfrey! Spent a hundred grand and

*The gun spoke from where she lay: “Crack! Crack! Crack!”*

“Nerts,” said Johnny wearily. “I know, I know! Sit down. I like the way you shimmy when you get sore but it won’t buy you anything!” He glanced at his watch. “Now, small change, you may be a princess to a lot of mugs, but to me you’re just a chiseler that put the finger on a friend of mine for a hundred grand. You’ve got until five o’clock to dig it up—or else!”

Back and forth she paced before

don’t know where! With a hundred thousand dollars you could buy your way out of the electric chair!”

She faced him desperately, breasts rising and falling.

“Electric chair! That is what I spend the money for! To keep me from the electric chair! *I keel a man!*”

Johnny Harding laughed up into her face. He looked at the clock on

the mantle. Four forty-five. "Why don't you save these scenes for the movies, hustler? I'm getting a little tired of them! No kidding! You've got fifteen minutes to dig up that jack!"

But at five o'clock the only occupants of the apartment were a frightened maid who tried vainly to assuage the grief and calm the fears of a hysterical movie star.

**J**OHNNY HARDING, excited, skeptical and worried, was dropping nickels into a telephone in the corner drugstore. Getting his bosom friend, Bill Nobles, of the homicide squad, on the phone he took his bawling out without a single word of derision.

"What for you bother me about that guy is more than I can see!" The detective's voice was plaintive. "I'm up all night and you get me out of bed to ask about a cheap chiseler like Thorndike! No, I don't know where he is, and if you find him tip off some of the boys, will you? He's been up to his old tricks—passing rubber paper. There's a pick-up order out for him, but it's none of my business. I deal in murders.

"Now if you happen to know anything about a cab driver named Cohen, a dead cab driver that might abandon his cab in the Bronx and then run out to Long Island to get himself knocked off—Cohen was the name. C like in chump, O like—"

"Nerts!" spat Johnny and hung up.

To his next call a suave voice answered, "No, Mr. Thorndike

isn't at home. No, I don't know when he will be—"

Likewise, "Nerts!" said Johnny Harding.

Call number three. "For God's sake, Johnny," came the agonized voice of Papa Manheim, "don't go to the police. What do I care if she chiseled me for a little gelt? I've spent a million and a half in publicity building her up and if you call in the police now I'll lose it all! Listen, Johnny, please, on my knees I'm begging you! It wasn't a hundred, I tell you—only eighty thousand, Johnny, eighty thousand! What if my wife, Sara, should find—" but he was talking to a dead phone.

By eight o'clock Johnny had visited three pawnbrokers checking up on the picture star's wild story. Likewise he had visited Cecil Thorndike's apartment only to be turned away by a hard faced valet with the same information garnered from his phone call—that Thorndike had not been home for several days.

**S**HORTLY afterward, lounging in a cab with Niva Sorenson by his side, he assured himself that so far her wild story had checked in every detail. She actually had raised \$20,000 on her jewelry that morning.

"Flushing," he told the driver and turned to the woman again. "Baby, so far your story is checking. I don't mind telling you that much but I still think it's a frame-up. You bump off a guy and then his own valet helps you dispose of the body! Why in hell would he do that?"

"He say," her voice was just as low, "he hated him. He say I am too beautiful to die! So we breeng him out here."

"And then," Johnny mused, "he calls you up this morning and says somebody saw you! Somebody calls him on the phone and demands a hundred thousand dollars—blackmail! Babe, you and Smollett aren't running a fast one, are you? Smollett mean anything to you? Boy friend?"

He felt her slim body stiffen beside him, her voice held anger. "Smollett is a servant! A menial! In my veins—"

"Yeah," grimly, "I know. Royal blood and all that. But it stinks just the same. You claim you kill a guy in a fight for your honor. Say, let me see the scar you were talking about. Pull up here, driver, and turn on your light."

The driver got a break. The muffled figure in the back lifted her cloak, her skirt, to disclose chiffon clad perfection—a million dollars worth of tapering leg. She unhooked the left stocking, slid it down to her ankle, disclosing a long skinned place stretching across her shin. Harding leaned over and examined it closely; she winced beneath his fingers.

"Okay," sharply, "it's fresh. Let's see the other."

The cloak parted beneath her fingers. The low vee of her neck half disclosed a pulsing breast and unhesitatingly she drew back the gown. There on the soft whiteness of her throat gleamed a black blotch—a bruise, in the form of an oval pointed at both ends—the mark of teeth.

"Okay, baby. Start your bus, Mac, we're on our way to Flushing."

"So far you're still clicking," he admitted. "But I still can't see why this guy Smollett would help you hide the body of his boss! Still"—remembering the fragrance and musky odor of that svelte skin, "some guys will do a lot for a dame. If you're on the level, he got his foot in it, though!" The woman remained wrapped in silence.

Through Flushing and toward the fishing piers they rolled, back into a clump of trees that darkened the moonlight. She directed the driver herself and presently the headlights revealed a fishing shack, dirty, grey and dilapidated. Johnny stopped the car and with an insinuating wink at the driver led the woman down the pathway toward the black cottage.

"The driver," she said, "he will suspect something?"

"Sure, babe! He'll suspect plenty, but not what you think. Come on."

THE door was unlocked; with an eerie feeling Johnny opened it, cast the rays of the tiny flashlight about the single room. A crude table and two broken chairs stood against the window. A cot with a crooked leg was along the wall. Bottles were on the table, on the chairs, cast about the floor—but the shack was empty.

For a long while they stood there in utter silence, the light flickering and dancing on the dirty walls.

*(Continued on page 120)*



# THE MAN Who Was Hanged

**J**OHAN GRAYDON, wrists bound tightly behind him, paused between the two guards and lifted bitter eyes to the morning sun. Like a slice out of hell it shimmered and bored down, driving heat to his bones and gluing his shirt and underclothes to his skin with sticky perspiration.

Resin simmered out and clotted on the rough-hewn pine boards of the thirteen steps in front of him. Graydon took a deep breath, ignored the guards, and mounted to the scaffold above.

A newly deputized young man, pimply-faced and nervous, worked

at a hangman's noose in a new hemp rope.

Graydon narrowed his keen eyes, let them flick swiftly from face to face in the crowd. Had she dared come here?—the woman who had made love to him and then sworn his life away for a murder he had not committed . . . on a victim he had never seen!

He didn't find her. He didn't see anyone whom he knew. The crowd was unfriendly, eager to see him die. It was a small mountain town; justice—and injustice—were swift; and here was a stranger, convicted and sentenced. It would be a good show for those who had

*The noose was no longer around his neck. He was confined only by the boundaries of the coffin. And this—because he had listened to a woman's honeyed words...*

## By COLBY QUINN

never seen a human being legally put to a violent death.

For hours the crowd had been gathering around the newly-erected gallows in the county jail-yard, waiting to see a man dropped through the trap with a black hood over his head . . . to jerk at the end of a rope and dangle before them with a broken neck.

The penetrating heat in the planks of the scaffolding had soaked through Graydon's shoes to the soles of his feet. He shifted, smiled grimly, and stepped on the lattice-work of the trap.

The pimply-faced young man had quit working on the nose. He stepped close and asked nervously:

"You got anything to say—any last words?"

"No!" snapped Graydon. A disappointed sigh arose from the crowd. The muttering had ceased.



"You—you *ready?*" asked the youth.

Graydon glanced up once at the heavy cross-beam with the end of the rope tied around it . . . and knew that this was the end of the road! He had been hooked with a fool-proof frame-up.

Graydon tensed his bound wrists as every muscle in his body strained.

"I'm ready," he said harshly.

The hangman slipped a black hood over the condemned man's head. He pulled it over his eyes, drew a string tight under his chin. He lifted the heavy noose over Graydon's neck, tightened it.

Then he stepped back to a lever sticking up like the hand-brake of a car—the instrument for springing the trigger of the trap. He pulled the lever.

**J**OHAN GRAYDON had called at the woman's house twice in the two days he had been in town. Both pretexts had failed.

Her name was Jane Scanlon, and she had an invalid husband who, his casual inquiries among the whittlers and tobacco-chewers in the general store had revealed, was never allowed to see visitors. Young Dr. Mason was treating him—for exactly what, no one was quite sure—and had forbidden excitement.

It was Jeremy Scanlon that Graydon really wanted to see. He had a shrewd hunch that he might be able to tell the man something that would probably lengthen his life considerably.

But Jane Scanlon regarded him with suspicion, refused to believe

that he bore a message of importance or the papers for a legacy, and slammed the door in his face.

The third time, however, she didn't wait for him to get to the door, but opened it smiling and parted her lips to speak to him. Graydon's eyes widened in suspicious astonishment.

Then, abruptly, Jane Scanlon's eyes went wide and blank. She trembled, suddenly went limp, and would have fallen had not John Graydon swiftly stepped forward and caught her in strong arms.

For a second his eyes went beyond her into the shadowed hall of the house; he glanced quickly over his shoulder. There was no one in sight.

Then as he stepped inside and closed the door softly with his heel, he became acutely conscious of the limp girl in his arms. He had thought her older, before; now he saw she could be no more than twenty-five.

Her body was slender and soft and warm, and surprisingly light. Graydon lifted her clear of the floor, slipped his right arm back of her shoulders so that his hand curled under her armpit and his fingers touched the outer curve of a small breast, firm and unbrassiered beneath the thin linen blouse.

His left arm went beneath her knees, and her skirt fell back, bunching in her lap and hanging free beneath as his arm tingled to the pressure of smooth unstockinged legs and the excitingly warm skin of her thighs.

Graydon carried her into the front room, walked through it into

another. Before lowering her to the couch, he leaned over her and blew on the girl's eyelids. That sometimes brought them around.

The red, full lips, so close to his, parted with a tremor; her eyelids quivered; black shiny curls shook as she half lifted her head and looked at him dazedly.

GRAYDON rested his knee on the edge of the couch and deposited his tempting burden on the tapestry coverlet. He let himself gaze for an instant on the revelation her disarrayed clothing gave him . . . slim legs uncovered to the teasing lacy edges of step-ins . . . firmly lifted young-looking breasts peeping forth where two buttons of her twisted blouse were undone. Then he made himself say sharply:

"All right, sister—what's it all about?"

"What happened?" she smiled a little. "Did I—faint?"

Graydon shrugged. "You tell me. After slamming the door on my nose yesterday, you gave me the open arms today, and as soon as I got close enough you collapsed all over me—too damned neat. What's the answer?"

For a second, a hard expression flitted across Jane Scanlon's gold-flecked green eyes. Then she pursed her lips and laughed softly. "Maybe I decided I was too mean to you."

"Then you'll let me talk to your husband?" Graydon asked eagerly.

"Yes. But"—her languid voice drawled the measured words—"he's in a remote room of the house, and the door is locked—be-

cause he can't be disturbed!" Her bell-like tone lilted in irony. "You can see him, but—wait! Maybe another reason I let you in was because I liked your looks."

"Sure," thought Graydon, "and maybe you did it because I look like the founder of the Society for the Care of Enfeebled Canaries." But he only lifted his eyebrows and leaned closer over her. He was here to find out things, and if this was the way to begin . . . !

Jane Scanlon's small hands went to her blouse; deliberately she tore the last two buttons open so that the linen material parted down to her waist. Then she slowly lifted both arms above her head, and the firm little breasts, almost boyishly small, daintily rounded, sprang free. She smiled.

Graydon's eyes flashed and a longing for her that he hadn't intended hummed in his blood. Slowly he slid his left hand along the warm skin of her stomach, trailed his fingers across the softness of one pink-white mound. He caressed the creamy globe in his hand gently.

WHEN Jane Scanlon moaned and threw her arms about his neck, he swiftly gathered her close, allowing her breasts to rub against his chest as he covered her eager, demanding mouth with his own dry lips.

She wriggled closer against him and her arms tightened spasmodically about his neck . . . almost chokingly tight. And suddenly a warning flashed in his brain. He flung the girl away, tearing at her tenacious arms.

A million hot stars exploded in his brain. Shock jabbed the back of his skull, and his head seemed to compress for a minute part of a second. Then it started expanding, blowing up like a balloon, until it embraced all the roaring, pounding fires of the universe. . . .

**I**T SEEMED hours later that Graydon floated back to consciousness, his temples hammering, his tongue on fire. He tasted blood and felt the cut where he had bit his tongue when something had walloped him over the head from behind.

He was in the same room and there were plenty of people. He guessed now that it had been hours . . . long enough for the county sheriff and the medical examiner and the town's two cops to have smoked a floor full of cigarette butts.

A pungent, nauseating odor penetrated his nostrils. It smelled oddly like burned flesh. Graydon stirred with a groan.

"He's coming around," said the sheriff grimly.

Jane Scanlon, sitting on the edge of the couch, no more dressed than she had been, started sobbing hysterically. She poured out her story again. It was simple, to the point, and no less grim because a well acted lie:

This man, whom she did not know, had come to the house asking to see her husband about important business concerned with a bequest. He had been quiet at first, but then he had attacked her brutally; and when her husband, hearing her cry, had hobbled into

the room to protect her, the stranger had bludgeoned him with a blackjack and then struck her unconscious with his fist.

She had awakened to find herself alone, had picked up the blackjack and hit her attacker with it from one side of the door as he re-entered.

Jane Scanlon, without looking at Graydon, rubbed a blue bruise on her jaw. The sheriff said grimly: "He didn't do anything except cut the body up with your wood-axe in the basement, stuff it into the furnace, and make a fire with gasoline. There's nothing left except the charred bones—and the false teeth and ring and belt-buckle you identified."

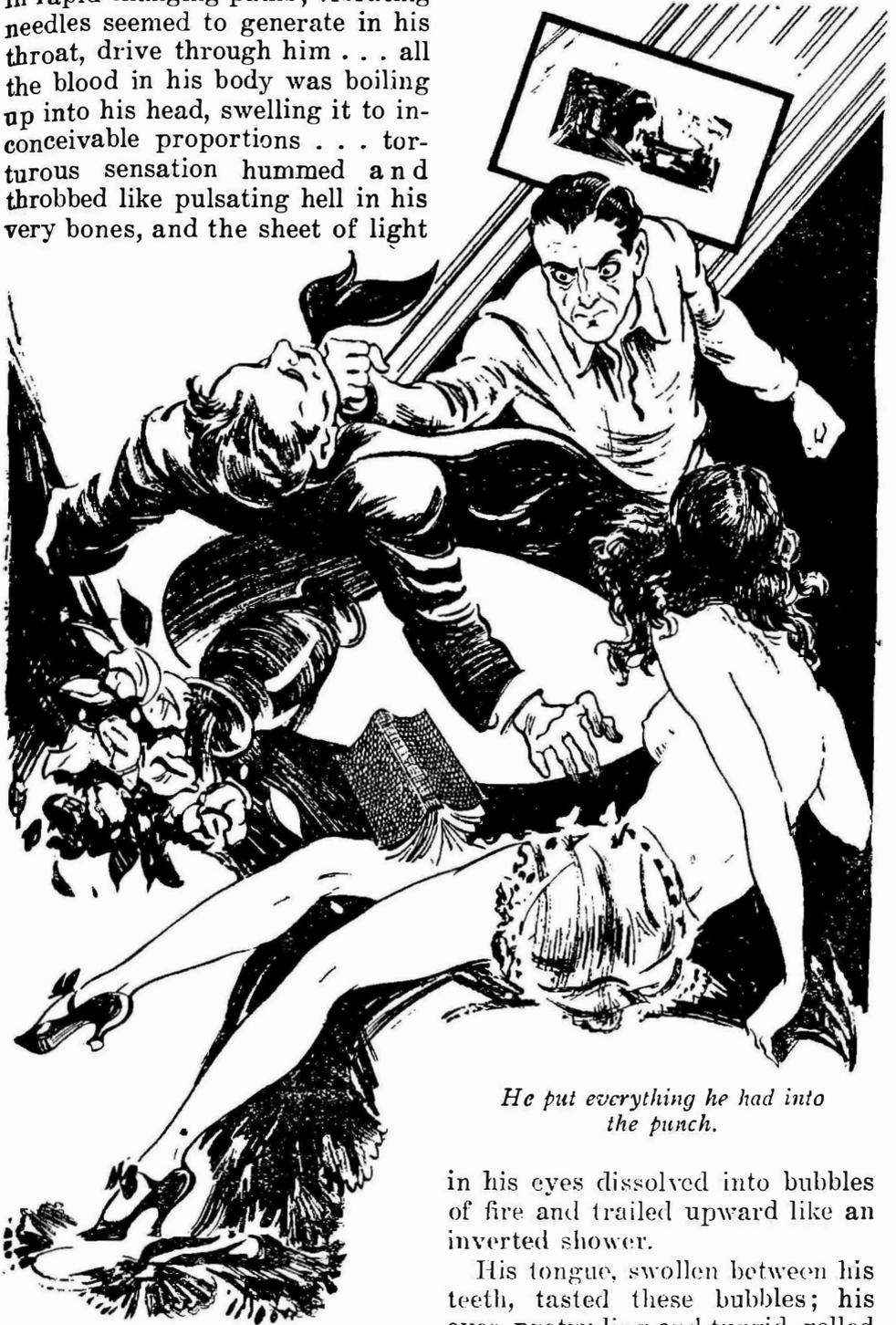
One of the cops muttered: "He'll hang, all right!"

**W**HEN John Graydon plunged down through the trap of the gallows, consciousness clung to him with cruel tenacity. In what was really an abnormally short drop, he seemed to fall for ages; and his sense of time was distorted as in a hashish dream, when heavy objects often seem to float like feathers to the floor.

After an eternity a blinding sheet of light flashed before his open eyes on the screen of the black hood. A monstrous sledge-hammer of shock impacted upon the back of his neck. Numb paralysis helped him float . . . then with terrific suddenness, a white-hot dagger of pain drove deep into his neck, shot down his spine, and sheared into every splitting nerve and cell of his body.

Exquisite agony traversed **him**

in rapid-changing paths; vibrating needles seemed to generate in his throat, drive through him . . . all the blood in his body was boiling up into his head, swelling it to inconceivable proportions . . . torturous sensation hummed and throbbed like pulsating hell in his very bones, and the sheet of light



*He put everything he had into  
the punch.*

in his eyes dissolved into bubbles of fire and trailed upward like an inverted shower.

His tongue, swollen between his teeth, tasted these bubbles; his eyes, protruding and turgid, rolled

and followed them upward to where a nebulous black fog was gathering. The fog grew into a jet-black mushroom, descending slowly to envelop him. . . . It gathered momentum in a rush and enfolded him, its dark obliterating atoms pervading his brain.

**G**RAYDON awoke with a start. Consciousness did not drift to him gradually; it jolted him with a pang of agony, and he would have groaned except that his throat appeared to be too swollen for sound to escape.

It was pitch-dark, and as he lifted a trembling hand to his horribly aching neck, he touched wood beside and above him, and knew he was in a box—probably a coffin.

For an instant panic and a terror of being buried alive seized him. Then he forced calmness on his nerves. Voices came nearer and he recognized one as that of the cop who had quite accurately told him he would hang. . . .

Well, he had; but somehow he was still alive. It had happened before in executions, where clumsy hanging had not broken the neck. They had cut him down and passed him for dead while a spark of life still remained.

“Damned if we bury him!” muttered the other voice. “Nobody but you and me knows that the tramp that died in jail here has disappeared. We’ve got our split, and if Mason finds out we haven’t shipped the body to that medical school—!”

“If we ship this guy instead,” said the cop, “and bury the coffin

empty, nobody will know the difference.”

There was the sound of metal being jammed under the coffin lid; nails shrieked as the wood was pried up. Graydon closed his eyes as the light from an electric bulb struck them.

“Jeez,” muttered the cop. “I’m downing a slug of corn before we wrestle this stiff out of the box. Corpses give me the jitters.”

“I’ll have a couple myself.”

Footsteps departed. John Graydon stirred his muscles and instantly sparks of pain crackled through him like the fire in a spark gap. He gritted his teeth, choked back the impulse to cry out.

He gripped the edge of the coffin with both hands and sat up. Some of the pain subsided with movement, and he paused to massage his tortured throat.

The coffin was on the floor of what Graydon recognized as a room adjoining the sheriff’s office. An open window bellied its curtains as a cool mountain breeze entered his grateful lungs.

Graydon braced himself, shook his throbbing head, and stepped from the coffin. He crossed the room swiftly, climbed out the window and fell as his knees buckled under him on the dew-wet grass. The night was black with clouds as he slipped through the alley gate.

Ten minutes later he crouched in the dark yard, laid his fingers on the window sill, and raised his head to peer into Jane Scanlon’s lighted cottage.

THE whole mad whirl had run through his brain like a lighting movie film. . . . His assignment by Eagle Indemnity to investigate some queer cases in Jefferson County . . . the frame-up that had hooked him . . . the swift, one-sided trial before a prejudiced jury . . . his hanging that had left him alive. . . .

And as he looked into the room, the germ of an idea that had long lurked deep in his mind was clarified into positive conclusion.

Jane Scanlon lay on the sofa with only a shred of brassiere and step-ins. Her eyes flamed, and the pert breasts that had snared Graydon shook with her irregular, panting breath. Dr. David Mason sat on the edge of the couch, leaning over her. Deliberately, he took her elbows and carried them above her head. His fingers slid slowly down to her armpits, trailed across the sensitive skin above her breasts.

When she shivered and goose-flesh sprang under his questing fingers, he ripped the brassiere from her in a single gesture and placed both palms over her breasts.

Jane Scanlon wriggled and threw one arm about his neck; with the other hand she caught his fingers and pressed them harder on her breasts. Mason slid his fingers to the waistband of her step-ins and toyed with it. Jane Scanlon was breathing in short gasps and holding onto him with both hands. . . .

Graydon had seen enough. "It's simple as hell, now!" he thought grimly. He took a deep breath;

strength had flowed into his muscles with the walk. He sprang from the ground and vaulted over the window sill into the room.

Mason disentangled himself and wheeled with a livid, unbelieving curse, but Graydon was ready for him.

"God!" Paralyzed by seeing a supposed dead man, the doctor stood there. Graydon was taking no chances and giving no quarter. He let go a swift drive for Mason's jaw . . . put everything he had into a solid one, square on the button. Jane Scanlon screamed as her lover dropped like a sack of meal; she jumped up and sprang at Graydon, clawing hysterically at his eyes, deadly fear in her own.

Graydon laughed—a horrid, rasping sound—and let her have it; a solid left to the chin that skinned his knuckles. Jane Scanlon flew completely off the floor and dropped senseless across the kayoed Mason.

"YOU can't hang me twice!" Graydon laughed grimly. Sitting on his own coffin, he glanced first at the gaping-jawed sheriff and then at two red-faced cops.

The sheriff snapped his jaws closed and shook his head. "You've got some things to prove, mister."

"I can prove them all—every damn' one!" snapped Graydon. "This guy Mason has pulled it once before. He's been Eagle Indemnity's agent in Jefferson County. He also happens to be a doctor, and he examines applicants

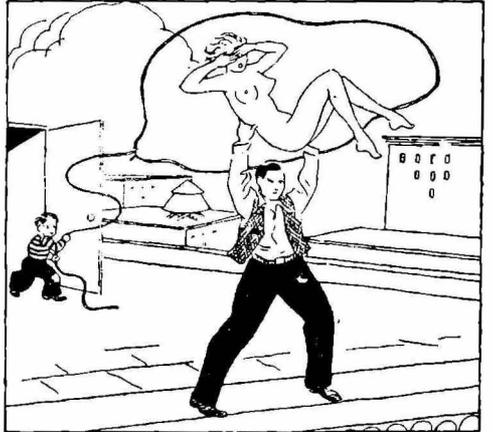
*(Continued on page 118)*

# SALLY THE SLEUTH



# Love Nest Loot

by  
BARRERUX



WATCH FOR SALLY IN NEXT MONTH'S SPICY DETECTIVE

*The girl had vital information; and they had silenced her the only possible way. It was a case of love versus politics, and Mace Mallory decided to side with romance*

*The detective picked her up and, without another look at the corpse, started up the stairs.*



# CRIME

**M**ACE MALLORY, chief investigator for the Eagle Detective Agency, braked his coupe to a stop at the curb. From his pocket he withdrew a letter and glanced at the message. It read:

Dear Mr. Mallory:

I am enclosing \$1,000 as a retainer.  
Come to my residence tonight for details.  
Gordon Newell,  
5627 Ardmore Drive.

The detective looked across the sidewalk to the numerals which

By  
FRANK E.  
MARKS



# CAMPAIGN

glowed under a lamp on the stone gateway. It was the address he sought. Mallory got out of his car and entered the grounds. He strode up the dark path toward the residence.

An aged sycamore thrust out its

gnarled branches like witches' claws. White sections of its denuded trunk loomed like sinister ghosts lurking in the shadows. From a wing on the first floor a slit of orange light stabbed through a crack in a curtained window of

the house.

Mallory stepped up on the landing in front of the entrance and reached for the door bell. His finger never touched the button. His arm remained as if frozen in midair. From within had come the report of a muffled shot; then another. The detective's big frame tensed. He turned the knob. The door did not yield.

Mace Mallory's long legs carried him to the window from which the light shone. Velour hangings obstructed his view into the room. A feminine shriek split the air. There was a commotion. Spike-heeled shoes mingled with the shuffle of broader soles on the floor within.

The detective's hand plunged to his shoulder holster. He flipped his service gun as he drew it, caught it by the barrel. With the stock he banged against the leaded panes. Shattered glass tinkled. The scrimmage in the room abruptly ceased.

Mallory tore at the tough leaden strips. The metal network came from the sash. He vaulted into the room, brushed aside the velvet hanging and found himself in a library. Muscles rigid, his gun at his hip, the detective's eyes swept the interior.

**BY** a flat-topped desk the body of a man lay face up on the floor. An outstretched hand clutched a revolver in its stiffening fingers. Crimson spurted from his chest. A swivel chair was swung away from the desk. The ominous rattle of death gurgled from the dying man's throat. His lips

twitched weakly. Fluttering eyes looked beseechingly at Mallory.

The detective dropped on one knee. "You have something to say?" he asked.

The man's features twisted. "I—I'm Gordon Newell," he whispered. "Campaign manager for—for Dwight MacDonald. You are Mallory?"

"Yes," the detective replied and leaned closer to Newell's lips. Mallory hoped to hear more concerning Dwight MacDonald who was the young reform candidate for mayor at the approaching election.

MacDonald's opponent was Cass Grainger, incumbent. The underworld had flourished during his two terms.

"I uncovered something against Mayor Grainger," the sinking Newell went on. "Some checks—big ones—endorsed by him. Grainger is receiving sums of money from Trigger Mattson, a notorious character."

"Yes. I understand, Mr. Newell. Go on," Mallory urged.

"MacDonald didn't want me to—to use any mud-slinging methods. But he must be elected. Unbeknown to MacDonald, his fiancée brought some police records of Trigger Mattson to light. The information got out—somehow—to Mattson," Newell's voice trailed thickly.

"I—I hired you, Mallory, to protect the girl. She—she's in—danger." The dying man's speech was scarcely audible.

"I'll get in touch with her at once, Mr. Newell. Where can I find her?"

Gordon Newell's lips moved no more. He stared vacantly. He was dead.

The detective got to his feet. He pulled out one of the desk's two drawers. Writing paper and envelopes were in it. The other drawer was locked. Mace Mallory suddenly pivoted, gun leveled. A gasp from the adjoining room had reached his ears. He sprang to the doorway, swished aside the tapestry curtain and stood in a living room.

On the rug, near an open stairway, the huddled figure of a girl lay. Mallory leaped to her side. Her skirt was up around her waist. Ivory thighs glimmered above knee-length hose. The sleuth turned her face upward from the carpet. A tattered bodice dropped from her creamy shoulders. One of her breasts thrust upward, a firm mound of luscious flesh, pomegranite tipped, tempting.

Mallory's pulse quickened. He put his finger tips in the smooth satiny valley between her bosoms. The feel of her soft throbbing breasts sent tingles through his whole frame. He lowered his head; stared at bruises on her throat. The girl moaned through crimson lips. Her eyes were closed.

The detective slipped an arm under her knees, another under her armpits. He held her close, looked around and then started up the open stairway. He felt her warm quivering breasts against his own chest; the pliant surface of her stomach under its light garment and the velvety contact of her leg on his hand.

ON THE landing at the second floor, Mallory hesitated. The door to a room was open. He went in, found the light switch and clicked a *boudoir* into illumination. The detective kicked the door shut, crossed to the bed and laid the girl on the silken coverlet. He got a glass of water; touched it to her lips; rubbed her forehead and brushed back her chestnut hair.

The girl's long lashes fluttered. Brown eyes stared with fright. She sat bolt upright. Her lips trembled, "Wh—who are you?" Her glance circled the room. "Where am I?"

"You're in Gordon Newell's house," Mallory told her. "What do you know about his murder?" He flashed his badge. "I'm a private detective."

The girl's hand went to her open mouth. She gasped, "A detective! I—I mustn't be found here!" Silk-sheathed legs slid to the floor. She stood up. "I—I must get away from here—quick!"

Mallory grasped her bare arm. "Not so fast, my dear. Better tell me what you know before the police get here."

"The police!" the girl paled. "I mustn't get mixed up with the police!" She wrenched from Mallory's grasp, bolted for the door.

The detective picked her up bodily, tossed her on the bed. "Now will you talk?" he asked.

"No!" she answered flatly. "I must get out of here."

"Okay, sister." Mallory grasped the bosom of her dress, yanked. The entire gown ripped from her form. The girl gasped; reddened over her whole body. The sleuth's

eyes swept over her alluring figure clad in a gossamer brassiere and transparent step-ins.

"You—you beast!" her red lips shook.

Mallory grinned, glanced at the open window. "Just to make sure you won't go out over the porch roof. I'm going down stairs to phone the police. I'll be right back. You'll have a chance to talk before they get here."

He took the key from the door, switched off the lights and went out. He locked the door and put the key in his pocket. Noiselessly he went down the carpeted stairs. At the bottom he suddenly stopped. His ears had caught a metallic click from the next room, the library where he had left the body of Gordon Newell on the floor.

Stealthily, the detective moved to the tapestry that separated the living room from the library. He peered through a slit. His jaw dropped. A man was in the library. He wore pajamas and a long dressing-gown. He was bent over the desk, his hands delving into the drawer—the one Mallory had tried and found locked.

**W**ITH one whisk the detective sent the curtain grating over its iron rod. He leaped into the room, covered the pajama-clad man with his revolver, commanded, "Up with them, brother—don't move!" Mallory advanced, jammed his gun into the man's kidneys. Ruthlessly he grasped him by the shoulder, wheeled him around.

"I can explain, sir!" came from the thin white lips of the man.

"Explain what?" The detective looked into his small eyes, at his sallow cheeks and mixed grey hair. "Who are you?"

"I'm Mr. Newell's secretary, sir. The shots woke me up. I came down and saw his body there."

"Why were you rummaging in that drawer?"

"Mr. Newell had some important papers delivered to him this evening. I wanted to find out if they were stolen, sir."

"Were they?"

"They were, sir. I found them missing when I unlocked the drawer."

For an instant, Mallory's glance shifted from the man to the drawer which he had found fastened. His sharp eye noted the bent shaft of the lock, the marred edge of the woodwork. "You jimmied that—!" the detective's voice choked off as he ducked.

He winced as something pointed grazed his shoulder. The man had lunged at him with a paperknife.

Mallory sprang at his attacker, caught his wrist, wrenched it. The man who had said he was Newell's secretary went to the floor, the detective astride him. The pajama-clad man kicked, flayed with his arms. The sleuth raised his gun, brought down the butt. It thudded on the man's skull. He lay still.

Something crackled under the secretary's jacket as Mallory put his hand on him. He reached inside of the man's garment, withdrew a bulky envelope. The detective put the package in his pocket. He clicked steel bracelets around his captive's wrists.

Mace Mallory went to the phone,



*The girl picked up her glass of liquor, and suddenly flung it full in the gunman's face. He staggered back.*

got police headquarters. He asked for Lieutenant O'Neill, waited, then spoke: "Mace Mallory speaking. I'm at Gordon Newell's residence. He's been murdered.—Yes, I'll wait for you." The detective hung up, crossed the room to the side opposite that from which he had entered.

Mallory slid the curtain from a window. The sash was up. He snapped his flash and examined the sill. A couple of blood spots stained it. Gordon Newell had evidently wounded his murderer.

**T**HE detective went back to the desk, sat down and took out

the bulky package taken from the handcuffed secretary. In it were some canceled checks of large amounts. They had been made out by Floyd Mattson. They were endorsed on the back with the mayor's signature, Cass Grainger.

There was a white envelope in the package. The upper left hand corner bore the inscription of the police department of a distant city. It was addressed to Elsa Pierce and gave her apartment house and number.

The detective's brow creased. He mumbled the girl's name to himself. He opened a newspaper that was lying on the desk. Two halftone reproductions met his gaze—pictures of a young woman and a man. The news item told of the couple's coming marriage. The man was Dwight MacDonald, reform candidate for mayor. Under the girl's likeness was printed, Elsa Pierce.

Mallory stared at the photograph. He visioned the girl locked in the bedroom upstairs. The girl from whom he had torn the clothes. She was Elsa Pierce—fiancee of Dwight MacDonald—the girl that Gordon Newell had said was in danger and whom Mallory had been hired to protect!

The detective returned the envelope to his pocket, jumped up from his chair. Now he realized why Elsa Pierce, the girl he was holding, wanted to get out of the house. The reform candidate for mayor was unaware that she had visited Newell's home with campaign matters.

As Dwight MacDonald's fiancee she didn't want to be mixed up in

a murder case. He must get her out before Lieutenant O'Neill arrived from headquarters.

He rushed to the stairway leading to the upper floor, put his foot on the bottom step. Outside, a siren moaned. Mallory halted. Shoes crunched on the gravel outside of the front door. The bell rasped.

The detective opened the portal. Police Lieutenant O'Neill and the medical examiner came in. "Hello, Mallory," O'Neill greeted. "Do you go out and wait for murders to happen? How come?"

Mallory grinned. "Newell sent for me. Before I got in I heard shots. I broke in the window, found Newell's body." The detective led them to the library; pointed to the dead man. Mallory turned to the manacled man who had said he was Newell's secretary. "While I was looking around," the sleuth explained, "this fellow slipped in here. He tried to knife me. I tapped him on the head."

O'Neill wrapped the dead man's gun in his handkerchief, put it in his pocket. The medical examiner inspected the gory wound in Newell's chest. "Got him through the lung," the doctor said.

Two uniformed men came in with a stretcher. They took Newell's body away. O'Neill prodded the handcuffed man. The pajama-clad man blinked; looked up with terror-stricken eyes. "I—I didn't do it, sir!"

"Get up," O'Neill ordered. The police lieutenant turned to Mallory. "Looked over the house?" he asked.

"Yes," the detective nodded. He

hoped the officer would let it go at that.

"Let's get going," O'Neill said.

**M**ALLORY breathed in relief. He followed the medical examiner and O'Neill who took his prisoner. Outside, the police lieutenant locked the door, put the key in his pocket. The detective stalled around his car until the officers from headquarters had gone. Then he went back and reentered the house by the smashed window.

Taking the steps in leaps, Mallory reached the door of the bedroom where he had left the girl—the girl that he now knew was Elsa Pierce.

He went into the boudoir, snapped on his flash and walked toward the bed. And then Mallory stopped as if his legs had turned to ice. His square jaw dropped. Elsa Pierce lay on the bed.

The coverlet was down, exposing her faultlessly-modeled body in the beam of the electric torch. And between the mounds of her firm breasts a jagged hole loomed! Crimson had flowed down the satiny valley of her bosoms, streamed over her rounded hips, and soaked into the bed clothes.

Mallory went to the bedside, stared at the naked inert form of the girl. He put his hand over her heart. There was no beat. Elsa Pierce was dead—stabbed to death!

The detective glanced toward the open window. The lace curtain wafted gently in the breeze. But through that opening the sinister hand of death had crept in—to Elsa Pierce.

Mace Mallory extinguished his flash and sat down in the darkness. His brain whirled as he pieced facts together. The girl had probably been in the house when Newell had been shot. She had surprised the killer. That accounted for the scream he had heard, the ensuing commotion.

The murderer had been frightened away when Mallory had crashed the window. And while the detective had been down stairs with the police the assassin had sneaked back into the house by the second story window, had silenced the lips of the girl forever.

From his pocket, Mallory withdrew the envelope addressed to Elsa Pierce, now dead. He took out the contents. In the glow of his flash, two pictures—police photographs—came to view. One of them was of a girl with light hair. Flo Adams was typed on the margin.

The detective smiled faintly. He recognized the girl. He had been in police court when this blonde had been there on a vagrancy charge. For future records, Mallory had jotted her name and address in his notebook.

He scanned the other photograph from the envelope. It was a picture of a beady-eyed man. The name "Floyd (alias Trigger) Mattson" was at the bottom. The police records told of Flo Adams' association with Mattson in another city.

And now, Gordon Newell, campaign manager for the reform candidate, had found canceled checks endorsed by the mayor, Cass Grainger; proving that the city of-

ficial was receiving sums of money from this underworld character.

**M**ALLORY jumped up, left the room and vaulted down the stairs. He left the house by the damaged window. Leaping into his coupe he whirled the starter, mashed down on the throttle. The machine plunged into the night.

Fifteen minutes later Mallory got out of his car at the curb of a side street. He went to the door of a stucco house set back in a parking. He punched the door bell, waited. A lamp clicked overhead. The door opened softly. A woman who had managed to squeeze her matronly figure into a form-fitting gown looked at him interrogatively.

Mallory smiled, induced a meaning twinkle to his grey eyes. "A friend of mine, Flo Adams, she is still here?" the detective asked and stepped inside without an invitation.

The woman surveyed him critically. "Flo is not here anymore," she replied.

Mallory looked disappointed. "But you can tell me where I can find her?"

She shook her head. "I'm afraid Flo wouldn't want to see you anymore. She has a steady boy friend now."

"Oh." Mallory appeared crestfallen. Then he grinned.

Significantly, the woman arched her penciled eyebrows. "Perhaps another girl—might interest you?"

"Perhaps," Mallory replied. He followed the woman to a reception room. She motioned to a chair and left.

**I**N a few moments three girls came in. They wore diaphanous silks that left nothing to the imagination. Three pairs of seductive thighs gleamed as they pirouetted the room. Swelling breasts peeped boldly from their flowing garments.

A red-haired girl sat on the edge of Mallory's big chair. She put her bare arms around the detective's neck, leaned close. A brunette perched on the other side. The tip of her breast brushed his shoulder. She smiled enticingly. The third girl dropped on a carpet stool at the detective's feet. Heady perfume assailed his nostrils.

Mallory put his arm around the redhead's creamy shoulders. She slid into his lap, melted to him. The detective felt the girl's warm flesh against him, the pliant breasts that crushed into his chest. The other two girls left.

The red-haired girl got up, pulled at the sleuth's hand. "Come on, handsome."

Mallory remained in his chair. "We can talk here," he said.

"Talk?" the girl frowned. "Talking won't buy mamma lingerie, handsome."

The detective passed her a bill. "Maybe this will."

The redhead dropped back on Mallory's lap, took the money. "What's it all about, handsome?"

"I want to know where Flo Adams hangs out."

The girl's eyes searched Mallory's face. "Flo's traveling in big time now."

"Who's the heavy sugar?" the detective asked.



*"You—you beast!" she cried. Her red lips shook.  
"You've got nothing on me. You can't get away with it."*

"I'm not telling, handsome. Say, what's the big idea?"

"Just want to make a social call," Mallory grinned. He pressed the girl close, felt her soft undulant flesh under his hand. His

fingers strayed inside her silken gown, over the solid mounds of her breasts. The redhead quivered, breathed short, then straightened. "No soap, handsome; old stuff."

The detective dug out a ten dol-

lar bill; waved it under her nose. "Come on, beautiful. Tell me where I can find Flo."

The redhead eyed the note greedily. "She's somewhere in the country. I don't know where. We talked to each other on the phone for a few days. The last time I tried to get her they said the line was out."

"I'll trade with you, beautiful. Give me that phone number. I'll give you this bill."

The redhead took the banknote, stuffed it in her hose. "The number is Arlington 7754," she said.

Mallory put the number in his notebook. The detective gathered the girl in his arms, got to his feet, planted a kiss on her scarlet lips and then dropped her in the chair. "Thanks, beautiful." He left the room, strode out of the house to his car at the curb and tore away.

**SET BACK** from the highway, an old gabled house loomed through a low fog when Mace Mallory quietly braked his coupe to a stop. Luck had favored him at the telephone company. The operator had known the location of the place listed under the number that the redhead had given him—the house where Flo Adams was supposed to be.

Mallory got out of his car, turned up the collar of his cravenette top coat and surveyed the somber structure among the trees. Darkness enveloped the lower portion. From the window of a turreted room on the second floor light filtered through the foliage. The detective walked around the building. Not a stir came from within.

He tried the rear door. It was locked. He tried several of his skeleton keys in the lock before it yielded. Inside, he snapped his flash, guided himself to the front of the house.

He went up a stairway to the second floor. There was a door set in a rounded wall. He approached it, listened. There was silence.

The detective took his service gun from its holster, gripped it in readiness. He banged the panel with his hard knuckles.

"Who's there?" a startled voice asked.

"Open this door," Mallory ordered.

Inside, the faint sound of feet patted toward the door. The voice spoke again on the other side of the panel. "I can't open the door. I'm locked in here, alone."

Another one of the detective's slender keys shot back the lock. Revolver leveled, Mallory kicked the door inward, poised himself on the threshold.

A gasp came from the red sensual lips of a girl in the room. The sleuth's sweeping glance took in her figure from her golden blonde hair to her bare feet. A tissue brassiere cupped her full swelling breasts. Her only other garment was a pair of step-ins of lace netting. Mallory gazed at her rounded hips, the sloping contours of her white thighs, and the flat surface of her smooth stomach.

The detective looked over the room; at the disarranged bed, a table on which was a glass of liquor, cigarettes and an array of food cartons. Mallory grinned. "About all I've seen tonight are

naked dames. What's the lay here, Flo Adams?" He showed his badge.

The blonde's features went hard. "You've got nothing on me, dick!"

"I might have, sister," Mallory smiled sardonically. "Gordon Newell, campaign manager for Dwight MacDonald, was bumped off tonight. Newell had plenty on the mayor, Cass Grainger, besides some police records of another person." The detective produced the big envelope. "This was in Newell's desk. His killer wanted to get hold of it."

Mallory brought the canceled checks to light; then held up the police photograph of Flo Adams, the girl in front of him. "Recognize yourself?" he asked.

The blonde stared. Her crimson lips parted.

The detective showed the other photograph—the picture of the man with whom the criminal records stated consorted with Flo Adams. "Your boy friend, Trigger Mattson."

The yellow-haired girl's face went ashen. "That stuff was found in—in the place where the man was bumped off?"

Mace Mallory nodded. "And a girl who knew something about it got a knife through her heart."

The cigarette fell from the blonde's trembling fingers. "My God!" she gasped and dropped into a chair.

"It might be a little messy when the police question you, sister."

**FLO ADAMS** leaned forward in her chair. "But I had nothing to do with it! I've been locked up

here for nearly a week! They even took my clothes so as I couldn't take a run-out powder on them!"

"Who are *they*, Flo?"

The girl's lips quivered. She looked up helplessly at the detective.

Mallory sat down alongside of her, put his arm around her, under her armpits. His fingers slipped under her wispy brassiere; sank into the resilient flesh of her breast. "How do you happen to be locked up here?" he asked.

The blonde swallowed nervously. "This—this is Cass Grainger's place, the mayor's. I've been kicking around with him for a time. The other night he brought me out here for a party. Cass got stewed. We were going back to town together when—when Trigger Mattson blew in. Trigger got sore."

"What about?"

"Trigger told the mayor he'd have to lay off me until after election. Cass got warty, said he'd do as he damned please. Trigger bundled him into his car and took him away. Trigger didn't want me seen in town so he took my clothes to keep me here. He had the phone disconnected and locked me in with some damned canned goods."

"How come that Trigger can tell the mayor, Cass Grainger, where to head in?" Mallory asked.

"Trigger can throw lots of votes," the blonde explained. "Cass needs them to get that mayor job again. If that reform mug, MacDonald, gets in, Trigger's dumps will be closed."

Mallory stared thoughtfully. "I  
(Continued on page 110)

# INDISCREET CORPSE

*Wayne's gun spoke as the knife descended.*

By KEN COOPER

*Actress to her finger-tips, the girl toyed with the detective. He wanted to believe her... Yet her story made even more puzzling this maelstrom of murder*



**W**AYNE TAYLOR breathed a momentous sigh of relief as the last act curtain descended on *Flight of Fancy*, a "mystery thriller" with neither mystery nor thrills! He hurried up the aisle, through the lobby, out on the sidewalk, resolving never again to accept a publicity manager's invitation to attend the opening of a crime play. It was one time when having a reputation as a criminal investigator was a handicap!

He lit a cigarette while waiting for his black limousine to pull up to the curb. Of course, there had been one redeeming feature about *Flight of Fancy*. Her name was Aline Carr and her body was like something out of Rubens pared down to twentieth century proportions.

Wayne remembered the orchid negligee she had sported in the boudoir scene. Her satiny breasts were full-fleshed globes under it, and her hips were pink and voluptuously curved. Not bad at all.

Kawi, Wayne's butler-chauffeur-assistant, nodded from behind the wheel as he brought the car up to the curbstone. Wayne opened the door and stepped inside. "Home, Kawi, and don't spare the horse-power. I need plenty of Scotch and soda after that dish!"

**H**E LEANED back and something soft brushed up against him. He jerked around. In the momentary light of a street lamp he saw frightened brown eyes, strawberry lips, and the excited swell of young breasts.

"I've got to talk fast, Mr. Taylor," the girl at his side panted. "I want you to help me get some



letters back. They are being held by Vernon Elton, the theatrical producer. I've been paying and paying to keep him from informing my husband, but I can't do it any more!" Her voice broke. "I know you can get them for me!"

Wayne reached beneath the seat and turned the switch that set the two speaking tubes on either side of the car working. The one curling down to Kawi's ear would bring him each word the myster-

ious girl spoke. Sometimes a witness came in handy.

"Who are you and how did you get into my car?" Wayne questioned.

"I'm Wanda Van Atta. My husband is Roger Van Atta, the international law expert. I noticed in the theatrical section of the paper that you were attending the opening of this play. I got the license number of your car from the registration bureau. I was afraid to see you at your home because I know I'm always being followed. Even now—"

Wayne glanced out the rear window. He leaned forward. "Take Tenth Avenue, Kawi." Then, to the trembling girl. "You wrote the letters to Elton?"

"Yes."

"Why should anyone be following you?"

Her hand fell on his arm. "I—I don't know, but I have that feeling. As though I were being constantly shadowed."

**T**HE limousine swung into Tenth Avenue, moved slowly along the dark thoroughfare. Again Wayne glanced out the rear window. His jaw tightened. "All right, Mrs. Van Atta," he said, "but you'll have to give me more information than you have." He caught a whiff of perfume eddying up from the valley of her breasts.

"There isn't anything else I can tell you. Elton promised me the lead in a play. He made violent love to me. I must have been mad to listen to him, but I did. I wrote him some damaging notes. Now he's holding them over my head."

She came closer. "I know you can help me if anyone can. I'll call you in a day or two. Now you'd better let me out."

Wayne gave the order and the limousine stopped at the next corner. The girl stepped to the pavement. "I'm counting on your help," she breathed. The door slammed shut and she hurried up the street. Wayne spoke into one of the speaking tubes.

"Circle the block as fast as you can, Kawi, and come back on Tenth Avenue. We were being followed by a sedan and I think there's trouble on the way!"

Motor roaring, the big car raced around the block. Coming into Tenth Avenue again, Wayne peered down the inky street. His heart leaped. He was just in time to see a figure spring out of the sedan, whip a hand over Wanda Van Atta's mouth, and drag her into the car. Before the door slammed shut it was away like a greyhound.

"Follow them!" Wayne barked. "Cut your brights and run with parking lights. Keep far enough behind so they won't suspect anything."

The sedan sped uptown, circled up off the drive and headed across George Washington Bridge. At the Jersey side, after paying the toll, it took the bleak Palisades road. Kawi followed it at a distance of a quarter of a mile. Wayne crawled through the front window and slid into the seat beside the Javanese.

"Swell night for a murder," he commented grimly, looking at the

somber, starless sky. "Got your gun?"

"Instructions always carry same," Kawi replied laconically.

"You heard what she said?"

"Think lady speak truth but unaware of evil machinations." Kawi slowed down as the tail-light of the sedan described an arc and vanished.

"Took a side road," Wayne muttered. "Pull up quietly and cut your motor."

Wayne stepped out of the limousine when it reached the side road. He could hear the motor of the sedan, knew it was idling.

"You stay here, Kawi," he instructed. "If you hear a shot, come on the run."

**F**IFTY yards from the main thoroughfare Wayne picked up the red tail-light gleam. Automatic in hand, he crept up behind the sedan. It was parked in front of what looked like a deserted caretaker's shack, but there was no driver behind the wheel.

Wayne made a mental note of the license number: L-4832-C. The flash of an electric torch through the window of the shack caught his eye. Ducking low he scampered across the road. On hands and knees he crawled to the low window sill.

Part of the glass pane was out and he caught the guttural accents of a foreign voice. Inch by inch he raised his head until he could peer into the interior of the shack.

The sight that met his eyes turned his blood into ice. For a split second he was held rigid by the horror of the scene. One man

had the white light of an electric torch trained on the bared breasts of Wanda Van Atta, and another was down on his knees beside her, a steel-bladed stiletto raised to plunge through her heart.

Wayne's gun came up with a jerk. Thunder roared and forked orange flame leaped out of the muzzle as a lethal bullet winged into the killer's spine, arching him in a spasmodic curve and dropping him to the floor.

For an instant the knife blade flashed as it spun out of the man's hand, but in the next breathless fraction of time the searchlight went out and darkness blanketed the murder scene. Wayne sidestepped and plunged through the door of the shack. His foot caught in a loose floor-board and he went down in a heap.

The light flashed on, blinding him with its intensity. He raised his gun to plow a bullet at its source, but the trigger refused to respond to the pressure of his forefinger. It was jammed! He clubbed the weapon as the shadow behind the light came at him.

Something hissed through the air, came down with a frightful crash on the top of his head. Everything went brilliant, and from brilliancy to impenetrable darkness.

**T**HE sensation of returning consciousness was not a new one to Wayne Taylor, but somehow each uplift from the bottomless pit of miasma had its own distinct features. This time he was envisioning himself making violently successful love to Aline Carr.

One hand was moving up the velvet sheen of a thigh and the other was comfortably cupped about the passionate swell of a full-blown breast. But when his eyes opened, the illusion was no more. Kawi's impassive, Oriental face looked down at him. Wayne managed a smile; a smile that Kawi did not return.

"Explosion from revolver come too late," the Javanese said.

Wayne licked his dry lips. "Too late for what?"

"For to apprehend fleeing individual. Can see only back of departing automobile upon arrival. However, secure registration numbers. Same being L-4832-C."

Wayne sat up and gingerly felt the bump on the top of his head. Suddenly he went rigid as recollection returned.

"What about the Van Atta woman? They were going to kill—"

Kawi picked his small hand flashlight from the floor and trained its circle of light to the center of the room. A gasp broke from Wayne's lips. Wanda Van Atta was stretched on her back, the bone handle of the stiletto protruding from the blood-soaked hill of her left breast.

"Dead!"

A peculiar pang shot through Wayne's heart. It was not that sanguinary death affected him, but merely the thought that only a bare hour or so ago he had felt those breasts warm and living against his chest, those pale hands clutching his shoulders, those color-drained lips raised in supplication. The pain of his head wound was forgotten as he came to his feet.

"Where's the one I got?" he questioned.

Kawi scanned the room with a flash. It was empty except for a broken chair. "Individual who escape evidently take companion. You think you kill him?"

"I don't know. Got him in the back. He must have bled."

There *was* a pool of coagulated blood a few feet away from where Wanda Van Atta's life fluid had puddled and grown hard. Wayne scraped it off with a knife, folded the gruesome evidence into a handkerchief. He stood erect and looked at the cold, still body of the girl. One breast was carmine-streaked, the other alabaster white.

"You were pretty much right, Kawi," he muttered. "The machinations were damned evil!"

CAPTAIN DARLING of the state police faced Wayne across a desk at headquarters.

"Good God, man," he blurted. "How can we keep a killing quiet?"

Wayne toyed with the murder knife, found to be devoid of fingerprints. "For twenty-four hours," he said quietly. "Tell the press you suspect attempted suicide. that Mrs. Van Atta is *not* dead, just injured. You can't reveal her whereabouts, either. I'll inform her husband and handle all details of the case." He rose. "And by tomorrow midnight I'll have your man! In case you hear of the man I shot, let me know."

Racing across the bridge to Manhattan, Wayne outlined his plan of procedure to Kawi. "We've got to get to Elton in a hurry—but

phone. "C'mon down right away! I'm throwing a party for Alina Carr. Elton'll be here sometime tonight!"

Wayne snapped up. "He—he isn't there yet?"

"No, but he'll show up! C'mon, I got more chorus girls than you can shake a stick at and plenty of 1911 bubble-water."

Wayne assented and hung up. Things were beginning to shape themselves. Vernon Elton was ab-

*Wayne lunged for the lamp as the door opened, revealing a man with leveled gun.*



innocently. I'll call Max Meyer and tell him I want to meet Elton about a play. From then on it's just pot-luck."

At his bachelor apartment, Wayne phoned Meyer, the booking agent. "I want an introduction to Vernon Elton, Max. I've written a play and—"

Meyer's voice boomed over the

sent from the Meyer blowout. That looked suspicious. Aline Carr was present. That sounded *auspicious!* A vision of the actress in that orchid negligee flashed before him. Warm, full breasts and hot lips. It didn't mix with murder, but he might kill two birds with one stone.

He turned to Kawi. "Meyer's throwing a party for an actress. He says Elton will be there." His mind crackled at lightning speed. "Before I go down I think I'd better call Van Atta before I go. I don't want him to crab the works by putting in a missing alarm to the New York police."

A very English voice responded to his call. Mr. Van Atta was out of town, would not return until the following evening. Wayne hung up.

"Just what we want, Kawi! By the time Van Atta gets back we'll be able to tell him the truth. Come on, down to Max Meyer's."

**T**HE theatrical agent's party was in full swing when Wayne arrived. A platinum blonde chorine, combining natural exuberance and Max Meyer's 1911 champagne, was dancing atop a grand piano, her costume a turkish towel and a smile.

"H'ya, han'some!" she greeted as Wayne entered the room, adding to the verbal salutation by lowering the towel to her hips. Wayne's eyes traveled the length of her slim nudity. Her calves were a little too muscular, but the lithe ripple of her thighs and what he could see of her curved hips made up for it. Her breasts were small, but rounded like California

oranges and set high on her chest.

Max Meyer, surrounded by a bevy of beauties, spotted the private investigator. He was over in a moment, bubbling gleefully. "The first thing is to meet Aline," he gushed, "and the second is to have a drink of my 1911 fizz!"

If the champagne was half the wine that Aline Carr was the voluptuous woman, it would be damn' good stuff, Wayne decided as he acknowledged Max's introduction to the actress.

"He's got a play he wants to show Vernon," Max explained. "A detective play, Wayne?"

Wayne nodded. "Er—yes, in a sense."

Aline Carr's violet eyes narrowed. The tip of her tongue moved sensuously about her blood-red lips, leaving a damp glitter in its wake. The succulently feline motion sent a shiver through Wayne. His eyes dropped to the neckline of her red satin evening gown.

Her large, gloriously white breasts were half-exposed, their inner boundaries touching one another and forming a delicately shadowed valley.

"From what I've heard, Mr. Taylor," she said softly, "you should be able to do a fine detective play. I'm sure Vernon will be glad to read it."

Max nodded vehemently. "Especially if Aline says he should." He winked broadly. "Aline and Vernon are like this." He crossed two fingers.

The agent's coarse witticism germinated an idea in Wayne's mind. To avoid undue suspicion.

it might be smart to work through the actress. If Aline Carr and Vernon Elton were as friendly as Meyer seemed to indicate, she would know something about Elton's relations with Wanda Van Atta.

"Mr. Elton is expected here, isn't he?" Wayne questioned.

Aline shrugged her nude shoulders. "He was, but I don't know what happened. I left him at the theater. Max, do you want to give him a ring at his apartment?"

**M**AX MEYER returned with a glass of champagne and information relative to the producer. "Two reasons why he didn't come. First, his car was stolen from outside the theater, and second, he's got a headache and doesn't feel well. He sends you his love and he'll see you tomorrow maybe."

Wayne suppressed his eagerness to plunge further into the maelstrom of mystery. A stolen car and a headache sounded like carefully planned alibis.

Someone struck up a lively dance tune on the piano. At his indicative nod, the actress rose from her chair and came gracefully into his arms. Gracefully, easily, her undulating curves adjusted themselves to Wayne's well-built body. Each forward step he took brushed his knee between her thighs. The velvet warmth of the contact sent thrill waves tumbling through him, vying in pleasure with the sensations engendered by his palm on her bare back.

She leaned forward and looked up at him. Her lips were a lushly damp invitation, parted to reveal

sparkling white teeth. Wayne's eyes were drawn magnetically to the bared white globes of her breasts. They were probably like velour to the touch; warm velour.

"You wouldn't want to tell me the plot of your play, would you?" she queried.

Wayne smiled down into her fascinating eyes. "I'd be glad to, Miss Carr." Forgotten, momentarily, was his mission. This seemed like a golden opportunity to be alone with her, possibly to pay concrete attention to the charms he had seen under the orchid negligee from a sixth row orchestra seat. "It's rather noisy here," Wayne remarked, "but—"

Her shaded eyelids lowered. "I had planned leaving, anyhow. If you'd care to stop at my apartment we could discuss it there."

"Splendid!" Wayne's pulses raced at the prospect. "I have my car downstairs. This is an unexpected treat."

**A**LINE CARR'S suite at the *Belvedere Arms* was hardly in the best of taste, but a sumptuously soft couch and low amber lights compensated for the fat-bellied, rococo cupids adorning the paneled walls. She removed her wrap, crossed to a whiskey cabinet and prepared highballs. Back on the couch, she crossed her long legs and turned to Wayne.

"Act 1, Scene 1," she said smilingly.

Wayne fumbled for the germ of an idea. "Er—the title is *The Indiscreet Corpse*. It concerns the murder of a woman and—and the subsequent apprehension of the

murderer by means of bringing the dead person back to life and luring the killer into making another attempt at murder."

Word by word and scene by scene he reconstructed the brutal killing of Wanda Van Atta, constantly searching her face for some sign of recognition. But there was none. She remained impassively beautiful, her violet eyes exuding a fascination far more potent than the amber liquor in his tall high-glass glass. Even the casual mention of letters brought no reaction.

Wayne took one final stab. "This plot," he said slowly, "is based on a case of blackmail with which I'm engaged at the present time."

She nodded approvingly. "It sounds terribly real. I'm certain Vernon will consider it. Another drink?"

Wayne shook his head negatively. "No, thanks." He *had* to keep clear. His eyes dropped to the swell of her breasts, a movement she caught. She came to her feet.

"Would you mind if I got into something more comfortable, Mr. Taylor?" The crimson tips of her fingers brushed across the tight bodice of her gown. Wayne watched the sensuously seductive play of her hips as she walked into an adjoining room.

She returned shortly, the red satin gown having given way to a peach chiffon peignoir. Wayne drew in his breath sharply. The garment was hazily diaphanous, revealing the columnar whiteness of her full-fleshed thighs, bias-cut step-ins sheathing her hips, and the sweet roundness of her breasts,

all but bursting the confines of a net brassiere.

She approached the console radio, twisted the dials. Soft dance music emanated from the grilled loud speaker.

"Dance?" she queried.

WAYNE rose. The roof of his mouth was dry. She came into his arms swiftly. In every sense the atmosphere was perfect. The faintly warm glow of one orange table lamp provided the room's only illumination. When its light fell across her face, it blended with the flesh tints, creating an exotic illusion of cream enamel, broken only by the strident flame of her mouth.

Wayne's hand slipped down from the small of her back until his finger tips touched the outward swell of warm flesh. A tremor shot through her and she missed a step. Not a word was spoken, but understanding passed between them.

Somehow, Wayne found the couch. Aline leaned back and away from him, but his mouth flew up her bare arm and buried itself in the pulsating hollow of her throat. His fingers, tense and eager, parted the peignoir to reach soft warm flesh.

She moaned softly and her lips beckoned. In that first kiss, she seemed to find an outlet for her voluptuousness. Her eyes, burning like coals, were pools of desire. The throb of ecstasy in Wayne's ears was a roaring cataract.

Under his searching fingers the peignoir fell away, the brassiere slipped from her shoulders, and

*Before he could strike, two hands seized him from beneath the bed.*



the mature lushness of her was before him, almost begging the thrill of his caresses.

It was this that deafened him to the turning of a key in the front door lock, to the soft pad of entering feet. Only when a harsh voice rasped a command did he realize that they were not alone.

"All right, Taylor, stick 'em up!" the voice snapped.

Wayne jerked erect, his back to the door. His arms came up slowly. The expression of horror on Aline Carr's face amused him. She was an actress to her fingertips, if nothing else.

Wayne drew a deep breath. He

gauged the distance to the table on which the orange lamp stood. Darkness would give him half a chance.

He was off the couch like a wild cat. A gun thundered and a whistling bullet creased his temple, burning like fire. The flat of his hand hit the lamp base, swept it to the floor. Darkness was followed by the melodic tinkling of glass. Wayne crouched low, wondering when the next shot would be winging his way.

An electric sign, blinking on and off, threw its intermittent light across the couch, revealing Aline Carr in a position of tense terror.

SUDDENLY the door opened and a shadowed figure slipped out of the apartment. Another shot echoed eerily before Wayne could get to his feet. Aline came off the couch, intercepting him as he headed for the door.

"Please!" she screamed. "Please don't go! He'll kill you!"

Wayne tried to break loose but her arms were tight around his neck. He heard sounds of a scuffle in the outer hall. Finally he tore away, hurling the actress to the floor. In the hallway he drew up short.

Kawi was stretched out on the cold marble, blood pouring from a vicious gash in his head. The gunman was nowhere in sight, but a half-open door indicated he had taken to the roof. Wayne gave chase, but the man had too big a lead.

Returning to the hallway, he lifted Kawi and carried him into Aline Carr's apartment. A brown leather pass case was clutched in the Javanese's hand.

Smeling salts and a cold compress brought Kawi around. His almond eyes blinked wonderingly as he looked up at Wayne.

"Individual entering look suspicious," he said by way of explanation. "Think it wise to follow."

Wayne nodded. "Very wise. Where'd you get this pass case?"

"From individual's inner pocket when grappling with him. Trust same is of value."

"I don't know. It contains papers of identification for Hans Mueller, together with a membership card in the *Friends of New*

*Germany*. That and a message in code. Would you remember the bird that knocked you out, Kawi, if you saw him again?"

The Javanese shook his head negatively. "Individual wearing mask, sir. Impossible to identify."

Wayne turned to Aline Carr, cringing in a corner. "Now *you've* got plenty to explain, baby. Who was it you called when you left me to change into that cobweb outfit?"

The actress' lips trembled. "Nobody! I didn't call a soul! I swear I didn't!"

"Then who was it took that shot at me and how did he know I was here?"

Her breasts heaved tumultuously beneath their scant covering. "I don't know! Believe me, I don't!"

Wayne scowled. "Okay, but it's damned funny you stopped me from giving chase. Afraid I might get hurt, is that it?" Sarcasm dripped from every word but it was lost on her.

"Yes," she panted.

AN idea flashed through Wayne's mind. He thought of "*The Indiscreet Corpse*" as more than a hastily constructed figment of his imagination. Why not bring this mystery to its logical conclusion in the same manner? Wanda Van Atta was dead, but as far as her killer knew she was still alive.

"You're coming with me, Miss Carr," he said. "Get into some clothes . . . and keep the door to your bedroom *open!*"

Kawi, still dazed from the blow he had received, sat in the rear of the limousine with Aline Carr while

Wayne drove to his apartment. The guest room was prepared for the actress, but before she entered it, she faced Wayne.

"I want you to believe I kept you from following that man for your own good," she said softly. "I don't know what you have in mind by making a prisoner of me, but at least believe my sincerity."

Wayne followed her into the room, closed the door. "You knew Elton was blackmailing Wanda Van Atta, didn't you?" he questioned.

Her eyes flickered. "I—I knew she was backing his productions."

"Because of some letters he had in his possession?"

"Yes."

Wayne gripped her arms. "Well, Wanda Van Atta was stabbed to death in a Jersey hut at eleven-thirty tonight!"

She stiffened and a gasp of horror broke from her lips. "No! Oh, God, no!" She went limp against him.

"I'm telling you this because I'm planning to use you to trap the killer," Wayne continued. "To all intents and purposes, you will be Wanda Van Atta . . . a corpse come to life!"

The telephone rang stridently.

Wayne released Aline and stepped out to the foyer. It was Captain Darling of the Jersey state police. The body of a German with a bullet hole in his back had been fished out of the river.

"Listen, Taylor," the police official protested, "we can't keep that murder under cover much longer."

Wayne spoke softly into the

receiver. "You won't have to, Darling. Just send a sample of the German's blood over to me at once. I'll have your killer before midnight tomorrow."

KAWI, his scalp wound dressed, appeared at Wayne's call. "Feel well enough to go on an errand?" The Javanese nodded. "Okay. Rush down to the *Evening Enquirer* office and tell Carson, the night city editor, that I want all the morgue has on Hans Mueller, if anything, together with any photographs he can dig up. There should be something under the Nazi file. Get back as soon as you can."

Before returning to the guest bedroom, Wayne mixed two highballs. In one he dropped a white pellet of morphia. Aline was sitting on the bed when he entered. Her eyes were fevered pools in her pale, frightened face. She accepted the drink, gulping it down as though her throat were parched.

"When—when did you say that woman was killed?" she whispered huskily.

"About eleven-thirty. The morphia would be working soon. "Why?"

She passed a hand over her forehead. "Oh—er—Nothing."

Wayne gripped her arm. "If you know anything, Aline, you'd better tell me before the police are called in on this. I might be able to cover you."

She shivered. "You're trying to trap me!" she panted.

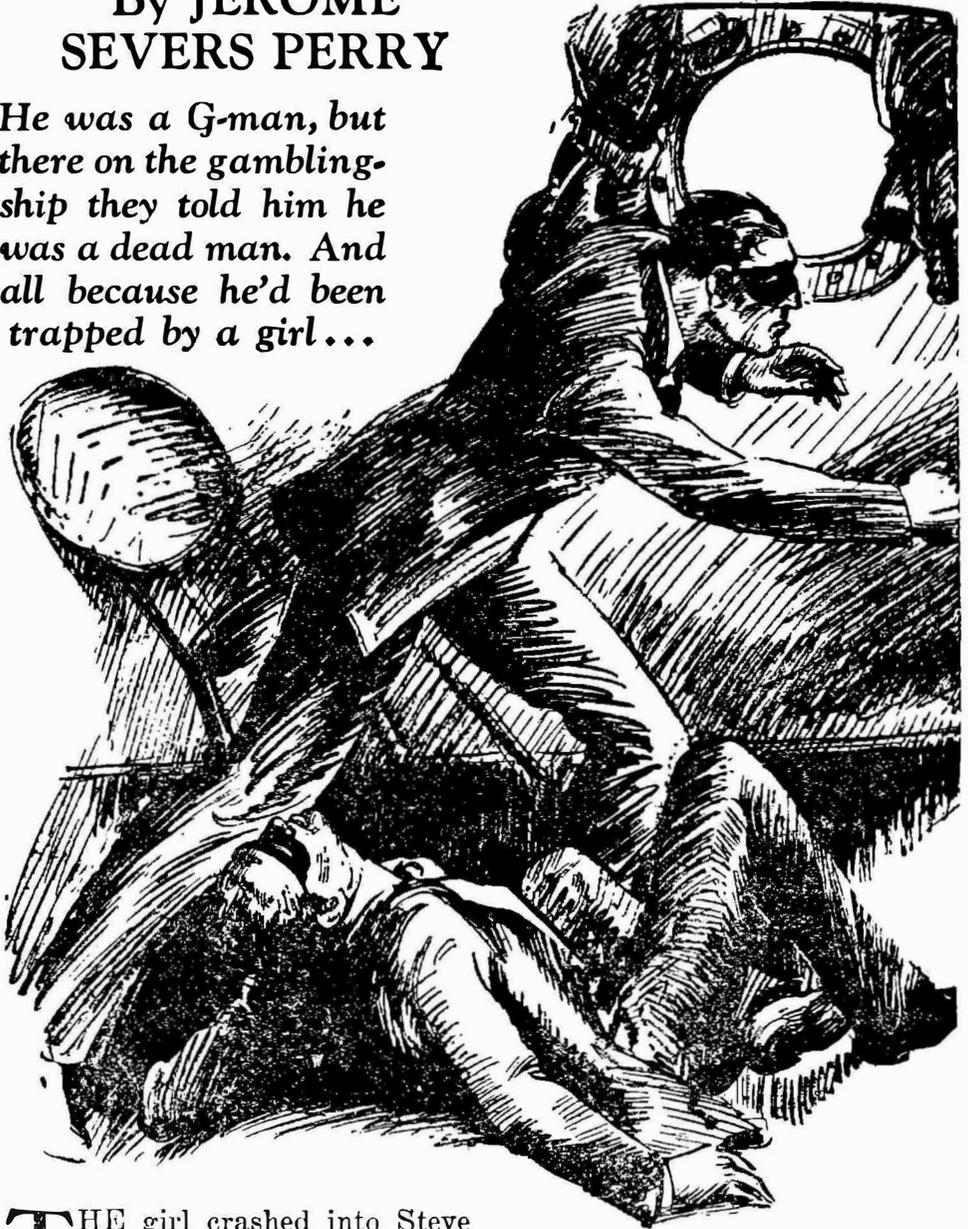
Wayne slid his hand up her arm, touched the outer boundary of a soft breast. "I want to help you,"

(Continued on page 98)

# DEATH RIDES

By JEROME  
SEVERS PERRY

*He was a G-man, but there on the gambling-ship they told him he was a dead man. And all because he'd been trapped by a girl...*



**T**HE girl crashed into Steve O'Neal, knocked a stack of ten-dollar chips out of his hand. "Oh—my goodness! I'm so sorry!" she gasped. She stooped

to help recover the scattered chips, even as O'Neal himself leaned forward. Their heads cracked together smartly.

# AT ANCHOR



*Before he could turn to defend himself, he felt the girl's gun in his side.*

O'Neal grinned ruefully. "Apologies and all that!" he said. "Entirely my fault." Then, for the first time, he took a good look at the girl.

It was night, and they were in the palatial saloon of the *Sea-Queen*, gambling boat de luxe, anchored twelve miles off the Pacific shore from the city of

Broad Beach. Ablaze with brilliant electric lights, humming with gaiety and subdued music from the dining saloon forward, the con-

verted coastwise steamer rode gently on the smooth swells. Magnificently reconstructed, the entire main saloon was now a palatial casino.

Soft carpets were on the floor; velvety lights cast a warm glow over roulette wheels, blackjack games, chuckaluck set-ups, crap layouts. Over the hum of voices arose the clicking of dice, the clatter of slot-machines, the softly-intoned announcements of roulette croupiers.

**S**TEVE O'NEAL, Federal Treasury dick, had been moving idly toward the grilled window of the cashier's cage, intent upon cashing in his stack of counters. This was his third successive nightly visit to the *Sea-Queen*, and he had been two hours accumulating those chips. He hadn't won them. He'd bought them—a few at this roulette table, a few more at that dice layout.

He'd worked very cautiously, so that he might attract no undue attention. He would buy five dollars' worth of chips, play half of them, lose them, pocket what remained. Then he would buy more at another table.

Finally he had started toward the cashier's window. And then the girl had caromed into him.

Now, picking up the last of the scattered counters, he looked at the girl. She was young, pretty, red-haired—and provocative as the devil. As O'Neal straightened up from his task of picking up the chips from the carpeted floor, his eyes traversed the girl's slender, chiffon-sheathed ankles and shape-

ly legs. Next came her lilting thighs and lush hips beneath the tight-fitting velvet of her green evening gown. Then her breasts.

O'Neal drew a sharp breath of admiration when he saw her breasts. They were firm, rounded enticing; and their upper halves gleamed snowy-white above the daring decolletage of her gown. Her shoulders were smooth and lustrous; and her face was a perfect oval framed with curling tendrils of auburn hair. Her blue eyes danced, and her red lips were parted in a smile of semi-coquetry.

"You must have been lucky tonight," she said to the Federal dick. She indicated his stack of blues.

He shrugged. "Not unlucky," he said.

She pouted. "Everything went against me, tonight. I've lost all my money." She sighed. "And I could stand a highball."

"You're alone?"

She nodded.

O'Neal smiled. "Wait until I cash these. Then—if you'll permit me—I'll buy a drink."

She took his arm gaily. "Nice!" she whispered.

He edged toward his original goal, the cashier's window. He slammed his stack of counters down. The swarthy man behind the grilled window raked them over swiftly, shoved a wad of bills at O'Neal. The Federal man accepted the money, pocketed it. His hand remained in his pocket, touching the bills, feeling them.

His face was impassive, but his heart accelerated a little. There were one or two genuine notes in

the roll. But the rest were spurious—counterfeit. He could tell by the feel of the paper.

It had been the same on O'Neal's previous two visits to the gambling boat. And now the Treasury dick knew that he had all the evidence he needed. His job was done.

RECENTLY, the entire coast had been flooded with bad currency. O'Neal had been sent from Washington to investigate. After weeks, he had finally traced the stream of counterfeit money to one source—the gambling boat *Sea-Queen*. It was a neat racket. The ship's proprietors caught the public coming and going—took in legitimate money when the customers lost; paid out spurious bills when the customers won.

Moreover, Steve O'Neal had a hunch that right here on this anchored boat were the engraving-plant and the presses from which the counterfeit bills issued. But of course he couldn't conduct a raid single-handed. Armed with his suspicions, he must get in touch with his chief back in Washington; gather together a crew of G-men; make a clean sweep of the *Sea-Queen* when the odds weren't so overwhelmingly against him.

Tall, broad-shouldered, impeccably clad in well-tailored dinner-clothes, O'Neal smiled down at the auburn-haired girl. "Okay. Now we're rich!" he spoke lightly. "Let's have that highball!"

Together they went to the ship's ornate bar in what had once been the vessel's lounge. They sat at a secluded table in an alcove. They ordered. Then the girl leaned for-

ward across the table, looked at O'Neal. "Do—do you think I'm perfectly terrible, sitting here with you, a stranger?"

He smiled at her. His eyes traveled to the deep valley between her partially-revealed, thrilling breasts. "I think you're terribly perfect," he answered.

Just then their drinks arrived. And at the same instant the girl, staring out of the alcove, suddenly went white. Her hand darted forth, clutched at O'Neal's sleeve. "My God!" she gasped.

O'Neal looked at her. "What's wrong?"

"My—my father . . . and my fiance! They—they don't know I'm out here on this boat! They—they'd—raise the devil—"

O'Neal said, "What of it?"

"But—I just saw them! They're right outside the bar! I—I've got to get away—quick!" She jumped from her chair; her eyes darted frantically about the alcove.

O'Neal saw a door leading to the outer deck. "Come along," he whispered. He grabbed her wrist, pulled her through the narrow door. They emerged upon a brilliantly-lighted promenade deck, went swiftly to a companionway leading to a landing above.

The girl looked backward, down. She trembled, tugged at O'Neal. "Hurry! I—I just saw them coming out of the saloon! Maybe they spotted me—"

AND then O'Neal saw a door open on the upper deck; a door giving access to one of the boat's private cabins. A man stepped out,

weaving unsteadily, as though drunk.

The Treasury man recognized him. He was George Varden, a Broad Beach banker—one of the men who had given O'Neal a lot of help in tracing down the stream of counterfeit money that was flooding the coast. Now the Federal man leaped ahead. "Varden!" he called.

The banker—red-faced, grey-haired, paunchy—looked at O'Neal. His mottled features grew a little redder. "O'Neal!" he choked out. "You—you mustn't say anything about—seeing me here—"

O'Neal grinned. "I won't. Not if you'll return the favor. Is anybody in that cabin you just came out of?"

"N-no. Not now. Why?"

"I want to borrow it for a little while."

"Help yourself, O'Neal." The banker waved his hand unsteadily, then wandered toward the companionway leading to the main deck below. O'Neal turned to the auburn-haired girl, who had crouched in the shadows. "Come along. I'll hide you in that cabin until we're reasonably certain your father and your fiance have gone back to the mainland," he whispered.

The girl looked at O'Neal. Her lower lip quivered. "All—all right," she acquiesced. He pushed her into the cabin, followed her, closed the door behind them.

His hand was still on her bare arm; and the touch of her feminine flesh sent little shivers of pleasure through his veins. He smiled at her. "Sit down there on the berth.

May as well take it easy." He reached for the light-switch, clicked it. The room was plunged in darkness.

He sat down beside her. The fragrance of her hair, the perfume of her body, assailed his nostrils. With an effort, he kept himself from slipping his arm about her waist, drawing her toward him. He couldn't take advantage of her, as frightened as she evidently was. They sat silent for a long moment.

And then, abruptly, there was a thunderous knocking at the cabin's door. A man's voice rasped "Lucile! Lucille—I saw you go in there! Open up!"

The girl gasped in the darkness. "My—m-my father!" she whispered, panic-stricken.

Steve O'Neal pressed her thigh with his hand. "Take it easy!" he said. Then he raised his voice. "Who's out there? What in hell do you want? There's nobody in here named Lucille!"

"Yes there is! I saw her go in!" the rasping voice penetrated the door.

O'Neal could feel the girl beside him; could feel her moving swiftly, struggling with something. He heard the swish of silk—and abruptly knew that she had stripped off her green satin evening gown. "Quick—take off your coat and tie!" she whispered. "It's our only chance."

"I don't get you!" the Federal man said, puzzled.

"Don't stop now! I'll explain... later—"

**C**ONFUSED, wondering, Steve O'Neal slipped out of his coat

and vest, whipped off tie and collar. The girl tugged at him, pulled him down beside her.

The door burst open. Two men lunged into the room, found the light-switch, clicked it. The cabin's single electric bulb glowed weakly. Steve O'Neal sat upright. He noticed that the auburn-haired girl had crouched down beside him, completely covered by the sheet, even to her hair.



*He leaped free,  
even as Lopez  
whirled on him.*

O'Neal looked at the two men who had burst into the cabin. One was elderly, wiry. The other was

younger—a swarthy individual with narrow hips and wide shoulders and gleaming black eyes. A sinister-looking man, with unveiled venom in his glittering glance.

The older man's eyes licked at O'Neal; then at the completely-covered figure of the girl in the bed with him. Abruptly, the elderly man's face went red. "I—I beg your pardon, sir!" he muttered. "I—I thought I had seen my daughter come in here. But of course—"

"Of course Lucille wouldn't be

here with a strange man!" the beady-eyed younger chap interposed. "We owe this gentleman our profuse apologies!"

"Never mind the apologies. Get out!" O'Neal rasped.

The two men backed out; closed the door of the cabin behind them. The Federal dick reached up, clicked out the light.

The girl beside him stirred uneasily. Abruptly, she clung to O'Neal in the darkness; her body trembled against him with relaxed tension.

"It's okay, my dear," O'Neal said. He touched her shoulder, patted it. . . . And then he discovered that she was naked! Naked save for a wispy step-in. Her breasts were unbrassiered, warmly pliant to his exploring touch. . . .

"I'd better stay here with you until we're sure they're gone," the girl whispered falteringly.

For reply, O'Neal gathered her into his arms. After all, he was human . . . and no man with red blood in his veins could be so close to a thrilling girl like this one without getting ideas. . . . !

In the darkness, he sought with his lips for her mouth. She surrendered her lips to him, willingly, ardently. Her mouth opened wide for his kiss, and he felt the darting tip of her tongue. . . .

His hands caressed her trembling breasts, the lush curves of her hips through her gauze-fragile step-in. Her thighs quivered; were alive to his tentative touch. He felt the delicious contours of her armpits, traced patterns on her naked breasts with his fingertips. . . .

"Oh—!" she gasped as he kissed her throat; as his mouth wandered downward over her cream-smooth skin. . . . And then her arms were about his neck. Her body was warm against him. . . .

IT was much later when at last he arose, felt for his vest, his coat. He slipped into the garments in the darkness. "They've probably given up looking for you now," he whispered to the girl. Then, as he donned his coat, his hand—almost automatically—went to the inner pocket, feeling for his flat bill-fold. He tensed.

The wallet was gone!

His jaw juttet. "What the damnation hell—!" he rasped. Because his small, gold Federal Treasury agent's badge was pinned within that bill-fold. . . and now it was gone. If it fell into the wrong hands, all his work of tracing the counterfeit gang would be lost; his quarry would realize that they had been spotted—would make a get-away!

Even as O'Neal's mind grappled with the truth, the cabin's door was flung inward. Two masked men leaped at the Federal dick. O'Neal pivoted, brought his hard right fist upward in a slashing blow that took the first masked man on the point of the jaw, sent him sprawling. But before he could whirl to defend himself from the second man, he felt an automatic's muzzle being jammed into his ribs. He half-turned—

The auburn-haired girl was smiling at him, harshly. "Reach for the roof, big boy!" she spat out.

He stared at her, white-faced.

She grinned. "You fell hard, didn't you, Mister Sap? You swallowed my story, hook, line, and sinker! You snooping rat! Now you'll get yours!" She looked at the masked men who had burst into the room. The one whom O'Neal had knocked backward was now struggling to his feet. The girl said, "Did we have the right dope, Morrie? Was this the guy we were after?"

"Yeah. He's a Fed, all right. Lopez swiped the wallet out of his coat a while ago, while old man Nichols held his attention by pretending to be your father. The wallet had a gold badge in it. This is the guy we're after."

Steve O'Neal's eyes narrowed. Abruptly, he realized what a sucker he'd been. The whole thing was a plant, a frame-up! And he'd tumbled into the trap without suspecting—

His jaw shot forth, and his mouth became a grim line. The girl bumping into him—that hadn't been accidental. She was one of the counterfeiting ring; had deliberately set out to trip him up. The counterfeiters must have been suspicious of O'Neal from the outset. And they had got this auburn-haired girl to rope him in.

All that bunk about her father, her fiance—lies! All lies! The men who had burst into the cabin; they hadn't been her father and the man she was engaged to. They were members of the counterfeit gang. And while the old man had held O'Neal's attention, the swarthy one had picked the pocket of the Treasury dick's discarded coat. . .

The girl donned her green dress; then she prodded O'Neal once more with her automatic. "Okay, mug. Get moving. You lead the way, Morrie." she commanded one of the masked men.

O'NEAL was shoved out of the cabin, along the upper deck toward where the *Sea-Queen's* bridge had once been. Now the bridge was solidly enclosed, converted into a medium-sized room. Its door opened. Steve O'Neal was prodded into the place.

He stared. Behind an ornate desk sat a man—a large man, masked, impassive, silent, motionless. Around the sides of the cabin were other men; some masked, some not. O'Neal recognized the two who had enacted the roles of the red-haired girl's father and fiancee.

The Federal dick squared his broad shoulders, stepped forward toward the big, masked man at the desk. "See here!" O'Neal rasped. "You can't get away with this kind of stuff, my friend. I'm one of Uncle Sam's little boys—as you've evidently found out by now, unfortunately. And I'd advise you to watch your step. The Federal Treasury doesn't brook any interference with its representatives in the performance of their duty!"

"No?" the masked man's voice was smooth, silky—and yet iron-hard beneath its oily overtones. "The Federal Treasury won't ever learn what has happened to you, O'Neal. You're never going back to shore!"

"Meaning—?"

"Meaning, my friend, that your

number is up. You're through. Finished. Washed up. You're a dead man right now!"

O'Neal grinned mirthlessly, baring his strong white teeth. "Don't you suppose my Department will send G-men looking for me if I turn up missing?"

"They won't find you . . . at the bottom of the ocean!" the masked man countered. "Not unless they're deep-sea divers!"

O'Neal chanced a long shot. "Maybe they won't find me. But they'll find your counterfeiting outfit in the hull of this boat!"

"What do you mean by that?" the masked man paled a little.

"I mean that I've already sent in my report, covering my suspicions of the *Sea-Queen*. You'll be raided before morning!" O'Neal barked.

Inwardly, he cursed himself because he had *not* sent in that report. If these men killed him, the trail would end right here and now. The Treasury dick hadn't wanted to report his findings until he had gathered conclusive evidence; that's why he had come out to the gambling boat a third time, to collect one more batch of spurious currency from the *Sea-Queen's* swarthy cashier.

But his face disclosed nothing of his inner thoughts as he stared, with grimly-narrowed eyes, at the masked man behind the desk. He carried through his colossal bluff with all the arrogance he could muster.

**I**T was a desperate play, and O'Neal knew it. A play for time—for a chance to escape the

clutches of his captors, get back to shore. The Federal man's heart raced, and blood throbbed at his temples. If he could make these men think that he had a squad of Treasury men coming out to the boat, they might turn their attention toward repelling such an invasion—and then O'Neal would have a fighting chance for his life.

The masked man stirred uneasily. "You're lying, O'Neal!"

"Yes? Wait and see!"

Then one of the lesser members of the gang stepped forward. "Listen, chief—maybe this guy's talking straight! And if he is, we're in a spot! We gotta dump that printing-press, get rid of all that 'queer'—and we gotta do it now!"

The masked man at the desk nodded slowly. "Perhaps you're right, Felipe. I guess the game's ended—for the time being. Come on—bring this Federal rat along. We'll send him to the bottom along with the printing-press and the engraving plant."

O'Neal felt himself being shoved out of the cabin, down a dark companionway. The steps led downward interminably, deep into the bowels of the vessel. At last O'Neal and his captors were in what had once been the *Sea-Queen's* engine room. Now, of course, there was no machinery. The vessel was nothing but a drifting hull, incapable of self-propulsion. The masked leader of the gang opened a heavy, water-tight door leading into a compartment at the ship's stern.

As the heavy door swung inward, lights flashed on. Steve O'Neal stared at his surroundings. He *was*



*He smashed his fist into her face.  
She sagged.*

in a small chamber—and the place was crammed with engraving and printing equipment. The Treasury man noticed something queer. It was a round porthole, set directly in the steel flooring. Not exactly a porthole, either. A round steel trap-door better described it; a steel trap-door held tightly in place by heavy clamps.

The masked chief of the counterfeit gang grabbed at O'Neal, thrust him against one of the printing-presses. He whipped out a length of cord, bound the Treasury dick to the heavy iron machinery. Then the masked man stepped back, grinning grimly.

"O'Neal," he rasped, "within an hour you'll be at the bottom of the ocean—along with all this counterfeiting equipment. This compartment has a water-tight door. And perhaps you noticed

that circular trap in the flooring? Well, below that circular covering, there have been holes drilled in the hull of this ship. In a moment, I'm going to leave you alone in this chamber. But first I'll release the clamps on that round port in the floor. Water will start flowing in here, slowly."

O'Neal's eyes glittered. "Damn you—!" he rasped.

The masked man went on unperturbably. "There is a similar water-tight compartment at the bow of the *Sea-Queen*—at the other end of the ship. We will close it, too; and then we will permit water to leak into it. Thus, as the water rises both forward and aft, the *Sea-Queen* will not list. It will settle, gradually, two or three feet in the water. It won't be noticed by the people up in the gambling saloon."

The Treasury dick struggled at his fetters. Sudden rage filled him. They intended to leave him tied here while water poured upward into the compartment. He would drown like a rat—

"When this chamber is full of water and you have drowned," the masked counterfeiter went on harshly, "we will release certain mechanisms. The entire floor of this room will drop downward—like a trap on a gallows. Our printing and engraving department will be jettisoned—will drop down into the water, go to the bottom. With your carcass along!"

**STEVE O'NEAL** started to cry out a rage-horn oath. And at that same instant, one of the lesser

members of the gang yelled, "Chief—look!"

O'Neal stared. The auburn-haired girl had slipped out of the compartment—was swinging the water-tight door closed! In another split-second, she would have the whole gang imprisoned—

The masked leader snarled "You damned double-crossing tramp!" and hurled himself at the closing door. He smashed into it just before it latched; and his weight threw it open again. He grabbed for the red-haired girl, pinioned her. Her face had gone ghost-pale. She struggled; but her struggles were useless. Her captor dragged her back into the compartment. He raised his fist, smashed it into her face. Blood trickled from her split lip. . . . She sagged.

"Damn you! So you'd turn rat on us, would you?" the masked leader snarled. "Well, you won't get another chance!" He grabbed at a length of rope; and in a twinkling he had bound the helpless girl to the printing press alongside Steve O'Neal. "For that, you'll die with this Federal snooper!" the masked man rasped.

The girl swayed against her gyves. The masked leader turned to his men. "Come on—let's get out of here!" he commanded.

O'Neal watched them as they filed out of the chamber. He saw the heavy door swing closed; heard the rattle of latches and clasps. Then his eyes went to that round, porthole-like affair in the flooring. One of the counterfeiters had loosened its dogs; and now water was seeping swiftly around it,

flowing into the compartment with hissing swiftness.

Already there was an inch of water on the floor of the chamber. It lapped at Steve O'Neal's shoes. The auburn-haired girl looked at him; and her blue eyes were filled with fear, with defeat.

The Federal dick scowled. She had tricked him; double-crossed him. And yet—she was too young, too pretty, to die like an animal in a trap. . . . But what could he do? How could he save her, save himself? Then, abruptly, he remembered how she had tried to lock the entire gang of counterfeiters here in this compartment. "Listen, sister!" he rasped at her. "I want to know something. After you'd double-crossed me, why did you attempt to imprison that gang of thugs in this chamber?"

Her lower lip trembled. It was bruised, bloody, where the masked leader had struck her in the mouth with his fist. "I—I'm a Federal operative, too!" she answered tremulously.

O'Neal stared, stiffened. "What?" he gasped.

The girl nodded. "Yes. I, too, was sent out here to track down the source of that flood of spurious money. I traced it to this gambling boat. Then I managed to get into the gang—become a member. Tonight, they forced me to . . . betray you. I had to obey, or I would have revealed my own connection with the Secret Service. But I—I hoped to turn the tables on them.

"It was my idea to get them all down here—then lock them in; make them prisoners along with yourself. Then I'd have gone

ashore, summoned help. I'd have returned with Broad Beach police, released you and had the gang placed under arrest. But—but it didn't work. They caught me before I could get the door closed all the way. . . ."

Steve O'Neal's lips became a thin, narrow line. "You say you're a Treasury operative. Prove it!"

She lowered her voice, whispered certain words to him. . . .

"By God! You're telling the truth, then!" O'Neal rasped. And a queer sensation of elation filled him. Somehow, he hadn't wanted to believe this girl to be a gang moll—a member of the counterfeiting ring. She was too lovely, too desirable, too clean—and Steve O'Neal liked her too much. . . .

**S**UDDENLY he tensed. "Listen!" he barked.

To his ears came a faint sound as of metal rasping against metal. And then, abruptly, the water-tight door of the compartment swung open. The water on the floor of the chamber spilled out over the bulkhead, spread in a wet stream over the steel floor of the ship's empty hull. A man splashed into the compartment—

The dark, swarthy, narrow-eyed man who had enacted the role of the red-haired girl's fake fiancée a little while ago. The man who had been called Lopez. Now Lopez strode toward the trussed girl alongside O'Neal. "Ah, *senorita!*" he smiled, displaying rattish teeth. "It seems such a shame for one so charming to die . . . like this!"

The girl looked at the man.

"Why are you here, Lopez?" she whispered tensely.

He grinned at her. "Perhaps to release you—if you are willing to strike a bargain!"

"A bargain?"

The man came close to the auburn-haired girl. His hands went forth, touched her. Touched her shoulders, her swelling breasts; caressed her shrinking body. . . . "If you will run away with me, *senorita*—if you will be my woman. . . ."

She twisted, tried to escape his prowling fingers. His hand had plunged within the low bodice of her green evening gown; his fingers sank deep into the white flesh of her shrinking breasts. . . . He grinned a wolfish grin. "You are very desirable, little one!" he hissed. "Will you—come with Lopez? Will you trade your life for my kisses, my love. . . .?"

The man's eyes were on the girl; were turned away from Steve O'Neal. The Treasury detective strained at his fetters. His wrists were bound by heavy cord to the counterfeiting press. Abruptly, he noticed a button controlling the motor of the press; noticed that if the machine could be set in motion, a descending metal arm would pass directly over the framework to which his cords were fastened. And that arm had a sharp edge. . . .

O'Neal squirmed, brought his elbow against the control-button. The press clattered; its motor hummed suddenly. The heavy arm came downward—

And Steve O'Neal's bonds were severed with that one descending stroke!

He leaped free, even as Lopez whirled at him. The swarthy man rasped an oath; his hand licked toward his coat pocket, came up with a flat automatic. The weapon belched fire.

O'Neal felt a stinging sensation in his thigh. He plunged himself forward—straight at Lopez' throat. Before the swarthy man could fire again, O'Neal was on him, battering at him with iron-hard fists. The two men crashed together, locked in vicious, deadly embrace. O'Neal felt a knee burrowing into his groin, and the pain sickened him for a single instant. He saw Lopez bringing up the muzzle of the automatic—

He smashed at the man's wrist, knocked it sidewise. Then his fingers closed around the swarthy one's throat in a throttling, steely grasp like the bite of a metal vise. Lopez choked, gurgled. His tongue protruded thickly; his eyes bulged. His entire body twisted and contorted in a desperate, futile attempt to escape O'Neal's bulldog grip. Abruptly, Lopez sagged. Life, fight, struggle, went out of him in a single instant.

O'NEAL grabbed the man's automatic, wrenched it from nerveless fingers. Then he let Lopez sag downward, into the water that still rushed up through the floor of the compartment. The Treasury dick flung himself at the bound figure of the auburn-haired girl, worked desperately at the knots which held her. At last she was free. She swayed against him.

For a single instant he held her, crushed her to him; felt the warmth



of her breasts against his chest. Then he sped with her out of the compartment, shoved its door shut; bolted it with its heavy clamps.

"You—you're leaving him in there? Leaving Lopez to . . . drown?" the girl whispered.

O'Neal's lips were grim. "He won't drown. He's dead. I broke his neck with my bare hands!" Then he grabbed the girl. "Come on—we've got work to do!"

Together they raced toward the iron ladder that led upward from the empty bowels of the boat. They gained the main promenade deck, sped toward the companionway leading to the bridge.

At the door which gave access to

*"You can't tackle them single-handed," she pleaded.*

the bridge enclosure, O'Neal halted. He turned to the auburn-haired girl. "Keep out of the line of fire. There'll probably be hell popping in a minute!" he whispered tensely.

She looked at him. Her eyes were wide, lustrous. "You—you're going to tackle the whole bunch of them—single-handed?"

"Yes!"

"But—but you might get hurt—killed!"

He smiled grimly. "The Government pays me to take chances. You know that. You've taken plenty yourself."

"Y-yes. But—but I don't want you to be h-hurt!" she said swiftly, desperately.

He read the pleading, hungry look in her eyes; and suddenly, helplessly, she was in his arms. He felt the thrilling contact of her lovely body against him; the firm mounds of her breasts being flattened upon his chest. He kissed her—a long, lingering kiss that filled him with leaping arrows of hot desire. And then he pushed her away from the door.

"Keep clear!" he whispered.

And as she stared at him, he backed off, gathered his brawny muscles, plunged himself at the portal like a two-hundred-pound charge of exploding dynamite. His shoulder smashed into the door, and the woodwork splintered under his hurtling impact. The lock gave way. Steve O'Neal plummeted into the room.

Harsh oaths roared out. The counterfeiterers were inside; had been stuffing spurious bills into weighted bags to be thrown into

the sea. Now, at O'Neal's plunging entrance, they leaped backward. The masked leader of the gang streaked for his automatic, whipped it forward, fired.

But O'Neal fired first. His slug took the masked man in the wrist, shattered the bone, sent the gang leader's weapon flying. And now the Federal Treasury detective was in the thick of it, his automatic spitting a steady stream of leaden destruction and roaring flame. Men screamed, went down.

O'NEAL's gun was empty now. He flung it full into the snarling face of an advancing counterfeiter. The man's features were abruptly obliterated as the hurled weapon smashed into his mouth and nose, flattened them in a gory pulp. The Treasury man leaped forward, stooped, picked up a gun from the hands of one of his fallen adversaries. And once more he hurled hot lead at his enemies.

There were but four of them left on their feet now; the masked leader, with his shattered wrist, and three lesser members of the band. And they were shrinking away from O'Neal, cowering before the smoking muzzle of his automatic. Their hands went up, slowly, in token of utter defeat.

Steve O'Neal leaped in, relieved them of their guns, herded them together in one corner. His hand flashed out toward the masked features of the wounded, grey-haired leader of the gang. He whipped the domino away from the man's blanched, contorted face—

"God! It's George Varden—the Broad Beach banker! The man

who pretended to be helping me round up the counterfeiter!" O'Neal rasped.

Then he raised his voice to the girl outside. "Hey, Red! Come on in here! Help me tie up these swine!"

The auburn-haired girl entered. Five minutes later, O'Neal and the girl had their prisoners securely trussed. Then the Federal dick barked a command. "Slip down to the promenade deck—grab the first water-taxi and get to shore. Bring back some cops. We'll round up the rest of the gang—the gambling employees who've been passing out the fake currency. Watch your step—don't let them see you leaving."

"But—they must have heard the shooting!" the girl whispered. "Suppose they rush you here on the bridge?"

O'Neal grinned. "I've got plenty of guns, plenty of bullets. I'll hold the fort till you get back with reinforcements!"

She turned, sped from the room.

And even as she ran, a savage, rattling inferno of sound broke loose from a window behind Steve O'Neal—a drumming, staccato cacophony of blasting explosions from the muzzle of a machine-gun. O'Neal felt the impact of something that smashed into his shoulder like white-hot iron. He went down. And as unconsciousness descended, he saw his four prisoners pitch forward in death—moved down by the bullets of their own cohorts outside the cabin. . . .

WHEN O'Neal opened his eyes, his head was pillowed against

something warm, soft, comforting—fragrant, enticing. . . . A woman's breast. The breasts of the auburn-haired girl.

He stared. The place was swarming with blue-coated police. The room was a shambles of dead bodies, of blood—

Very gently, the girl laid her cool palm on O'Neal's forehead. "Don't ask questions!" she whispered. "I'll explain what happened. The gang-members from the gambling saloon must have heard the sounds of battle up here. Just as I left you with your prisoners, the men from the main deck came up, cut loose with their chop-pers. They planned to kill you—and to kill the ones you had captured, so they wouldn't talk.

"Then—then Varden and—and his men are—dead?"

"Yes. And the machine-gunners got away in a launch before I could get back out here with the police. But the main counterfeiterers are all killed. Only a few subordinates managed to escape. The printing-press, the engraving equipment, are still in the hull of the ship. The counterfeiting ring is broken up."

O'Neal smiled, despite the raging pain of his wounds. "I'm not interested in the counterfeiting ring any more," he said slowly.

"What—what do you mean?" the girl hugged him closer to her rounded, pillowing breasts.

"It's another ring I'm thinking of!" he told her. "As soon as I can get patched up—I'm going to put a ring—here!" And he touched the slim, lovely third finger of her left hand.

## DANCE HALL DOOM

(Continued from page 17)

closed. She pointed. "I'm not going anywhere — because I'm chained here," she said.

"God——!" Horn bent to an examination. Vera had told the truth. Her ankles were shackled to the heavy metal of the bed. "And—and you let me start the fire?"

**T**HE room was insufferably hot. Smoke filled it like some tangible body. And as yet the fire had made small headway.

A cough racked Vera's lovely body. "Why not? Maybe some—of those girls can be—saved—or at least—fire is a clean death!"

Horn scarcely heard her. He was tearing at the shackles like a madman. He could not budge them. He stopped his useless efforts, bent to examine them for a long moment. He stood up.

"Good-by," Vera repeated.

Jim hurled himself at the door. It crashed down on his second attempt. There was a guard in the hallway, but that man fled down the corridor screaming, "Fire!"

Jim Horn did not attempt to escape. He went back into that smoke-filled room. He pulled Vera to a sitting position. She looked at him dumbly. He swung a terrific right to her jaw. She slumped back—unconscious.

Jim Horn had to break both her ankles to get her free.

With his limp burden he staggered out into the hall again. The

opening of the door had given the fire a new lease on life. As from a distance came the sound of many voices, yet Horn managed to get the length of the hall before he encountered anyone.

A huge man loomed before him in the smoke—Axel. The chauffeur paid no attention to the man and his burden. He ran heavily toward the fire.

Horn put Vera down on the floor. A group of the masked men were standing together, gesticulating.

"Well—Horn." It was LeBlu's voice. "I see you have managed to make things hot for me. But at least—you can die now." LeBlu was no longer in his hidden room. His tall figure detached itself from the group. Like the others, his face was hidden by a grotesque monstrosity of a mask. In one hand he held a black automatic. It was leveled at Jim Horn.

"And now," continued LeBlu, "you shall—"

Horn was tensed for his last futile spring when a thunderous pounding sounded on the door. It burst open. Uniformed policemen streamed into the room.

Horn jumped then as LeBlu's attention wavered.

The automatic spoke as he was in the middle of his leap. Horn felt a stunning blow on the shoulder. It spun him around, sent him to the floor.

LeBlu did not spare him an-



other glance. The man was streaking across the floor toward the bar.

Jim struggled to his feet. He shouted and pointed, but his one voice was not heard above the hubbub, the shots, screams of dying men, and yells of rage.

LeBlu jumped to the bar, poised, and sprang at what seemed to be solid wall. It opened to swallow him.

Horn started to follow—then remembered Sally. "Let him wait, we'll smoke him out!" he muttered. He dashed to the wheel. With his good hand he released Sally, held her trembling body pressed against his.

"Fire! Fire! Look out—the whole thing's going up!" The corridor was a mass of flames. Crackling, roaring, that whole end of the building was an inferno. Axel had not returned. He had died there, rather than report failure to his master.

Vera was carried out by gentle hands. Jim Horn entrusted Sally to a blue-coat. He found his chief.

*With his limp burden, he staggered out into the hall.*

"Probably would have missed you if it hadn't been for the fire. We got to the bridge and the workmen there tried to send us back. Fortunately we had a state trooper with us who had been over the bridge earlier this evening. He smelt a rat. We decided to come on—and we got here just in time. Where's LeBlu?"

Horn's lungs were nearly bursting with the heat and smoke. He pointed toward the bar. "Secret room there. He's in hiding."

A cry of warning echoed

through the room. "Run! Run! The roof's going!"

Horn, the chief, and the policemen carrying the rescued girls barely made safety. The flimsy roof fell in with a dull boom. Sparks flew high into the greying heavens. There had been no opportunity to get to LeBlu.

The Dance Hall of Doom was no more.

Some life had returned to Jim's numbed shoulder, enough so he could draw Sally into the shelter of his arms. He meant to shield her like that always.

---

## INDISCREET CORPSE

---

(Continued from page 79)

---

he said.

Strength seemed to ebb from her. "All right, I'll tell you. I heard Vernon telephoning the Van Atta woman before the show opened. He needed money. She said she couldn't give it to him. He mentioned the letters and threatened to ruin her husband with them." She clung to Wayne. "But I swear he didn't threaten to kill her! I swear it!"

The morphia was beginning to take effect. Wayne eased Aline back on the bed. Over and over again she reiterated Elton's innocence. When she was breathing deeply, Wayne extinguished the light and left the room.

WAYNE awaited Kawi's return anxiously. His patience was well rewarded. The newspaper

morgue had produced a complete dossier on Hans Mueller.

During the war, the man had been suspected of being a German agent and had been tried for espionage. A one year sentence was the result. Wayne's heart leaped as a familiar name appeared in the typed report. Roger Van Atta, as a Special Federal Attorney General had *prosecuted the case!* Was this, then, a revenge murder?

Wayne read on. Since the advent of the Nazi government, Mueller had been identified with the movement in this country.

The information opened up a new channel, and yet, one that had its flaws. If it was a killing for revenge, how did the murderer know of his presence in Aline Carr's apartment, and where did he come by a key?

The messenger from Captain

*A hand whipped over her mouth.  
She was dragged into the car.*



Darling, bringing a sample of the German's blood, interrupted his train of thought. In any event, he would have to wait until morning to match it with the coagulated life fluid he had scraped from the floor of the hut. The dose of morphia would keep Aline in a coma for twelve hours at least. After double bolting the door, Wayne retired.

**N**OON of the following day brought the toxicologist's re-

port, together with a death mask photo of the German who had been pulled out of the river. The blood samples matched and the death mask picture was identical with the photograph Kawi had secured from the *Enquirer* morgue.

But it served only to complicate matters. If Hans Mueller, the Nazi agitator, was dead, who was the masked killer carrying his pass case?

A check-up at the registration

bureau confirmed Wayne's suspicion of the murder car. It was Vernon Elton's.

Leaving Kawi to watch over the still comatose actress, Wayne hurried to the producer's penthouse. There was no response to his repeated knocks. The resident manager of the exclusive apartment dwelling finally consented to use a pass key.

Wayne stepped briskly into the gorgeously appointed suite the moment the door was open. A faint odor of burnt gun powder led him to a bedroom. He drew up short on the threshold.

Vernon Elton was stretched across the bed, a bullet hole in his temple, a revolver clutched in the stiff fingers of his right hand.

"Call the police," Wayne said quietly.

Before the homicide men arrived, Wayne searched the apartment. Nothing seemed to have been disturbed. One closet in the bedroom was hung with carefully pressed suits, the other contained sport clothes and two sets of golf clubs. Wayne removed a putter and examined it curiously.

An hour later, the dead man's butler was located.

Frozen with fright, he explained how Mr. Elton had called him at eleven the previous evening and instructed him to take the night and the next day off. The medical examiner set the time of death between midnight and two A. M.

Wayne left the penthouse, the verdict of suicide ringing in his ears. It looked like the end of the trail, and yet something bothered

him. He stepped into a phone booth and called Captain Darling.

"One more thing, Darling, and I think we'll have it sewed up," he said. "Call in the newspaper men and issue a statement that Wanda Van Atta is recovering from her suicide attempt at the apartment of Wayne Taylor."

The police official gulped over the phone. "Are—are you mad, Taylor?"

Wayne smiled. "A little theatrical, Darling, but not mad."

**EVERYTHING** was set at Wayne's apartment. He had forced another dose of morphia down Aline Carr's throat, pulled the covers up around her chin and turned her with her back to the bedroom door. The hours ticked until the deadline of midnight was close at hand.

Wayne paced the drawing-room nervously. If this didn't work, the fantastically fictional case he had built up would crumble.

The sharp ring of the doorbell brought him to instant attention. Wayne nodded to Kawi. The Japanese left the room. At the second ring, Wayne approached the door. His hand was cold on the knob as he turned it.

The door swung back under an impact. Wayne looked into the muzzle of an automatic, tight-clasped in the hand of a black-masked man.

"Don't make a sound, Taylor!" the intruder snapped. "Who else is in the house?"

Wayne breathed heavily as his hands came up. "Just my butler and—and—"

"Where's the Van Atta woman?"

Wayne nodded towards the bedroom door. "In there . . . sleeping."

Cruel lips curled under the mask. "I've got an idea you're lying, Taylor, but it's worth the chance. Lead the way but be careful. One false move and you get it. I should have let you have it at the hut."

Wayne's heart pounded as he walked towards the bedroom. This was the killer! He opened the door slowly, stepped inside.

A hiss of breath escaped the masked man's lips as he saw the figure in the bed. He motioned Wayne to the far corner of the room. His hand went to the inside pocket of his jacket and came out with a knife. Every nerve in Wayne's body twisted.

The knife blade flashed as it came up, reached its peak and whisked down at Aline Carr's back.

At that instant, two yellow hands shot from under the bed, clutched at the killer's ankles and spun him off his feet. The gun in his hand thundered and a lead slug crashed through the window. Wayne drew his automatic. Both revolvers roared at the same time.

The masked man slumped as a bullet drove into his chest.

Wayne was at his side in a flash. He ripped the covering from his face, stared in wonderment. *It was Roger Van Atta!*

Blood bubbled from the lawyer's lips. Wayne could see he had only minutes to live. "Why did you do it?" he questioned. "Why did you kill Elton and your wife?"

Van Atta's eyes rolled. "Secret German letters," he mumbled.

"They . . . they had letters . . . expose me." His head sagged to his chest. "*Heil Hitler!*"

WAYNE TAYLOR faced a coterie of detectives in the drawing-room of his apartment. "The search of Van Atta's home gives you the answer, gentlemen," he said. "For years he has been a German agent, even going as far as to prosecute Mueller during the war to avoid suspicion being thrown on him.

"He accidentally overheard a telephone conversation between his wife and Elton, relative to some amorous letters and mistook the reference to secret letters of his own. With Mueller to assist him, he followed his wife, killed her in the hut, dumped Mueller in the river when he discovered the man was dead, and proceeded to trail me from my apartment.

"Foiled in an attempt to remove a witness to the murder, he went after Elton, whose car he had previously stolen to throw suspicion on the producer. He killed Elton but made it look like suicide. I was suspicious of that because the gun was in Elton's right hand and he owned left-handed golf clubs."

He paused as a sharp cry came from the bedroom. Wayne smiled. "You'll have to excuse me now, gentlemen. I have a pretty lively corpse to entertain!"

Aline was sitting up in bed, wide eyed, when Wayne entered the room. Her breasts were exposed above the bunched covers.

"What happened?" she gasped. Wayne sat down on the bed.

"Plenty, beautiful." He reached out and slipped his arm around her bare waist. "Let's rehearse, huh?"

Dazed, she swayed against him, breasts swaying. "I—I don't understand."

Wayne cupped a soft mound in his hand. "In return for not mentioning how Roger Van Atta got a key to your apartment, gorgeous," he whispered. "I think you might show me how indiscreet a corpse can be."

---

## LOVE IS A CANNIBAL

---

(Continued from page 37)

die . . . but I didn't."

"You didn't mean to, Pearl. You meant to kill me, but I gave the Passionate Cannibal to Miriam. When she watered it last night the water liberated the *Calaveric Monoxide* gas that you had mixed with the earth, and strangled her while she slept!"

"I'm so glad it was Miriam instead of you, Eddie."

"Are you going to kill me, Pearl?"

"Of course not, Eddie."

"Then get your clothes on, baby. I've got to run you in. Spode's after me for the killing because I gave Miriam the plant. He thinks what you expected the police to think, if they had found *my* corpse this morning, that the *Canibal* choked her to death. It has to be you or me."

Pearl threw herself seductively against Eddie's tall, solid form.

"You wouldn't really run me in, would you, Eddie?"

"It's got to be *you* or *me*, baby."

**T**HE soft light of Pearl's eyes changed suddenly to a yellow gleam. With a quick, cat-like movement she stepped back, picked up

the automatic, and leveled it at Eddie's stomach.

She spoke in a sharp, raucous voice, "No private dick can run me in, Eddie Pell! How would you like a belly full of lead?"

"My! Such language from a lady!"

Her voice had an edge like chilled steel. "Eddie, you always were a stinker. You're a two-timing double-crossing key-hole peeper. You're a yellow buzzard with no guts. . . . Somebody ought to kill you, and it might as well be me!"

Eddie said, "You couldn't shoot a man to his face. You'd put arsenic in his coffee or calaveric in his potted plants. I thought you were a lady and worth saving, but you're not. I'm going to take that gat away from you and run you in."

"You move one step, Eddie Pell, and I plug you."

"Plug away, baby; I take my lead standing up. Just keep in mind, sweet, that if you shoot, *you* go like Miriam did. You strangle to death. Eddie will die with his long, thin fingers clamped around your pretty neck!"

*She collapsed when he smacked her. The door opened and the policemen entered, guns drawn.*



Eddie took one step forward.  
 "Stay where you are, Eddie!"  
 He took another step.  
 "I'll shoot!"

He took a third step.

A spit of pink flame licked at Eddie's stomach. Eddie grunted and took another step.

Pearl held her finger on the trigger and the pink flames drummed a rataplan at Eddie's body. Ra-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-tat! Eddie put both hands against his stomach, as if to keep his guts from falling out. He took another step.

Pearl wailed with terror as Ed-

die's fingers reached up and closed relentlessly around her slim white neck. She dropped the empty gun and tore at his iron wrists with her fingers. She screamed out a blabber of words.

"Don't strangle me, Eddie! I'll go with you! I'll confess everything, Eddie! For God's sake, don't strangle me!!"

Eddie's fingers tightened inexorably. The words changed to gasps. Her eyes began to bulge and then, as if the spark of life had suddenly gone out, her body became limp in his hands.

Eddie laid her fragile form gently on the floor and stood looking down at the lovely contours of her tiny, luscious figure. He rubbed his stomach absent-mindedly where the wadding from the blanks had stung his skin.

"I hated to fool you about the gat, baby, but you killed Miriam and you've got to pay for it some way."

**H**E PICKED up the phone from the stand and dialed a number. After a minute he said, "This is Eddie Pell. Tell Spode I'm in room 7 at 211 Greenwich. Thanks."

As he turned around he smiled at Pearl's still figure and said, "Come out of it, possum. You're not dead and I know it."

Pearl sighed and moved one leg, then slowly, with a faint flutter opened her eyes. Gradually she got to her feet, being careful to expose as much of her glorious body as possible.

Eddie said, "You didn't think I'd fall for that old gag, did you?"

"Oh, Eddie, let me go! Don't

keep me here till Spode comes! Let me go!"

No answer.

"Eddie . . . ?" Her voice was suppliant and seductive.

"Yeah?"

"Look. . . ."

She had slipped one shoulder strap and let her filmy night gown fall half off, exposing her luscious pale torso. Then, lifting her arms, she locked her hands behind her flame-colored hair. Her milk-white breasts rose with the movement, quivering alluringly like tea roses in a summer breeze.

"You'd better finish the dance, baby, because Spode is on his way."

She moved toward him with a feline, tantalizing movement. He didn't move.

He could catch the faint aromatic fragrance of her body as she pressed wet velvet lips against his mouth. Her molten tongue seeped between his lips and filled his lungs with fire. Still he didn't move.

He clenched his fists, digging his fingernails into the palms of his hands.

"I can take it, baby. You're wasting your time. And Spode is on the way."

A single deep gasp came from the little figure as she stiffened against him. She spat one word into his ear like the hiss of a snake and sank her teeth into his neck. The blood spurted in a stream across her bare shoulder.

**W**ITH a lightning, involuntary movement Eddie shot up his fist and struck the red-head a smack behind the ear. Instantly

her chin dropped away from his jugular vein and she collapsed against the side of the bed. Eddie clapped a hand against his neck to stop the spurting blood.

A terrific pounding shook the door. Then, suddenly, it opened to reveal Spode and Cardigan, both with weapons drawn, crouching like bears ready to attack.

Spode said, "Will you go quietly, Eddie, or do I have to be rough?"

Eddie laughed, "I'll go quietly, sergeant, if you'll take along the killer." He nodded his head towards Pearl's inert body.

Spode's jaw dropped. "Is she the killer?"

"Yes, sergeant, she's the killer. When we get to headquarters I'll draw you a diagram. Let's go before Eddie loses another pail of blood."

Spode was very business-like. "Cardigan, pick up the . . . ah . . . lady. There'll be room enough in the squad car."

Cardigan, bewildered, looked first at Pearl and then at Sergeant Spode.

Spode glared at him. "Throw a sheet around her, you ninny, and let's get going!"

"Yeah," Eddie grinned at Cardigan, "and be careful she doesn't bite."

---

## DEATH'S BRIGHT HALO

---

*(Continued from page 29)*

**S**NOW-SHOES! I stiffened. So that accounted for the fact that there had been no foot-prints at the spot where the Chink girl's cadaver had vanished! Then I thought of something else. I said, "What about the Chinese girl's feet? Anything funny about them?"

"Y-yes. They were bound, in the ancient Oriental fashion. They were all squeezed together—deformed."

Now I had the answer to my other puzzle. Now I knew why the Asiatic dame had tottered when she ran; why her footprints resembled the tracks of an animal. And Jeff Truman had laughed at me, called me screwy!

"They—they abduct us and

bring us here," Lorna McFee whispered bitterly. "They compel us to wear these necklaces. And if we try to run away—"

"I get it!" I said. Then, suddenly, I heard footfalls outside the door of the room. That would probably be the masked white-slaver coming to bump me off, thinking I was in a drugged stupor. I grabbed Lorna McFee, shoved her behind me. I yanked out the .44 Colt I'd borrowed from Jeff Truman and crouched, waiting—

The room's door opened. The lights flashed on. I saw the masked man. He had an automatic in his fist. His eyes widened through the slits in his mask when he saw me standing there, instead of being stretched unconscious on the bed.

With an oath he pointed his automatic at me—

I came up with my .44 and squeezed the trigger. And then I felt a sickness at the pit of my belly. The hammer clicked down on a jammed cylinder! The .44 was useless!

Before I could move, the masked man jammed his automatic into my guts and said, "Stick up your flippers, Turner!" Then he glared at Lorna McFee, who was cowering practically naked, behind me. "You, too, you double-crossing skirt!" he snarled.

She gasped out a despairing cry. The masked man grabbed her by the hair with his free hand, hauled her forward. "So you didn't give him that drugged drink, eh?" he barked at her. "Well, you'll have the pleasure of dying with him!" He turned to me and leered.

His face was close to mine. I caught a whiff of garlic. And then I knew what I was up against. I knew the masked man's identity; realized that he had gone into the white-slave business to recoup his fallen fortunes. And I knew that he wouldn't stop at murder. . . .

**H**E SHOVED me out of the room and dragged Lorna McFee after him. He had his rod in my gizzard. I had to go with him, or he'd have blasted a tunnel through my kidneys. And then I wouldn't have been able to drink Scotch any more.

Then, from the first-floor hallway below me I heard a sudden sound—a girl's shrieking cry of fear, followed by pattering footsteps and a harsh feminine oath.

Flesh thumped against flesh; a body thudded to the floor. And then that hard-faced, red-haired woman came up the stairs, hauling a limp, naked form after her.

She was one of the five girls I'd seen in that other room. The cuddly platinum blonde. Her negligee had been ripped off; I could see the heavy fullness of her bosoms, the dimpled curves of her hips. . . .

"What's the idea?" the masked man rasped.

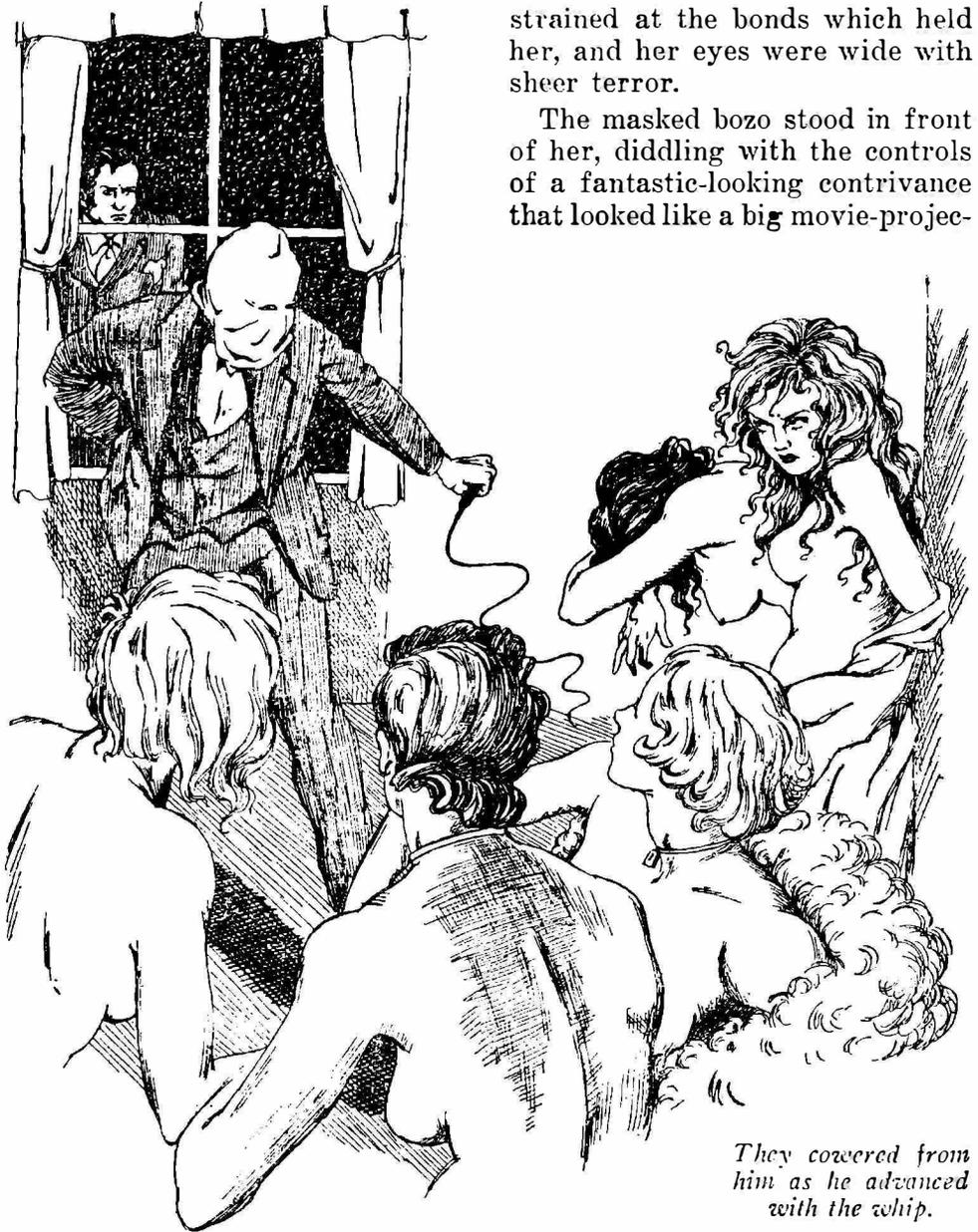
The red-haired dame said, "She tried to run away. I caught her."

"Yeah?" the masked guy growled in his throat. "Well, we'll fix her along with these other two. That will give me a chance to make the final adjustments on my death-ray machine—the machine that's going to make me master of the world!"

He prodded me forward. The others followed us. We went up a flight of rear stairs. I found myself in a small, circular chamber—the cupola on top of the house. The masked man raised his roscoe, slammed it against my dome. I saw stars. Then I didn't see anything. I was out.

**I** DIDN'T stay unconscious very long. I've got a thick skull. I opened my eyes, blinked back the agony that surged through my think-tank. I stared.

The brunette Lorna McFee was on the floor beside me. We were both propped against the wall. Lorna was tied by wrists and ankles, and she was nude except for her wispy step-ins. But the masked man hadn't bothered to rope me.



strained at the bonds which held her, and her eyes were wide with sheer terror.

The masked bozo stood in front of her, diddling with the controls of a fantastic-looking contrivance that looked like a big movie-projec-

*They covered from him as he advanced with the whip.*

He probably figured I'd be out for quite some time from that bat on the skull.

The red-haired, hard-faced woman was gone. But across from me I saw the platinum blonde girl strapped in a chair. Her body

tor. Even as I watched, he snapped a switch—

I heard a wet, sizzling sound; smelled roasting human flesh. Arid smoke drifted to my nostrils, got in my eyes. The blonde girl cut loose with a scream that ended

in a wild crescendo of nothingness. I staggered to my feet, nausea churning my guts to a froth. The blonde girl's metallic necklace was a sputtering halo of glowing fire that seared into her flawless throat. . . .

The juice ate through flesh and bone in an instant. Abruptly the girl's lovely head was severed—burned away from her white body. The head plopped horribly to the floor—

“You foul fiend from hell!” I yelled. And I launched myself at the masked man.

He whirled when he heard me; whirled, and reached for the automatic in his shoulder-holster. But I was too quick for him. I balled my fist, smashed it into his mouth. He staggered, went backward—fell against the blonde girl's decapitated corpse in the death-chair.

He screamed. A puff of blue smoke, a shower of sparks, leaped from him as the death-ray struck his holstered foe. The weapon exploded. It tore a gaping hole in the murderer's chest, so that I could see his seared, roasted, dead lungs. . . . He slid to the floor. . . .

I whipped the mask from his contorted features. “So, Jeff Truman!” I grunted.

**Y**ES; that's who it was. Jeff Truman, the extinct Western star. It had been Truman who had abducted young girls, forced them into white slavery; made them earn the money to pay for his hellish experiments on that death-ray machine. That's why Truman had lived down at the beach, in a little bungalow near the larger house

which once had belonged to Sammy Weissmann. . . .

It had been Jeff Truman who'd killed that Chinese girl with his blasting, invisible electric ray. He'd then managed to get back to his bungalow in time to be there when I knocked at his door. I remembered I'd waited quite a while before he answered my knock. . . .

And Jeff Truman, fearing I'd discovered his secret and realizing I intended to search the big beach house, must have phoned from the bungalow while pretending to search for that .44 Colt which I wanted to borrow—and which he had purposely jammed. He had phoned and arranged for Lorna McFee, one of his captives, to come over for kerosene. He planned for me to be lured to the big house so that I could be drugged and murdered!

And that garlic smell on his breath—that's what had tipped me that the masked man was Jeff Truman. Because Truman had been eating a salami sandwich when I first seen him. Salami—with garlic!

**I** WHIRLED, scooped the unconscious, half-naked figure of Lorna McFee into my arms. I dashed down the stairs with her. She seemed very sweet, very desirable, as I carried her. . . . At the foot of the stairs I bumped into the hard-faced, red-haired dame, Jeff Truman's accomplice.

She started at me. I biffed her, hard, right on the button. I twisted my free hand in her hair, dragged her outside the house. Lorna Mc-

# Of The Best Sellers 98¢

Formerly \$2.00 Each, Now All 7 For

## THE MARRIAGE GUEST

### MARRIED TO ONE LOVED ANOTHER

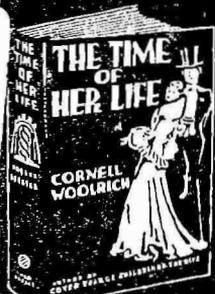
**THE MARRIAGE GUEST**—by Konrad Bercovici. Stark drama of the crucifixion of three lives, through which runs the golden thread of a woman's passionate, enduring love, defying the world of conventionality. Here is absorbing, breath-taking drama!

### THE STORY OF A LUSTFUL WOMAN!

**REPLENISHING JESSICA**—by Maxwell Bodenheim. A young woman's battle between flesh and the spirit. Sensational reading that holds you spellbound. Charging it with being an immoral book, reformers tried in vain to prohibit its publication.

### SHE REVEALED IN DECEIT!

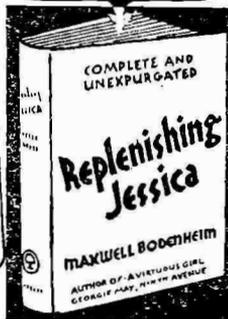
**THE TIME OF HER LIFE**—by Cornell Woolrich. The amazing story of a young, alluring, ruthless adventuress by a \$10,000 prize-winning author. Her mad love of pleasure led her into a life of wild escapades until she is finally tamed by the one man who could control her.



### SHE "WORKED" FOR HER EMPLOYER'S SON!

**HELP WANTED**—by Jack Lait. The zenith of sensational drama... a young, beautiful secretary caught in the vicious toils of her employer's rich, fascinating and unscrupulous son. A tremendous success as a play in spite of a clamor of Mid-Victorian criticism—spell-binding as a novel!

### THEY TRIED TO BAN THIS BOOK!



### THE "LOW-DOWN" ON THE UNDERWORLD!

**BROADWAY RACKETEERS**—by John O'Connor. Both sides of the racket, plus the laughs and lusts of the racket mob, told in the jargon of Racketland. Here is Broadway blazing with illicit loves, honeycombed with intrigue, teeming with swift-paced action! A saga of the Main Stem!



### THE "LOVE" OF AN INDIAN GUIDE!

**PLAYTHINGS OF DESIRE**—by J. Wesley Putnam. The flaming fire of an overpowering love in a smashing story. The rich roué, his wife and the rugged Big Woods guide who proves sophistication may be found far beyond the gay lights of Broadway. A strongly emotional novel of love and duty.

**\$14.00**  
Worth of Thrills and Romance  
For **98¢**

### MEN CALLED HER "FAST"!

**A VIRTUOUS GIRL**—by Maxwell Bodenheim. Alluring, wistful, passionate Emmy-Lou, born to love under the spell of a Summer night and a boy whom her parents forbade, has the courage to live in spite of the strangling conventions of respectability. She believed in Romance and dared the penalty.



## HERE IS THE BIGGEST BOOK VALUE OF A LIFETIME!

Each Thrilling Novel Is Complete, Unexpurgated . . . Not One Word Omitted!

### IN THE LAND OF ROMANCE AND ADVENTURE!

Forget the depression, quarrels, worries! Let yourself be transported from the sordid streets of today to the glamorous realms of fiction! Meet characters whose exciting, dramatic lives traverse widely different worlds from yours . . . whose varied adventures are a revelation!

If you want books to put you to sleep don't buy these at any price.

If you object to the crude realities of life, if you buy them, your sensibilities may be wounded. We warn you frankly that the characters in these stories are red-blooded, simple, tempted by the same lusts and passions, fighting with the same idealism, everyday, living people.

### EVERY ONE A BOOK OF PROVEN POPULARITY!

Each one of these seven books has been stamped by the seal of public approval. Edition after edition was bought out and still the public demanded more—at the \$2 price! We know everyone will like all of these best sellers because they have been "reader tested" and proven 100% dynamite.

Now you can have a library of thrilling reading for only 98¢!

Each book is bound separately in magazine style with an attractive binding . . . printed in clear, easily read type on pages 6½ x 9½ inches. Not one word has been left out! Not one incident censored!

### This Edition Is Limited . . . Don't Delay!

You do not risk one penny. Examine the books. Then, if you are not completely satisfied in every way, return the books to us and we will refund your money without question.

### SEND NO MONEY . . . MAIL COUPON TODAY

MAYFAIR PUBLISHING CO.,  
1270 Sixth Ave., Dept. 1110, New York, N. Y.

Please send me the seven best sellers. If not satisfied I will return the books within 5 days and will be refunded.

I will pay postman 98¢ plus few cent postage on delivery.

I enclose 98¢ plus 15¢ postage. Send books postage prepaid.

Name .....

Address .....

City..... State.....

Canadian Orders \$1.25 in advance. Foreign orders 6 shillings in advance.

MAYFAIR PUBLISHING CO., Radio City, 1270 SIXTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.

## DISSATISFACTION GUARANTEED OR MONEY IMMEDIATELY REFUNDED

When answering advertisements please mention SPICY DETECTIVE STORIES

Fee shivered; regained consciousness.

I said, "Watch this red-haired hag. If she comes to, kick her in the teeth!" Then I lammed back into the house. Two minutes later I had every last one of those poor, necklaced girls out of the joint. And when they were safely dressed and out, I spilled that five-gallon can of kerosene all over the first floor of the place; struck a packet of matches—

The house burned like tinder. It was a raging inferno before the county fire apparatus could reach the scene. They weren't able to save anything. Jeff Truman and his death-ray machine, up in the cupola, were destroyed together.

But I didn't wait for that. I ran to Truman's bungalow, got out his car; took Truman's white slaves back to Hollywood and set them free. All except the red-haired dame and Lorna McFee.

I turned the red-haired dame over to the cops and placed a white-

slavery charge against her—together with a charge of being accessory to at least two murders. Then I took Lorna McFee to my own apartment. Gave her a dressing gown and a slug of Scotch. Seated her on the divan in my living-room.

Then I went to my phone and dialed Sammy Weissmann.

When he answered I said, "Sammy? This is Dan Turner. I've found Lorna McFee for you. Yeah. Bring your hundred bucks up to my apartment and you can have her." Then I looked at Lorna McFee on the divan. The dressing gown had fallen open in front, revealing her sweet young breasts. I remembered the moments I had spent with her in the darkened room of that big beach house. . . .

Now she was smiling at me, and her eyes were shining, inviting. . . . I put my mouth back to the phone and said, "Say, Sammy, take your time coming over. Yeah. About an hour. Right. . . ."

## CRIME CAMPAIGN

*(Continued from page 67)*

get the set-up, sister." He grasped her bare arm. "We're leaving here, right now."

"Where are we going?"

"To my house," Mallory told her. "I'll hide you there tonight while I go gunning for Trigger Mattson—if you'll give me the dope on him. Or maybe you'd like it better at police headquarters."

"No—please!" the blonde trembled in an undertone. "I'll go with

you. But I haven't any clothes!"

The detective tossed his long coat to her. "Get into that."

Suddenly, the girl's blue eyes went wild. She stared toward the door behind Mallory. A voice rasped, "Stick 'em high, you lousy dick!"

Slowly, the detective raised his arms ceiling-ward.

"Now turn around!" the hard

ice ordered. "Let's see your mug!"

**FACE MALLORY** faced the newcomer. He tensed. The man whose gun bored a line on him was the beady-eyed person—the man whose police photograph was the detective's pocket. He was the mayor's henchman—Trigger Mattson! There was a bandage around his left wrist.

Mattson's mouth twisted wickedly. "Smart dick, eh? Walked right into one of my places to find out where Flo was?"

Mallory's mind flashed to the stucco house where he had talked with the red-haired prostitute. The matronly woman who had let him in had probably listened. She had got in touch with Trigger Mattson after the detective had left.

Mattson spoke out of the corner of his mouth to the blonde. "Get his gun, Flo!"

The yellow-haired girl snatched Mallory's weapon from its holster; handed it to Mattson. He shoved it in his pocket.

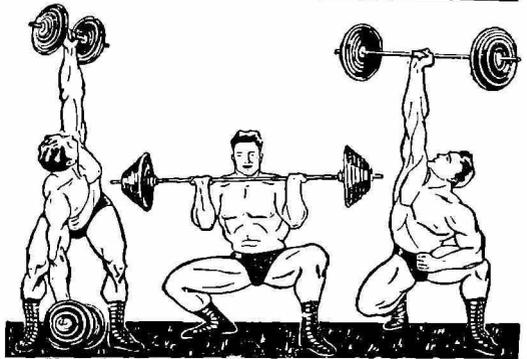
"Sure glad you got here, Trigger," the blonde said. "This dick was going to take me to the hoosegow."

"He won't take anybody anywhere!" Trigger snarled. "We're taking him—for a one-way ride! Look him over, Flo. See if you can find a big envelope on him."

Flo Adams reached into the detective's pocket, drew out the package containing the police photographs and records.

"See if our mugs are there, Flo."

**NOW...**  
**You Can Buy a Complete**  
**BARBELL OUTFIT**  
**INCLUDING ILLUSTRATED**  
**COURSE FOR AS LITTLE AS \$5**



*Now Is the Ideal Time for Barbell Training*

**Strong Men of All Times Have Used Barbells to Gain Their Great Strength**

● Now for the first time Barbells are within the reach of every man. Formerly costing as high as \$50.00 they now can be obtained for as low as \$5.00!

● Of course YOU want a symmetrical he-man body that commands admiration wherever you go! Of course you want steel-spring muscles and extraordinary strength that lasts for life! And you want to get them the quick, sure, most inexpensive way—by the Saxon Super System. Now is the time to start.

**Look at the Records of Saxon Pupils!**

● Saxon pupils are famous for their strength and development—many are world champions. He will teach YOU to be as successful if you will follow the Saxon Group System. It never fails. The Saxon Super System is the only way. It builds big, shapely, proportionate muscles packed with steel-strong strength. Select the Saxon progressive barbell and dumbbell method. It is unfailling!

**Full Course of Instructions Included FREE!**

● An illustrated instruction booklet, "The Saxon Super System," is included free with each outfit. Make the most of this chance to get your outfit while the prices are drastically reduced. It is sold on the Double Easy Payment Plan with big cash discounts.

**We Offer Many Fine Prize Awards!**

● Send for our free folder of information if you are really in earnest about this strength business! Learn all about the prizes and awards that we offer our pupils for rapid progress. See pictures of the outfit and know just what you are getting for your money! See how simple it all is! Then you will want to get started right away without losing any more precious time.

**SEND FOR Special FREE OFFER!**

Saxon Super System, Dept. 1210,  
 4324 Paul St., Philadelphia, Pa.

**DON'T  
 WAIT!  
 MAIL NOW!**

Kindly send me your free folder of information on the Saxon Super System, giving full descriptions of outfits and costs.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

The blonde took the pictures from the envelope, held them up.

Trigger Mattson grunted. "Take care of them," he ordered the girl. He advanced to the detective. His gun was in line with Mallory's heart. "Might as well blot you out now, dick! You'll be easier to handle." His forefinger curled menacingly around the trigger.

Flo Adams picked up her glass of liquor from the table. She raised it to her lips as the gunman neared Mallory. Then with feline alacrity she dashed the contents of the glass into Mattson's face.

**I**N THAT fraction of a second Mallory's iron fist shot out, cracked against the jaw of the man with the gun. Trigger reeled backward. The weapon in his hand belched. A slug tore into the ceiling.

The detective crashed his heavy body against him. Mattson went to the floor, Mallory on top of him. The gun spewed again. The hot pellet grazed the sleuth's hair as it zinged past his ear. The steely fingers of Mallory's left hand wound like tentacles on Trigger's gun wrist.

Mallory's right hand dived toward the side pocket of Mattson's coat; where the killer had put the detective's service gun. Trigger wrenched his body free from Mallory, threw the detective on his side. The killer drew up his leg, shot out with his foot.

The heel of his shoe smashed against the detective's head. Mallory winced, gritted as blood oozed in droplets and trickled into his bushy eyebrows.

Mattson yanked his hand free, got to his knees, aimed his gun between Mallory's eyes. The detective flattened himself to the floor as yellow fire spat over his head. Mallory plunged; raised his heavy shoulders under his assailant's armpit; grasped him around the waist.

Like a wrestler, the detective whirled; flung his opponent to the floor. Trigger's head cracked against the boards. Mallory crushed down on his adversary's body. This time the detective's hand recovered the gun from the killer's pocket. The sleuth raised it, swung it in an arc. It cracked sickeningly on Trigger Mattson's skull. The gunman went limp.

The detective walked to the bed; ripped off the sheet. He tore the linen into strips. He trussed Mattson's ankles and wrists. From a dish on the table, Mallory took a walnut. He jammed it into the fettered man's mouth and secured it with a strip of the bed spread.

Mallory picked up the envelope containing the police pictures and returned it to his pocket. He spoke to Flo Adams, "Thanks, sister. How come you helped me out of that jam?"

"Listen, dick. Maybe I've been pretty lousy. But I don't go in for killings."

"Fine, sister. I'll give you a break. Get into my coat. Come on."

**D**RAPING the inert Trigger Mattson over his shoulder, Mace Mallory started for the door. He suddenly halted. There was the sound of skidding tires in the yard below. Flo Adams ran to the win-

# Here's How!

to get a  
kick out  
of LIFE



128  
Pages

—with a  
thousand thrills!



If you haven't read this sensational magazine, find out  
what you've been missing!

## SPICY MYSTERY STORIES

October Issue On Sale August 15th

113

dow. She gasped, "Three of Trigger's gang!"

The detective heard the men leave their car, scramble up onto the old wooden veranda downstairs. Flo Adams dashed out into the hall; threw open the door of a linen closet. "Get in here," she directed Mallory. She got the bedroom door key from Mattson's pocket.

Mallory went into the enclosure with his burden. The blonde took off the cravenette coat, threw it after him. She closed the doors of the closet and the room. Crouched among the linen the detective heard the grate of the lock below, the entrance of the three men. They were running up the stairs. "Where's Trigger?" one of them asked Flo Adams.

"He—he's in there!" She pointed to the closed bedroom door.

The men smashed into the bedroom. The blonde pulled the door shut; locked them in with Mattson's key. She yanked the closet door open. "Come on, dick!" she said breathlessly.

Mallory followed her down the stairway, out of the front door to his car. The detective dumped his trussed prisoner into the back of his coupe and slammed down the lid. He leaped behind his steering wheel. The blonde got in beside him. The sleuth jammed down on the starter. The coupe roared to life, plunged out of the grounds.

The second story window went up. A tongue of saffron licked into the foggy night. Lead pinged against the bullet-proof glass of the detective's car. He nosed it out the driveway, reached the boule-

vard and headed toward the city.

A glare of light reflected from the inner side of Mallory's windshield. The blonde looked back. "They're right on our trail, dick!"

Mallory mashed his throttle to the floorboards. The coupe plunged into the mist. Guns cracked from behind. A bullet smashed on the coupe's rear window. The yellow-haired girl melted to the big detective, her trembling body fusing against his. Mallory glanced at her. "Where's my raincoat?" he asked.

"Oh!" the blonde caught her breath, held her hands to her naked breasts. "I forgot to grab it. It's back in the linen closet. Look out!" she suddenly exclaimed.

**T**HROUGH the fog a red semaphore glowed. The whistle of an inter-urban train screeched. The electric cars shuddered under applied air brakes. The coupe tore for the gleaming steel rails, crossed them, safe. Mallory looked back. The electric train had stopped on the crossing. The big sedan was held up.

The headlights of the big car were well behind when Mallory reached the city limits. Criss-crossing through the residential area, the detective turned his car into his own driveway in the middle of a block. "I guess we've lost them," he said to Flo Adams. He jumped from his coupe and opened the door on the blonde's side. She got out.

Mallory took the girl in the back way of his home, upstairs to his bedroom. He sat down, put a cigar-

ette between his lips and flicked a match to it. He blew a cloud of smoke into the air; looked at the revealed charms of the blonde who had thrown herself on the bed.

He got up, grinned. "I guess you'll be here when I get back from the police station. I've got to deliver that rat, Trigger Mattson, to Lieutenant O'Neill."

As he spoke his ears detected footfalls on his driveway. He threw up his window. A gun barked at him. Mallory ducked back into the room. But in that instant he had seen two men carrying the form of Mattson toward the front of his house. The big sedan was at the curb, engine purring.

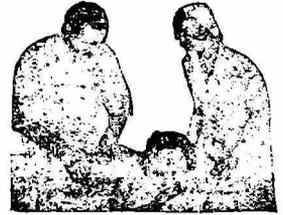
Mace Mallory went down the stairs in bounds. The three desperate henchmen of Trigger Mattson had traced the detective to his home. They were attempting to rescue their underworld boss.

Revolver ready, the detective plunged through the front doorway. He saw the men about to put Mattson in their car. As Mallory jumped to the lawn there was a volley of shots.

One of the men carrying the trussed Trigger Mattson slumped, moaned. Mallory hesitated. He recognized Police Lieutenant O'Neill and a squad of officers from headquarters in the little group coming from the street. Taken by surprise, the three men were quickly overpowered, shackled.

The police lieutenant swung on the detective. "What's going on here at your dump, Mallory?" O'Neill focused his flashlight on the tied-up man. "What the hell!"

## Learn this Profitable, Fascinating Profession in 90 Days, at Home



Hundreds of men and women of all ages, 18 to 50, are making \$10.00 to \$20.00 a day giving scientific Swedish Massage and Hydro Therapy treatments. There is a big demand from beauty shops, hospitals, sanitariums, clubs, doctors and private patients. The field of reducing alone offers untold possibilities.

Learn this interesting money making profession in your own home by mail through our college extension course. Same instructors as in our nationally famous resident school, same diploma awarded. Course can be completed in three months. Many earn Big Money while learning. Enroll now and we will include anatomy charts, medical dictionary, reducing roller and Hydro Therapy supplies free of extra cost. The reducing course alone may be worth many times the modest tuition fee. Send coupon for special reduced price offer. Complete details with list of successful graduates will be sent free.

National College of Massage and Physio-Therapy  
Dept. 751, 20 N. Ashland Boulevard, Chicago

You may send me Free and postpaid your illustrated catalog and complete details of your special offer.

Name.....

Address.....

## Rare and Unusual PRIVATELY PRINTED Fully Illustrated Classical Art Studies

Send \$1.00 for combination set, along with unexpurgated exotic literature. Special BARGAIN PRICES. All sent prepaid on receipt of \$1.00.

FLEUR CO., Dept. E.D.

Box 12, Station R, New York City

DO YOU WANT TO

### STOP TOBACCO?

Banish the craving for tobacco as thousands have. Make yourself free and happy with Tobacco Redeemer. Not a substitute, not habit forming. Write for free booklet telling of injurious effect of tobacco and dependable, easy way to relieve the craving many men have.

**FREE BOOK**

**NewellPharmaceuticalCo.**  
Dept. 345 St. Louis, Mo.

## CARDS & DICE

Magical work a specialty; catalog on request. One of the oldest and most reliable firms.

VINE HILL & Co., Dept. H., Swanton, Ohio

**LONELY HEARTS** Join our Club. World's Greatest Social Extension Bureau. Happiness awaits you, correspondents everywhere, seeking congenial mates. Quick results. Confidential service. Particulars FREE. **STANDARD CLUB, Box 607-M, GRAYSLAKE, ILLINOIS**

he exclaimed. "Trigger Mattson!"

"I thought you might get interested in him," Mallory said. "So I went out and got him. I was bringing him in. I stopped here to phone. These fellows followed me; tried to get away with Mattson while I was in the house. But how come you're here, O'Neill?"

"That secretary you cracked on the head spilled his guts," O'Neill explained. "He was lined up with Trigger Mattson; tipped him off about some stuff Newell was going to use against Mayor Grainger. Trigger broke in the house to get it. Newell swapped shots with him and got killed.

"We went back to Newell's house," O'Neill continued. "Found a girl stabbed, upstairs. Seems she took something to Newell's house. She must have seen Trigger shoot him. That's why she was bumped off. Then I ran into this layout when I came here looking for you. I wanted to find out if you knew anything about a package of police records and certain checks Newell's secretary told about."

**T**HE detective drew the big envelope from his pocket, handed it to O'Neill.

The police lieutenant examined the contents. He looked searchingly into the detective's face.

"Where'd you get this stuff, Mallory?"

"Found it on the lawn after you left," Mallory answered.

O'Neill scowled. "Mallory, sometime I'm going to put you in a nice little boudoir at our hotel."

Mallory grinned. "Okay, lieutenant."

O'Neill and the officers left with their prisoners. The detective went back into his house, up to the bedroom. Flo Adams came up to him with frightened eyes. "I—I heard you talking with the police. You gave them my picture. They'll be looking for me!"

Mallory took her photograph from the side pocket of his coat. "I held this one out on them. It's not a good picture of you." He tore it up, threw it in the grate.

The blonde sighed in relief. Her crimson lips smiled. She came close to the detective. He put his arm around her bare shoulders, crushed her pulsing breasts against him and felt the warm contact of her thigh. "It's too late to get you any clothes tonight," he told her.

She melted to him. Mallory felt her body quiver ecstatically. "I—I won't need any clothes—tonight!" She turned her head upward. Her eyes sparkled—held a promise.

---

**Watch for**

**‘HEAT FROM TEXAS’**

**A Different Detective Story. Coming Soon.**

# "I was FAT and FORTY"

writes **R. S. DANIELS**

"Now my waistline is 4½ inches smaller. Muscles have grown stronger and stomach no longer sags. . . It's given me new life and pep—sluggishness is gone. It is certainly all you claim."  
R. S. D. Tulsa, Okla.

## "LOST FIVE INCHES—FEEL FINE"

"Your Director belt is the finest thing I've ever worn. It is very comfortable. . . I want another, but not as large as I am 5 inches smaller around the waist."  
F. R. C. Parkhurst, N. C.

## "RESTORED PEP AND VITALITY"

"The Director belt is wonderful. Does all you claim. . . I've felt much better ever since, no longer short of breath."  
D. W. B. Wichita, Kan.

## "IT ELIMINATED CONSTIPATION"

"I have trimmed my waistline 3 inches. My digestion and elimination have improved greatly, thanks to Director."  
I. H. C. Fitchburg, Mass.

## "NOW ENJOY SOCIAL AFFAIRS"

"I feel much younger. . . It's an easy way to reduce. It certainly changed my appearance."  
H. E. P. Mt. Carmel, Ill.



Don't continue to look this way



The "Director" gives you this waistline

Gone—that bulging waistline



**No Dieting  
No Exercise—No Drugs**

Director applies a gentle changing pressure upon the fat at the waistline. With every movement of your body, during every waking hour, this massage-like action causes excess fat to be absorbed and eliminated, easily and quickly.

This remarkable belt improves your appearance the moment you put it on. Without a heavy waistline to pull them out of shape, your clothes instantly fit, feel and look better.

With the overworked abdominal muscles properly supported, you attain a more erect carriage and enjoy a feeling of new ease, comfort and lightness. Director puts snap in your step, helps to relieve "shortness of breath", and renews your vim and vigor. You look and feel 10 years younger.

The Director belt is easy and comfortable to wear. Loose, fallen abdominal muscles go back where they belong. Director's massage-like action aids nature in promoting regularity without the use of harsh, irritating cathartics.

- How Director Works
- Improve Your Appearance
- Renew Your Vigor
- Break Constipation Habit

**REDUCE  
4 to 6 Inches  
OR  
NOT ONE PENNY  
COST TO YOU  
SENT ON TRIAL**

**Send for FREE Details**

Just fill in and mail this handy coupon and we will send you (without obligation) Free literature and full details of our liberal 2-weeks no-risk-to-you trial offer.

Name.....

Address.....

Town.....State.....

**Mail to LANDON & WARNER**

Dept. T-24, 360 No. Michigan Ave., Chicago.



# LEARN to DRAW

beautiful girl's heads and figures for pleasure and profit—most fascinating—romantic—highly paid branch of the art profession. Be an artist—make big money. If you like to draw you can learn to draw Amazing NEW easy way quickly starts you. No experience necessary. Complete course consisting of simple instructions, comprehensive charts, diagrams and pictures of beautiful artist's models ready to draw. Entire course now offered at very low price and on easy terms.

## First Lesson FREE

Start your art career today by sending your name and address and only 10c to cover mailing cost and we will send you the first lesson—try it free. You will be delighted with progress you can make in short time.

Send today for free lesson and special offer.  
**TOWERTOWN STUDIOS, Dept. 995,**  
 520 N. Michigan Ave. Chicago, Ill.



### FOLLOW THIS MAN

Secret Service Operator No. 53 is on the job! Running down dangerous Counterfeit Gang. Tell-tale finger prints in murdered girl's room.

**Free** Operator No. 53 made to his chief. Write for it.

**Earn a Regular Monthly Salary**  
 YOU can become a Finger Print Expert at home, in your spare time, at small cost. Write for confidential full report and details. Literature will NOT be sent to boys under 17 years of age.  
**INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE**  
 1920 Sunnyside Ave.  
 Dept. 63-17 Chicago, Ill.

# THE MAN WHO WAS HANGED

(Continued from page 53)

and gives them medical certificates. He and this dame Scanlon were pulling a fast one; they suspected me when I hung around too much, and they slugged me good and proper—killed two birds with one stone to collect ten grand on Jeremy Scanlon's policy."

"Then *they're* the murderers!" gasped the sheriff. His eyes narrowed. "You haven't proved that you didn't kill him yourself, though."

Graydon laughed harshly. "I don't have to," he said grimly, "inasmuch as I was the nearest thing to a murder involved. There isn't any Jeremy Scanlon. . . . There never was! If you can prove there was, you can hang me again! Jane Scanlon's been here six months; have you ever seen her husband? Has anybody? You have only Mason's word that he was treating an invalid and keeping him out of sight. I'll say he was! A neat scheme to insure a non-existent man, commit a mythical murder, and collect. And I was the fall guy—only I didn't fall far enough to break my neck!"

"Listen"—the sheriff strangled a little—"how the hell—?"

Graydon shrugged. "I was on the wrong track myself. I wanted to talk to Jeremy Scanlon to see if

## Learn ELECTRICITY IN 12 WEEKS AT COYNE

The great Coyne Shops in Chicago have a world-wide reputation for training ambitious fellows in this big pay field in only 12 weeks. They help you by giving you lifetime employment service. By my new plan YOU can take advantage of their wonderful method of learning—by doing TODAY FOR THE FUTURE.



### "Pay-Tuition-After-Graduation" Plan

Train in 90 days on real electrical machinery. Send the coupon today. If you are short of money I'll send you advance of my finance plan. If accepted, you won't have to start paying tuition until five months from the date you start school, and then you'll have 18 months to complete your payments. Send for BIG FREE illustrated BOOK telling about COYNE training without book study or useless theory, and how many earn while learning.

**COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL**  
 500 S. Paulina Street, Dept. 75-67, Chicago, Illinois

MR. N. C. LEWIS, President  
 500 S. Paulina St., Dept. 75-67, Chicago, Ill.  
 Send FREE Book and "Pay-Tuition-After-Graduation" Plan.

NAME.....  
 ADDRESS.....  
 CITY..... STATE.....

they were doping him—giving him slow poison. But all that burning of the body looked fishy as the devil. . . . Why couldn't they have knocked him in the head just as easy? If you guys hadn't been in such a godawful hurry to stretch my neck, we might have found out things.

"I didn't tie things up, though, until I heard your pals here"—he glanced at the two uncomfortable cops—"decide to ship me off in place of a dead tramp who had disappeared. I'll bet Mason and the dame already had that corpse hacked up and in the furnace, just waiting—after I'd made them suspicious—to whack me down and stick me with a phony murder!"

Graydon stood up abruptly, rubbed his black-and-blue neck. He kicked the wooden coffin and shivered slightly.

"Hell!" he swore softly. "I'm going to spend a lot of time from now on . . . keeping myself from turning into a corpse!"

**In Next Month's Issue**

**"Body Ransom," "When Doubles Cross," "Gunfire at Scarlani's," "Beyond Justice," "Murder Make-Up"**—these are only a few of the titles to thrill and chill you in November **Spicy Detective Stories**

**LET ME TELL YOU**

About your business, travel, changes, matrimony, love affairs, friends, enemies, lucky days and many other interesting and important affairs of your life as indicated by astrology. Send for your special Astral Reading. All work strictly scientific, individual and guaranteed satisfactory. **FOR MANY YEARS PRIVATE ASTROLOGICAL ADVISER TO ROYALTY and the ELITE.** Write name, address and date of birth plainly. No money required, but if you like send 15 cents (stamps; no coins) to help defray costs. Address: **PUNDIT TABORE.** (Dept. 535), Upper Forjett Street, **BOMBAY VII, BRITISH INDIA.** Postage to India is 5c.



**CONTROLS Disease of Blood**

An effective treatment against disease of blood. Used for 60 years. Home treatment. Hundreds of Endorsements. Whatever the cause, however far advanced, write for **FREE Book.**  
**JOHN STERLING REMEDY CO., Dept. 81, Kansas City, Mo.**

**HAYFEVER**

**ASTHMA and SUMMER COLDS** are unnecessary. Complete relief only \$1.00 Postpaid. Nothing else to buy. Over 40,000 **HOLFORD'S WONDER INHALERS** sold last year alone. Mail \$1.00 today for full season's relief to **THE DANDEE CO., 252 HENNEPIN AVENUE, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA,** or write for Free Booklet.

**Try This On Your Hair 15 Days**



Let Your Mirror Prove Results. Your hair need not thin out, nor need you become bald. This Different Method stops thinning out of hair, lifeless hair, itching, dandruff, thinned or increasing baldness by strengthening, prolonging the life of hair on men and women. Send your name now before it's too late for free 15-day test offer. **JUEL DENN, 207 N. Michigan Ave., Dept. 107, Chicago, Ill.**

**MEN HELP YOUR GLANDS**

**WITHOUT USING POWERFUL INTERNAL STIMULANTS**

When the glands weaken from worry, dissipation, etc.—use **GLANDVICO** externally. A real gland stimulant. Strengthens weak, abused glands. Renews natural powers, strength and vigor with quick, lasting results. A trial box will quickly convince you. Sent sealed 25c; large box \$1.00. 3 boxes \$2.50.  
**FREER & DEAN, (Dept. R) 265 W. 34th St. New York City**

**QUIT WHISKEY**

The Health Remedy Products of Kansas City is now offering a **NEW** scientifically prepared treatment to aid men and women **FREE** banish all desire for drinking. Thousands have already proved success of this New Easy Way. Can be given secretly. Write today for Free Booklet. Accept no substitutes. Write Health Remedy Products, 2507 Manufacturers Exch. Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

**BOOTS AND SHOES**

with 5 inch Heels. Made to order. Leather Corsets. Costumes. Opera Gloves, Rubber Busts, Riding Habits and other accessories. Price list and 8 costume photos \$1.00.  
**NADINE STUDIOS, Room 1102, 210-5th Ave., N. Y. C.**

# A HUNDRED GRAND

(Continued from page 45)

"Chiseler!" snapped Johnny. "If you and that punk put a stiff in here last night, where in hell is he?"

The woman moaned and fainted. He stood there, looking down at her, wondering, trying to piece the thing together. Deliberately he walked away to examine the cot minutely, carefully, long and well by the bright little light. There was no single spot of blood stain. Still puzzled, and more than a little suspicious he came back to her, cast the light on her.

Her face was ghastly white and even beneath her thin lipstick her lips appeared blue, bloodless. The long cloak she wore had fallen apart, her dress had worked up about her hips in the fall. On the upper part of her rounded thigh was a black bruise, as large as the palm of a hand.

"J's" Johnny spoke to Johnny, "somebody's been kicking her around, all right! Teeth prints, a bruise like that and a barked shin! But where in hell's the body? If she and this mug Smollett *did* put one out here and some one else found it! Whew! What a mess!"

Even Johnny Harding failed to relish the idea of helping conceal a murder! If this woman had killed Cecil Thorndike, as she claimed, how could he afford to put his foot in it? Even for an old and trusted friend like Papa Manheim? And as he carried her to the cab looking at her finely chiseled features

he realized she was exactly the type who might kill a man trying to use force where guile might be successful.

"'Smatter, boss?'" from the cab driver, "couldn't she take it?"

"She didn't like the salt breeze," grinned Johnny, lifting her in.

Something gleamed and glittered in the sand at his feet. Thinking she had dropped her vanity he picked it up, examined it with surprise. "Drop your badge, bud-die?"

"Naw," said the cab driver, "mine's on my cap!"

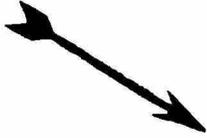
Johnny dropped the shiny badge in his pocket, got in.

At the first drug store he bought ammonia, borrowed a glass of water and revived her. The rest of the way into Manhattan she was inarticulate other than mumbling and groaning, moaning like a frightened child about the electric chair, the noose and death! Johnny comforted her as best he could, arm about her trembling shoulders, fragrant hair in his face, but his doleful countenance belied his words.

"We'll straighten it up some way," he promised her. But inwardly he was cursing for by now he was more than half determined that events had transpired exactly as she had claimed. He swore deeply at the panic that had made her conceal the corpse with the aid of the misled valet, Smollett.

# Follow the trail to Adventure!

... where all roads  
lead to  
ROMANCE ...



Life goes on—

*any time you pick up a copy of Spicy-Adventure! . . . And what life . . . glamorous, pulse-stirring tales of lovely girls and real men in fast, red-blooded situations.*

Plenty of action and plenty of good solid punch to the heart in these yarns! You'll enjoy a story in this magazine from the first word to the last—and then want more . . . And the swell part is, you can have more. Just don't miss

*the thrill of the month—*

## SPICY-ADVENTURE STORIES

*October Issue on Sale September 2nd*

FOR now, to all appearances, the body had been found, and the finders were blackmailing the woman—hence \$80,000 from Papa Manheim. If it wasn't reported to the police the blackmailers would bleed Niva Sorenson from that time on—and if it was reported the ensuing scandal would break down all the publicity for the star Papa Manheim had so painstakingly built up. It *was* a jam, and how!

At the St. Helena he insisted on her taking a drink for a bracer. In fact, he needed a little bracing himself, and got it, not once, but three times. It was good Scotch.

"Well," he said dismally, "it still stinks to me! I'll admit I came up here this afternoon thinking you were just another cheap tart, hooking Papa Manheim, but now I don't know what to think! You've cut loose with a hundred grand to keep this thing still, but that's only a starter! Where you going to get the jack when they tap you again?"

He paced back and forth, bracing himself at every turn with the bottle of Scotch he carried in his hand. For a long while she sat there silent, thinking, thinking. When she arose her voice was steady in answer to his question—as steady as the hands which held the telephone.

"No, no," he protested, "lay off the police until morning! I'll tell you—you call this mug Smollett and get him over here, out of his own apartment. I'll have a little look-see while you're entertaining him; there may be something rotten yet. Don't give up, baby!"

It required a little argument before she agreed, but ten minutes later the call had been made, the soft-voiced Smollett had promised to appear by midnight and Johnny was on his way to Greenwich Village, where lay Thorndike's apartment.

The sidewalk in front of the apartment hotel was deserted; Johnny waited in the shadow across the street. Presently a little figure of a man darted from the entrance, hailed the very cab Johnny had vacated and rode away. Johnny ran across the street, dashed into the foyer and up to the desk.

"Smollett," he said hurriedly, "Smollett, Mr. Thorndike's man. Was that him that just left?" And as the clerk nodded affirmation, he snapped his fingers in disgust. "Missed him again!"

Walking out he caught the eye of a fresh-faced bellhop, motioned him to follow. Wise in the ways of apartment hotels the bellhop was soon beside him on the sidewalk.

Johnnie shoved a card in one of his hands, began leafing through a sheaf of green bills with the other.

"Gee, Mr. Harding," the bellhop grinned, "I'd have known you, anyway. I read your stuff every morning. What—"

Johnny grinned back at him. "Swell, kid. I like to see young fellows reading pure literature. Want to make a few bucks? I'm buying good advice. If you was me and wanted to go to that heel Thorndike's apartment without anyone knowing it, how'd you work it?"

The kid spat into the gutter. "Heel is right! Thorndike wouldn't give a dime to see an earthquake. But if I was you and wanted in his apartment while he was gone I'd tell a wise bellhop—like me—then meet him in the elevator in about ten minutes. Maybe the bellhop can finagle a pass key."

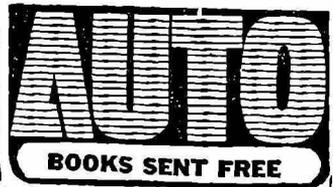
Johnny peeled off the top bill and handed it to the boy. They grinned at each other and parted.

Ten minutes later Johnny Harding opened the door of the empty apartment and switched on the lights. He closed it softly behind him and gazed around. It was furnished exactly as Niva Sorenson had explained—the table here, the divan there, the heavy chair here.

He padded through the living room, entered one of the bedrooms at the rear. Evidently it was the man Smollett's room, for the closet held a single black suit and the bureau drawers revealed nothing but the clothes of a valet. There were a few pictures, a few nicknacks, and a bottle of Scotch half full on the dresser.

Johnny wiped his mouth and walked into another bedroom. The bureau drawers held half a dozen pairs of charged socks, a few tattered undershirts; the closet revealed a soiled dressing gown. "Where," Johnny asked Johnny, "is the guy's clothes? Thorndike was always a snappy dresser. Where's his rags now?"

Perhaps the valet had concealed them—no doubt he had. His plan was simply to make it seem that



on approval. Just mail the coupon and we'll send you a set of these remarkable auto books, just off the press. Whether you are a mechanic or helper, expert apprentice, auto owner or driver, if you're interested in knowing all about automobile mechanics, then take advantage of this FREE OFFER.

**Over 300 pages on DIESEL Engines**

A better job—in the gigantic auto industry. BIGGER PAY—a chance to go into business for yourself and get a share of the huge profits are waiting for any man who even half tries to improve himself. Learn auto engineering with these wonder books a new way—without studying or memorizing. Simply use the JIFFY INDEX to look up the answer to any auto problem. Built by eleven of America's greatest automobile engineers, and written in simple language so you can understand it. Very newest cars, all covered.

**CAN YOU FIX IT?**

These wonder books tell step by step HOW to take out "play" in differential—to kill the shimmy in steering—to set "THING"—how to put your finger instantly on engine trouble and then the quick expert way to FIX it. Newest improvements fully covered. Equal to a complete trade course at less than a fourth the cost.

**6 Big Volumes 1935 Edition**

2500 pages, 2000 Illustrations, wiring diagrams, etc., including Marine Engines, Aviation Motors, Diesel engines, etc. The Luxe edition, gold-stamped flexible binding.

**FREE!** Privilege of consulting Automobile Engineers of American Technical Society for one year without cost if you mail coupon immediately.

**AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY**  
Drexel Avenue & 58th St., Dept. A728 Chicago, Ill.

**AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY**

Drexel Ave. & 58th St., Dept. A728, Chicago, Ill.  
I would like to see the new 6-volume edition of your AUTO BOOKS. I will pay the few cents delivery charges only, but if I choose to, I may return them express collect. If after 10 days use I prefer to keep them, I will send you \$2 and pay the balance at the rate of only \$2 a month, until \$24.80 is paid. Please include free consulting membership as per your offer above. Send brand new 1935 edition.

Name.....  
Address.....  
City..... State.....  
Attach letter stating age, occupation and name and address of employer and at least one business man as reference.

**AGE SHOULDN'T COUNT**

**MEN!** If overwork, worry or mental strain has caused you to lose your energy and vigor of youth, try FORMULA 120, destined as a tonic and nerve stimulant for ENERGY and VIGOR. Users report GRATIFYING RESULTS. T. R. of New Mexico writes: "Wouldn't be without them." D. R. of Florida writes: "Send four more boxes." FORMULA 120 is perfectly safe and harmless, yet effective. Price: \$1.00 per box, 3 boxes for \$2.50. SPECIAL FORMULA 120, containing GLAND PRODUCTS, indicated for severe cases, \$2.00 per box, 3 boxes for \$5.00. Send 15c if ordering C.O.D. P. PRODUCTS CO., Dept. 3S-1, 1120 So. Francisco Ave., Chicago, Ill. AGENTS WANTED.

**QUIT TOBACCO**

The Health Remedy Products of Kansas City is now offering a NEW scientifically prepared treatment to aid men and women banish quickly all desire for smoking, chewing or snuff. Thousands have already enjoyed success of this New Easy Way. **FREE** Write today for Free Booklet. Accept no substitutes. Write Health Remedy Products, Dep. 587 Manufacturers Exch. Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

**New Sensationally Different**

Imported Novelties: "Was You Dere, Charlie," "Pop with Rolling Eyes" Motion Picture set of six Hula-Hula Dancing Girls showing real motion. Also Lola's Famous Bare Dance—also a shocking letter about the Ladies—also Secret Love Letter from Court of old Russian Regime... Novelty Flip Cartoon... also dancing figure made of rubber and other surprises. Combination regularly imported to sell retail at more than three dollars. Entire lot sent anywhere for \$1.00 cash or money order plus 10c for handling.  
**GISHI-MURA IMPORT 125 E. 46th Street. New York, N. Y.**

the murdered man had disappeared. He wandered back into the living room, set the bottle carelessly on the table. Here was the stool she had fallen over when Thorn-dike hit her. Here was where the struggle had occurred. He pulled open the heavy drawer.

The gun itself! The murder gun! The valet had missed it!

He picked it up carefully, touched the trigger. Crack! Crack! He dropped it hastily, waited for the echo to die away, sweat popping out on his brow. Whew, what a trigger! Speaking of hair-triggers! No wonder the damned thing went off! Good thing he wasn't looking in the barrel! Carefully he revolved the cylinder in his hand, gazed at the remaining shells long and well.

Presently he laid the gun back on the table and began to laugh. Perhaps he laughed from sheer relief but sometimes the little columnist laughed most heartily when mad. He killed the Scotch, took up the phone and called Niva Sorenson.

For a second the operator rang fruitlessly. Then the connection was made and a woman's sobbing voice said, "Oh! oh! oh!" and the connection was severed.

**I**T TOOK a precious three minutes to get to the ground floor and hail a cab, and a precious ten minutes to get to Central Park West. But he wasted no time at the front door—rather, he made the fire escape in nothing flat.

The French doors were locked

but he burst a pane of glass with the gun he had thrust into his pocket. There was no sound in the bedroom; he tiptoed to the closed door, placed his ear against it. Cautiously he opened it a tiny crack and peered in.

The woman leaned, half crouched against the table, a heavy book end raised above her wildly streaming hair in a gesture of defense. Just out of arm's length was Smollett, valet to Cecil Thorn-dike, smirking and smiling.

"Now, sweetheart, there ain't no use fighting me like this. After all, I'm your friend. Look what I did for you!" Step by step he advanced, little pig eyes glaring and burning.

She stood quivering like an excited thoroughbred. The bedraggled appearance of the room proved the struggle that had already taken place and the figure of the woman emphasized it. She stood there poised for flight, clad only in a pair of thin silken step-ins, a torn brassiere dangling unheeded from her shoulder. A tattered negligee lay on the floor beneath her heels. Her generous breasts rose and fell in the stress of her fear and emotion.

Before Johnny could say a word the man sprang. He didn't seize her, didn't snatch at her. Instead he swung at her savagely with a clenched fist and the book end clattered harmlessly to the floor as she crumpled from a hard left to the jaw. For a moment longer Johnny stood there as the man bent over her white form.

"Stick 'em up, you rat!"

The man turned and glared, eyes wild, then slowly his hands went up.

**I**N FIVE minutes he lay on the floor, trussed like a pig for slaughter, a red spot on his jaw showing where Johnny had smacked him unmercifully. The woman, Niva Sorenson, lay on the davenport, still unconscious. Johnny hung up the phone and looked around for the Scotch bottle.

"Punk," he said softly to Smollett, "you act like a rat and if I was you I'd run true to form. In five minutes Bill Nobles will be here, Nobles of the homicide squad. When he gets through with you they'll clap you in the bastille, and finally they'll sit you in the hot seat and fry your no-good carcass to a crisp." He took a drink and looked solemnly at the bound man.

"What do you mean, hot seat?" The man's eyes were frightened.

"Why, just this. I know the whole lay, chump, the whole lay. I got the gun right here that killed Cecil Thorndike, and it's got your fingerprints all over it!"

"I didn't kill him! The dame did it! She—"

"Nuts! When you go on the stand who's the jury going to believe? A swell-looking dame like that, a dame all broke out with sex appeal, or a rat like you? Why, you've got 'heel' written all over your face. You shouldn't have put the gun back in the drawer. Well, you'll make a fine looking stiff, anyway."

Silence. When the man Smollett spoke again his voice was shaken.

**PRIVATELY PRINTED** **MATURE READERS** **LIMITED EDITIONS**  
 AND COLLECTORS OF  
**AMATORY CURIOSA**  
 OF ALL RACES  
 SEND FOR FREE CATALOGUE  
 OF BOOKS ON  
**ANTHROPOLOGICAL ESOTERICA**  
 Unexpurgated Classics  
 Exotically Illustrated  
 RACIAL ARTS OF LOVE

All FALSTAFF scientific and anthropological Books on the Love Relations of Mankind are enthralling and highly informative documents by authorities of international repute. That is why the FALSTAFF list of permanent subscribers reads like a "Who's Who" of American Sophisticated Intellectual Aristocracy.

**FALSTAFF PRESS**

Dept. 2410, 230 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.  
 Please send me free illustrated catalogs of Amatory Curiosa.

Name..... Age.....  
 Address.....  
 City..... State.....

**DO YOU WANT TO STOP TOBACCO?**  
  
 Banish the craving for tobacco as thousands have. Make yourself free and happy with Tobacco Reducer. Not a substitute, not habit forming. Write for free booklet telling of injurious effect of tobacco and dependable, easy way to relieve the craving many men have.  
**FREE BOOK**  
 NewellPharmaceuticalCo.  
 Dept. 545 St. Louis, Mo.

**16 M.M. ART MOVIES**  
**THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A BURLESQUE QUEEN**  
 Not a book - not a series of still pictures - but a real motion picture that will thrill you. Only \$4.98  
 Sample Roll Art Film and price list. \$1.00; with new type handy projector, \$2.50.  
 Homovias, 22 E. Van Buren, Chicago



**MAN! BE STRONG!**

Give Nature a chance to revitalize your mind and body. Steady your nerves. Enjoy vigorous, robust HEALTH. Astonishing discovery helps nature accomplish life-long results without drugs or stimulants. Send only \$2.00 today for complete treatment with 50 Vita-Tablets included Free!  
**B. ROBEA** Box 2163 **Philadelphia, Pa.**

**LONESOME?** A Pal, Sweetheart, or Mate is waiting to meet you through the Star Correspondence Club.  
 Choice members, both sexes, everywhere. Small cost. Quick results. (CONFIDENTIAL.) Some Rich. Free particulars and list. **LOIS L. REEDER, Manager,** P. O. Lock Box 549, Palestine, Texas.



## Back to the Old Theories!

*THERE is no mystery about the universal appeal of the detective story.*

*From the beginning of life mankind has seen everywhere the age-long drama of the conflict between good and evil, between the forces of good and the forces of evil, between the powers of law and the powers of outlawry.*

*Literature has always recognized this fact.*

*One of the first stories in the Old Testament is a murder story, a fratricide—the story of Cain and Abel.*

*In the story of Solomon we have very early examples of what a wise lawgiver could do by deductive reasoning, in, for example, the case of the kidnaped child, claimed by two mothers.*

*And so all great literature has gone.*

*What is Shakespeare's Hamlet but a glorified detective story in which the murder mystery is solved by that much-used device of re-enacting the crime before a body of suspects for the purpose of forcing a confession?*

*By the time that Vidoq, Lecog, Dupin, Sherlock Holmes, Philo Vance, Craig Kennedy, Charlie Chan, and other modern fictitious sleuths had entered the lists, literature had achieved a refinement that made the detective problem itself the whole theme of the detective story.*

(Continued on page 128)

(Continued from page 125)

“Mister, I didn’t kill Thorndike. You got me wrong.”

“Yeah, how would I know? How would a jury know?”

“Thorndike ain’t dead, mister, honest to God. Listen, let me out of this and I’ll take you to him. I know where he’s at, I know where he’s holed up!”

The door barged open. Bill Nobles.

“Hello, drizzlepuss,” smiled Johnny, “have a drink?”

The big detective’s eyes swept around the room and back to the little newspaper man. “What you into now, dimwit? And who’s the scenery?”

“It’s a long story,” said Johnny, “but I’ve got a pinch for you. Thorndike, the hot check man.” Nobles looked disgusted. “Only this time I’ll bet my hat you’ll stick him for murder—not hot paper! Sit down, demon detectatiff, sit down!”

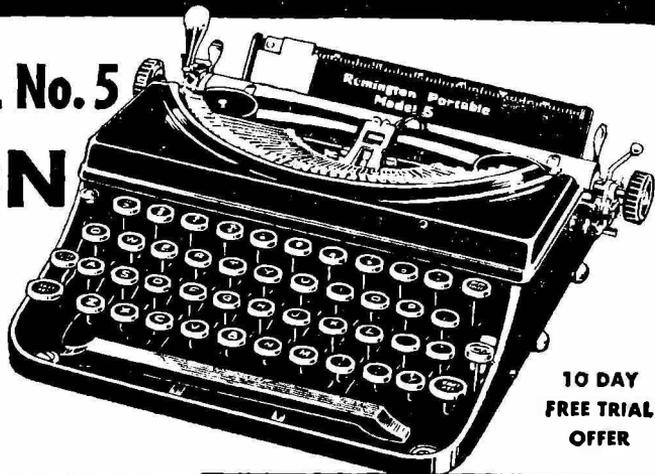
TEN minutes later. “And so as soon as I find the blanks in the revolver, I knew it was a frame-up sure enough. Besides, it looked funny for Thorndike to plaster the town with bad paper just before he got bumped off. I’ll bet even you would smell a little stink there. They frame this poor little innocent gal here into believing she killed Thorndike, and little Rollo helps her do away with the body. That stunk like fish, too. He’s a great little helper, though. He’s going to help you up to the Bronx to pinch Mr. Cecil Thorndike!”

Nobles thought for a moment. “Okay, I’ll knock him off if he’s there, but whatta you mean mur-

# ANNOUNCING AMAZING TYPEWRITER BARGAIN

BRAND NEW MODEL No. 5

REMINGTON PORTABLE  
10¢ A DAY  
MONEY BACK GUARANTEE



10 DAY  
FREE TRIAL  
OFFER

## BIG PRICE REDUCTION

● Positively the greatest portable typewriter bargain ever offered! Now for the first time Remington, world-famous manufacturer, offers a NEW purchase plan... only 10¢ a day buys this latest model machine! Not a used or rebuilt typewriter. Not an incomplete machine. A beautiful brand new regulation Remington Portable. Standard 4-row keyboard; Standard width carriage; margin release on keyboard; back spacer; automatic ribbon reverse; every essential feature found in standard typewriters!

### Money making opportunities always open

Hundreds of jobs are waiting for people who can type. A typewriter helps put your ideas on paper in logical, impressive form... helps you write clear, understandable sales reports, letters, articles, or stories. A Remington Portable has started many a young man and woman on the road to success.



### A Gift for Every Member of the Family

If you want a gift for birthday, Christmas, or graduation, one that Father, Mother, Sister or Brother will use and appreciate for years to come... give a Remington Portable. It's the one gift that can be used with both pleasure and profit by every member of the family.

### ACT... WHILE LOW PRICE HOLDS GOOD!

New wage scales in our own factories, and in the factories of the companies which make our materials, point definitely to higher prices. Stocks of machines on hand make possible the present unbelievably low cash price on this machine. Everything points to higher prices. We cannot possibly guarantee this low price in the face of constantly rising costs in every one of our departments. So we say... "Act fast!"

### 10 DAY FREE TRIAL OFFER

You can try this machine for 10 days without risking one penny of your money. Not even shipping charges. Send for complete details on this most liberal offer. Get attractive new catalogue illustrating and describing the many Remington models available on unusually low terms. Clip coupon today!

### EVERY ESSENTIAL FEATURE found in Standard Machines

Buying a typewriter isn't like buying a suit of clothes. Many Remington portables, seeing 10 years of hard service are still in active use. When you buy... buy a machine with every standard feature. The Remington No. 5 is the most compact and durable portable ever built... includes all essential standard typewriter features. This beautiful machine

represents the height of economy... unequalled economy in first cost... unequalled economy in service.

It is today the best value ever offered in typewriter history... and that statement comes from the company that has consistently made typewriter history. Buy now. It is a real bargain offer.

### Specifications...

The Model 5 includes every essential feature found in standard typewriters. It has standard 4-row keyboard. Complete visibility. Standard width carriage for long envelopes. Carriage return lever of exceptional design for easy and rapid operation.

Margin release on the keyboard. Automatic ribbon reverse. Backspace. Two color ribbon shift. Variable line spacer. Adjustable margin stops. Auto set Paragraph Key (one of the most useful features found on any typewriter). Weight 11 lbs. 13 oz. Furnished with Pica or Elite type.

### TYPING COURSE

FREE

When you get your new Remington No. 5, you will get with it... ABSOLUTELY FREE a 36-page course in typing. It teaches the Touch System, speeds up work. It is simply written and well illustrated. Instructions are easy to follow. Even a child can understand this method. A little study and the average person, child or grown-up, becomes accurate. Follow this course during the 10 DAY FREE TRIAL OFFER that we give you on your typewriter. At the end of that time, you should be able to dash off letters faster than with pen and ink.



### CARRYING CASE

FREE

With every Remington No. 5, a FREE carrying case sturdily built of 3-ply wood. Covered with heavy DuPont fabric. Top is removed in one motion, leaving machine firmly attached to base. Can be used anywhere... on knees, in chairs, on trains.



Remington Rand Inc., Dept. 276A-10, 205 E. 42 St., N. Y. C.  
Please tell me how I can buy a new Remington Portable typewriter for only 10¢ a day. Also enclose your new catalog.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

CLIP COUPON NOW

REMINGTON RAND INC., DEPT. 276A-10, 205 E. 42nd St., N. Y. C.

When answering advertisements please mention SPICY DETECTIVE STORIES

(Continued from page 126)

*It is the belief of the publishers of Spicy Detective Stories that such refinement has been carried to a point where it has approached sterility.*

*The policy of detective story publishers of barring all love stories, all depictions of human emotions, as something extraneous in the presence of the all-engrossing problem (which is like a problem of mathematics) is a short-sighted business.*

*For that reason, you will find in Spicy Detective Stories a return to the old theories. You will find your detective story, but you will find it all bound up in a human story—a story of love and romance, motivated by the real essentials of human conduct.*

## Asthma Was Choking Her



### Got Immediate Relief! Seventeen Years Later—"Still Enjoying Splendid Health"

December 8, 1916.—"I had asthma for 17 years. I coughed most of the time and couldn't rest, day or night. I tried everything, but grew so weak I could hardly walk across the room. After taking one bottle of Nacor, I could do most of my housework. That was 8 years ago. I am still feeling fine, with no sign of asthma."—Mrs. Mary Bean, R. 3, Nashua, Iowa.

July 31, 1933.—"I continue in good health and am still praising Nacor. I have no signs of asthma."—Mrs. Mary Bean.

**FREE**—No need to suffer asthma torture when blessed relief can be yours. For years Nacor has helped thousands. Their letters and booklet of vital information sent **FREE**. Write to Nacor Medicine Co., 208 State Life Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind.

der? I can't pinch him for killing himself, specially if he's alive now!"

"Teh! Teh!" said Johnny softly. "How about that cab driver, Cohen? You know you found his body in Flushing and his cab in the Bronx? Well, lookee! I found his badge outside that cabin on the bay. Smollett here probably rode back to town with the great Sorenson, picked up another cab and went back for Thorndike. Of course they smacked the poor cabby on the sence—just in case. Ask Thorndike when you pinch him—or this lug here."

Smollett turned his head away and groaned—his face drained of color.

At the door on the way out Nobles turned at Johnny's voice. The little columnist was bathing Niva Sorenson's face with a towel. "Would you mind calling me in the morning about eleven? I have to be in the office around noon."

"Why don't you leave a call, simple mind?"

"Here? Leave a call in a swell joint like this? My! my!"

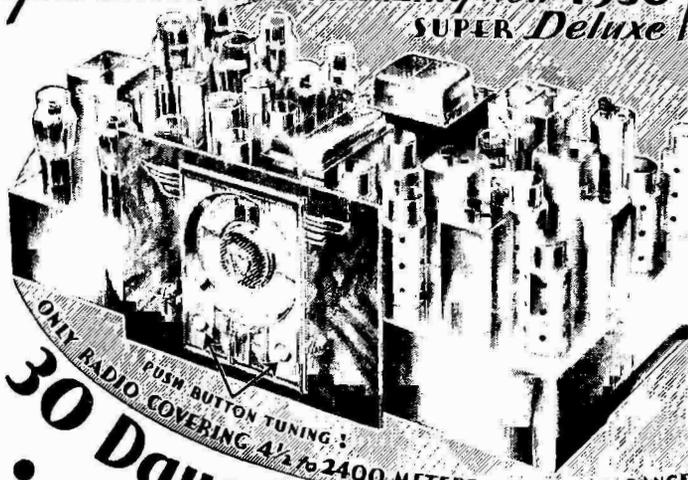
The white shapeliness of the screen star stirred beneath his ministrations. Nobles grinned enviously, closed the door.

"And don't forget that hundred grand," Harding's voice came to him, "I won't have time to worry about it. I'm a busy man."

**Watch for further stories  
of the little columnist,  
JOHNNY HARDING!**

SAVE % 50% by BUYING YOUR RADIO *Direct from* MIDWEST LA

*Exciting World-Wide Entertainment... Glorious New Ac*  
*Guaranteed with Amazing New 1936*



**MIDW**  
**18-T**  
**SIX-T**  
**Re**  
**(ALL WAVE**

**30 Days FREE Trial!**  
 ONLY RADIO COVERING 4 1/2 to 2400 METERS - 12000 MILE RANGE  
 PUSH BUTTON TUNING

**EVERYWHERE.** radio enthusiasts are saying: "Have you seen the new 18-tube, 6-band, Acoustic-Tone V-Spread Midwest? It's an improvement over Midwest's 16-tube set, so popular last season. This amazingly beautiful, bigger, better, more powerful, super selective, 18-tube radio... is not obtainable in retail stores... but is sold direct to you from Midwest Laboratories at a positive saving of 30% to

50%. Outperforms \$250 sets. Approved by over 120,000 customers. Before you buy any radio, write for FREE 40-page catalog. Never before so much radio for so little money. Why pay more? You're triply protected with: 1-Year Guarantee, Foreign Reception Guarantee and Money-Back Guarantee.

**WORLD'S GREATEST RADIO**  
**\$59**  
 (LESS TAXES) \$

**TERMS AS LOW**

**PUSH-BUTTON TUNING**  
 Now, offered for first time! Simply pushing Silencer Button flushes set between stations... while pressing Station Finder Button automatically indicates proper dial position for bringing in extremely weak stations.

**Full-Scope High Fidelity**  
**Split-Hair Selectivity**

**80 ADVANCED 1936 FEATURES**  
 Midwest's brilliant performance made possible by scores of advanced features, many of them exclusive. Only Midwest tunes as low as 4 1/2 meters and as high as 2400 meters... 6 bands... 18 tubes... push button tuning... acousti-tone V-spread design... pre-aged adjustments... Fidel-A-Stat... Triple Calibration... etc. See pages 12 to 20 in FREE catalog.

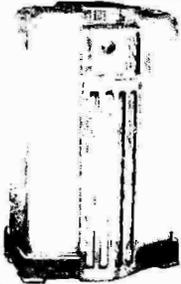
Now, get complete range of audible frequencies from 30 to 16,000 cycles as being transmitted by four new High Fidelity Broadcasting stations - WJMS - WOXY - WENR - and WEXAL. Bring in distant, weak foreign stations, with full loud speaker volume, on channels adjacent to powerful locals.

Six-bands... offered for first time! E, A, L, M, H and U... make this super deluxe 18-tube set the equivalent of six different radios... offer wave bands not obtainable in other radios at any price! Now, thrill to new explorations in sections of radio spectrum that are strangers to you. Every type of broadcast from North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia is now yours. Send today for money-saving facts!

**METAL**  
 This Midwest is full glass-metal counterpart are designed to accept tubes, without change.

**Delighted With S Davison, Mich.** A gineer confirmed my that no other make will compare with my for tone, selectivity, ease of tuning and wi It is great entertain

**Praises World's Maysville, Ky.** M envy my Midwest a beats theirs in price formance. It is amazi tive and brings in Spain, etc. Its full, fading tone denotes s ity and advanced wo W. E. I



**Acousti-Tone V-Spread Design** (Pat. Pending) Send for FREE 40-page catalog illustrating new 1936 Midwest models and chassis in four colors. Full Scope High Fidelity Console. at left, shows dispersing vanes and exclusive V-front that propel High Fidelity waves uniformly to the ear.

**DEAL DIRECT WITH LABORATORIES SAVE UP TO 50%**

No middlemen's profits to pay - you buy at wholesale price direct from laboratories... saving 30% to 50%. Increasing costs are sure to result in higher radio prices soon. Buy before the big advance... NOW... while you can take advantage of Midwest's sensational values. You can order your 1936 Full Scope High Fidelity Acousti-Tone radio from the 40-page catalog with as much certainty of satisfaction as if you were to come yourself to our great radio laboratories. You save 30% to 50%... you get 30 days FREE trial... as little as \$5.00 puts a Midwest radio in your home. Satisfaction guaranteed or money back. Write, today, for FREE catalog.



**MAIL COUPON**  
**FREE 30-DAY TRIAL**  
**PAGE FOUR-COLOR**

**MIDWEST RADIO CORP.**  
 Dept. 32-D Cincinnati, Oh  
 (When you receive our new 1936 catalog and take of your liberal 30-day offer. Please send an order.

**MIDWEST RADIO CORP.**  
 DEPT. 32-D CINCINNATI, OHIO U.S.A.  
 Established 1920 Cable Address MIRACO All Codes

Name.....  
 Address.....  
 Town.....  
 (Check here, if imported in a.....)