THE American MAGAZINE

SUCCESSFUL LIVING FOR THE FAMILY

February 35¢

THE MAN WHO BROKE THE TAX SCANDAL

★

2 Complete Novels:

THE CHARMER
by Gertrude Schweitzer

—

MURDER IN MANHATTAN
by Hugh Pentecost

★

EXCLUSIVE!

WE STOLE A RIDE TO FREEDOM
by Konvalinka and Truksa

★

LET ME LOVE YOU
by Sarah-Elizabeth Rodger

★

THE WONDER OF THE DESERT
by J. B. Priestley

—

PLUS 5 SHORT STORIES

IT'S FUN TO BE A DALY (FAMILY OF THE MONTH)

Recipe for Pleasure

Take golden, buttery popcorn—salty peanuts—crunchy pretzels...crisp potato chips or cheese-topped crackers...and top them off with refreshing, delicious MILLER HIGH LIFE, *The Champagne of Bottle Beer!*

There's a recipe that spells real pleasure and deep-down enjoyment because the distinctive goodness of MILLER HIGH LIFE blends so perfectly with your favorite snack-time treat. Join the millions more who are enjoying life with MILLER HIGH LIFE. Brewed and bottled by the Miller Brewing Company ONLY...and ONLY in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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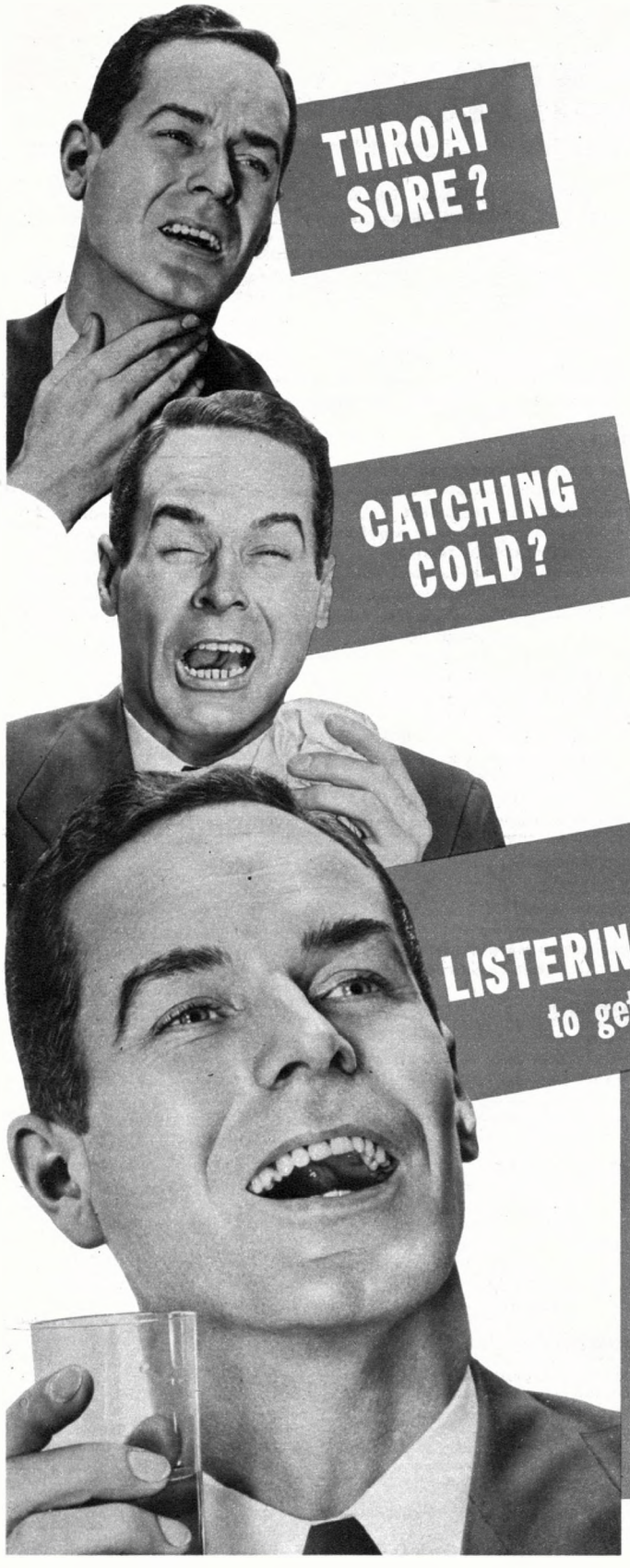
HIGH LIFE
The Champagne of Bottle Beer



Prompt Action

can often help head them off or lessen their severity

WHATEVER ELSE YOU DO, gargle Listerine Antiseptic at the first hint of a sneeze, sniffle, cough or scratchy throat due to a cold.

Kills Germs on Throat Surfaces

Listerine Antiseptic reaches way back on throat surfaces to kill millions of germs, including those called "secondary invaders." (See panel below.) These are the very bacteria that often are responsible for so much of a cold's misery when they stage a mass invasion of the body through throat tissues.

Listerine Antiseptic is so efficient because, used early and often, it frequently helps halt such a mass invasion . . . helps nip the cold in the bud, so to speak.

Fewer Colds and Sore Throats in Tests

Remember, tests made over a 12-year period in great industrial plants disclosed this record: That twice-a-day Listerine Antiseptic users had fewer colds, generally milder colds, and fewer sore throats than non-users.

LAMBERT PHARMACAL CO., *St. Louis 6, Mo.*

Gargle LISTERINE ANTISEPTIC Quick to get after these germs

SOME OF THE "SECONDARY INVADERS"

(1) Pneumococcus Type III, (2) Bacillus Influenzae, (3) Streptococcus hemolyticus, (4) Pneumococcus Type IV, (5) Streptococcus viridans.

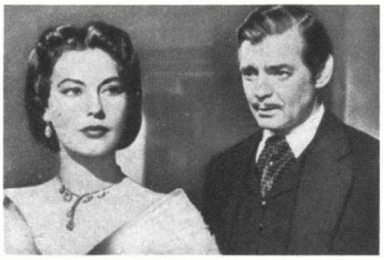
Tests showed that even fifteen minutes after Listerine Antiseptic gargle bacteria on mouth and throat surfaces were reduced up to 96.7%; an hour afterward as much as 80%. Among bacteria on mouth and throat surfaces can be many of the "secondary invaders," some of which are shown above. These are the very germs that can cause so much of a cold's misery when they invade the body through throat tissue.

See The SAMMY KAYE SHOW • "So you want to lead a Band"
CBS TELEVISION NETWORK

Picture OF THE MONTH

For the New Year there's a new light in the entertainment skies. It's the radiance that comes from M-G-M's lustrous and lusty production of "Lone Star".

This story of the battle for Texas and the battle of the sexes is sparked to immediate excitement by the meeting of two of the most pyrotechnic personalities on America's screen today. The romantic stars are Clark Gable, rugged, reckless, assertively male and Ava Gardner, all woman, satiny in her beauty and electric to the touch.



They encounter each other amid the upheaval and strife of frontier Texas in its most turbulent era. And what a blazing, Roman candle romance is theirs!

It begins with a stolen kiss in a moon-drenched patio, while inside the rambling, low-arched hacienda a bold plot is working that could tear Texas and their dawning love asunder.

Broderick Crawford, fascinatingly ruthless land Baron, has already converted Ava to fiery belief in his cause. He sees the Lone Star state stretching to the Pacific and envisions Ava as queen of his inland empire.

But Gable has aligned himself against this power-mad leader. The two foes pit rifles, Colts, bowie knives and bare, slashing fists against each other while Ava is torn between her unspoken pledges to Crawford and her blood's leaping response to Gable's caresses.

In its story, in its cast, in its production, in every respect—M-G-M's "Lone Star" is a stellar production.

★ ★ ★

CLARK GABLE, AVA GARDNER and BRODERICK CRAWFORD in "Lone Star", with Lionel Barrymore and Beulah Bondi. An M-G-M Picture with screen play by Borden Chase, directed by Vincent Sherman and produced by Z. Wayne Griffin.

THE American MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 1952
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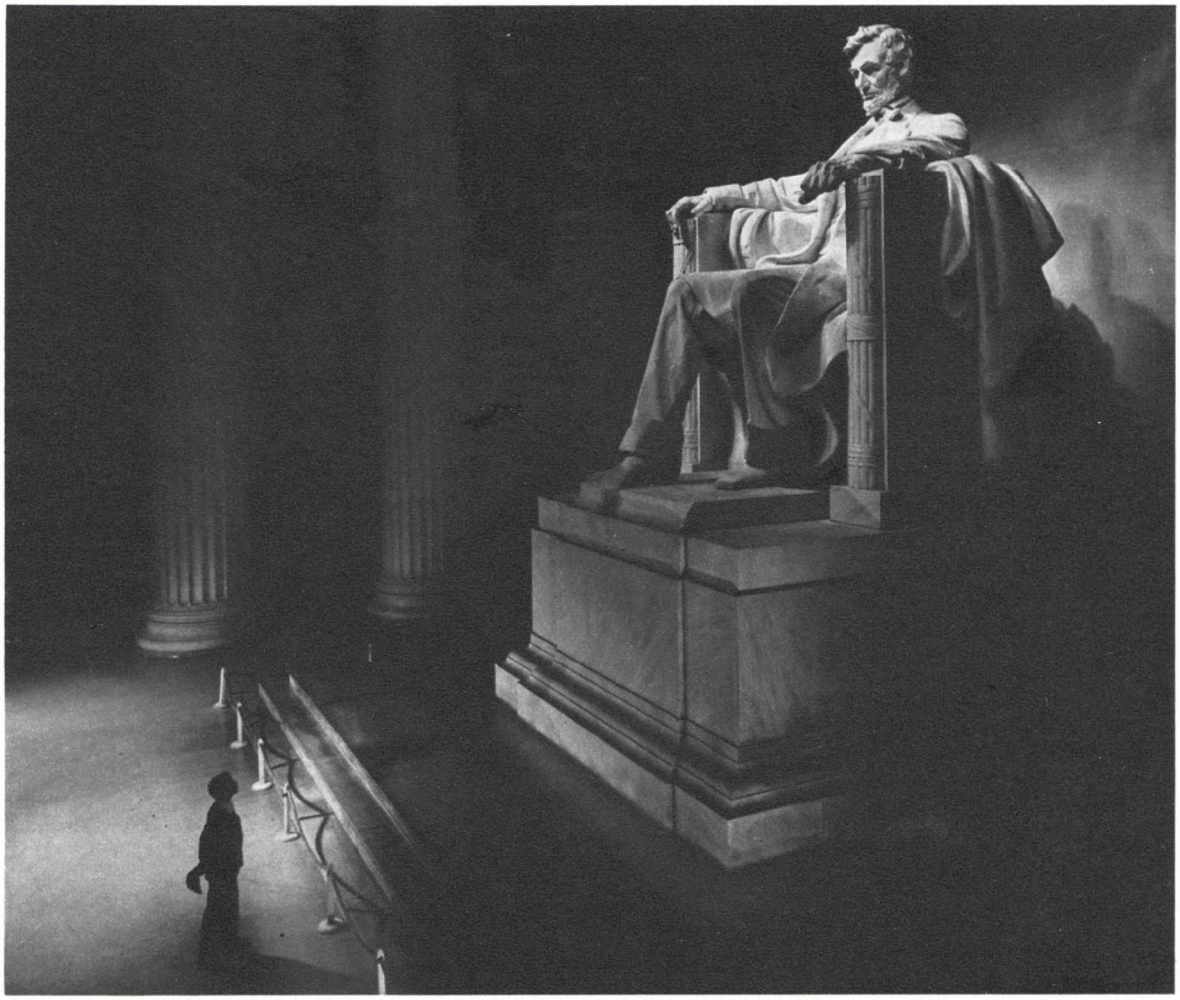

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How "big" should government be?

Lincoln was President at a time when the federal government had to take away from its citizens more rights and responsibilities than ever before.

But he didn't like it. He believed, with the writers of the Constitution and the Declaration, that our government should protect people's independence, not push people around.

"In all that the people can individually do as well for themselves, government ought not to interfere," Lincoln once said.

Lincoln never let Americans forget that. He kept reminding the nation that the government's vast wartime powers must be only temporary.

He made powerful enemies. For there are always those who want to see government run things—and run people—permanently.

We have them today. They think up all kinds of reasons why the federal government should take over this or that business, industry or service. They never say they want socialism. Maybe they don't even realize it. But that's actually what they propose.

Most Americans don't want socialism any more than you do. The job is to recognize it—and halt it—no matter what disguise it wears.

The people who plan and work for a socialistic U. S. A. know that permanent control of a few key industries and services will give government the power to take over just about everything. One of the key industries that they're trying to take over is electric light and power. That's why this warning is brought to you by America's *business*-managed, tax-paying Electric Light and Power Companies.*

*Names on request from this magazine

Electric power is the key to U. S. production strength. We need more and more of it to produce more steel, aluminum and other materials, and to make them into more planes, ships, tanks and guns.

America's electric light and power companies have planned ahead to have enough electricity ready on time to meet foreseeable demands.

They'll *have* it ready . . . *if* their suppliers can get the steel and other materials they need to finish the new power plants, lines and equipment they've started.

• "MEET CORLISS ARCHER"—CBS—Sundays, 9 P.M., Eastern Time.
• Look for "THE ELECTRIC THEATRE" on Television.

LETTERS

ACROSS THE EDITORS' DESKS

Maybe you've been wondering how it feels to be picked as an AMERICAN MAGAZINE "Family of the Month" and have a writer and a photographer come busting into your home to find out how many eggs Mom uses in her cakes and what kind of slippers Dad puts on when he comes home at night.

We learned something about this recently from Mrs. Sue Eakins, daughter of Sam and Myrtle Lyles. You'll remember the Lyleses as the Louisiana tenant-farmer family whose adventure in successful living was described by Roul Tunley (*The Lyles Know How to Live*, Dec.).

Since Sue works for the Opelousas, La., *Daily World*, she was in a position to turn the tables and do a report on Reporter Tunley. Here it is:

I wondered, of course, what an associate editor of a national magazine would look like, and worried a little about that. I needn't have. . . .

I still had my hair in bobby pins when he arrived. My sister Kitty was with me and she giggled. It wasn't just the bobby pins—Roul Tunley was neither wizened and stooped, nor lean and scholarly, as several folks had suggested, but an entirely likable chap with his tie askew and a tired look from the plane ride from New York and the drive from New Orleans. . . .

Roul managed to find out everything there was to know about every last one of us, and actually learned all our names —which is no small feat. . . .

We're glad to have Mrs. Eakins correct the notion that editors are ordinarily wizened, stooped, lean, and scholarly. We like to think we're human, after all.

We'd be less than human if we weren't a little bit proud of the fuss stirred up by the article, *They Gave Uncle Sam the Works* (Dec.), telling of the rebellion of a group of Texas housewives against the withholding provisions of the Social Security Act as they apply to household help. The hundreds of comments received were about equally divided, for and against the ladies' direct-action protest. Here are samples:

Dear Sirs: For some years I've watched the Government and State tax and license everything from your pet to your income. . . . Congratulations to the Texas housewives. All I can say is, more are behind them than they realize.

Mrs. L. B. Mall
Ukiah, Calif.

Gentlemen: I sent the girls $10, with the thought that we have reached the height of something-or-other when it is necessary for 17 loyal American housewives to carry on this fight, while thousands of big, wealthy corporations have knuckled under. . . .

A. Walker Jr.
New Orleans, La.

Gentlemen: Suppose they win their fight and the Social Security Act is no longer effective? Who loses? Old people and little children, unless other means to care for them are provided. . . .

H. C. Mooningham
Central City, Ky.

Dear Sirs: . . . Since the amount deductible for houseworkers' pensions is so negligible, why don't these "stalwart characters" pay the 3 per cent themselves, and help make some provision for the old age of people who can only work with their hands?

Mrs. S. Shuckman
New York, N.Y.

Every day our *Why Don't They?* department receives suggestions which seem to occur simultaneously to many different readers. The one that's popping up most often today goes like this: "Why don't they add television to the telephone so you can see the person you're talking to?"

Our *Why Don't They?* editor investigated, and found out that they do. A video communication system is actually now on the market. Its cost: a modest $4,200 for each screen and camera, plus installation, plus the price of your personal coaxial cable.

By publishing an article which told how four Canton, Ohio, couples, who called

(*Continued on page* 6)

The characters in all short stories and novels in this magazine are purely imaginary. No reference or allusion to any living person is intended.

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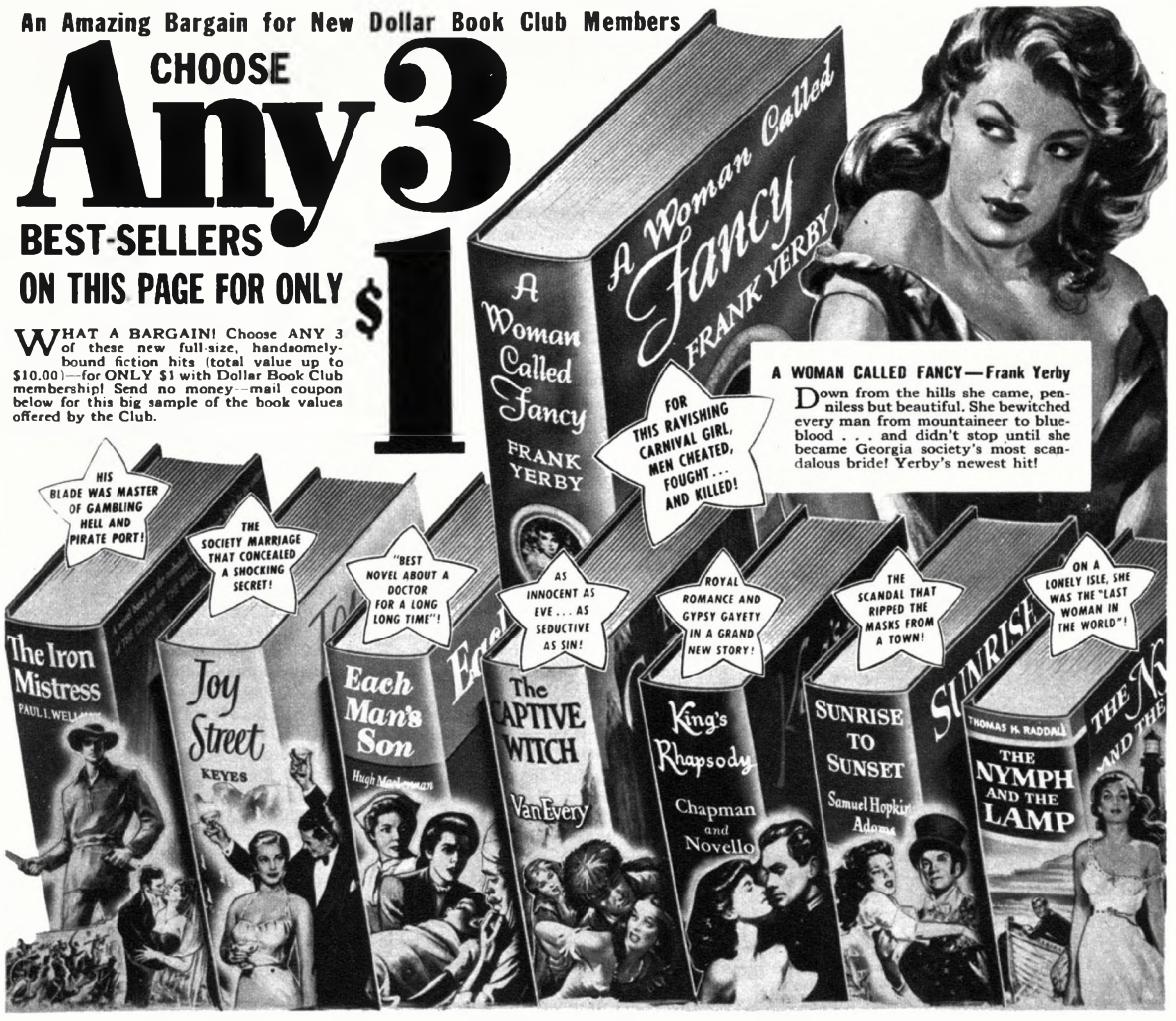

THE IRON MISTRESS
Paul I. Wellman

Jim Bowie carved his way to wealth and women from gay New Orleans to the devil's own city of Natchez! They spoke his name in whispers—yet he became a fabulous hero! By the author of *The Walls of Jericho.*

JOY STREET
Frances Parkinson Keyes

Boston's aristocracy turned out for beautiful Emily's society marriage to wealthy Roger Field. But, at her own wedding reception, Emily met a stranger—not even a "blue-blood"—and fell in love for the first time in her life!

EACH MAN'S SON
Hugh MacLennan

The islanders whispered about Dr. Ainslie's frequent visits to pretty Mollie MacNeil. Was the doctor seeking a love that his beautiful wife could not give? Did he covet Mollie—or the affections of her fatherless eight-year-old son?

THE CAPTIVE WITCH
Dale Van Every

Adam Frane kidnapped her from an Indian camp—and discovered that she was a white girl, brought up as a savage! First she fought him like a wildcat, then tempted him with her beauty in such primitive fashion that he almost forgot his waiting bride!

KING'S RHAPSODY
Chapman & Novello

Handsome King Nikki had no taste for royal females; he wed the lovely Princess Christiane only for convenience. But he changed his mind when she donned a peasant's disguise and proved, with wicked daring, that even a Queen can be a tempting woman!

SUNRISE TO SUNSET
Samuel H. Adams

No one asked questions about the girls in Gurdon Stockwell's great cotton mill. But when a lovely young millhand was rushed into an unwanted marriage — when the other factory girls "talked" — violence broke loose!

THE NYMPH AND THE LAMP
Thomas H. Raddall

In quest of adventure, lovely secretary Isabel Jardine fled from her humdrum city job to the wild, wind-swept island of Marina. Alone on this outpost of lonely men, she was wooed and fought over with desperate passion!

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Letters Across the Editors' Desks

(*Continued from page 4*)

themselves "the Kitty Kats," pooled their half-dollars for a few years and then made an air trip across the Atlantic, we've evidently encouraged the travel bug to bite a good many readers. Here's one reaction:

Dear Sirs: I've just finished reading *Pin Money Paid Our Way to Europe* (Dec.). I'm now planning a trip to Europe in the near future. I intended going by myself, but after reading this delightful article I have decided it would be nice to travel with a group of congenial Americans.

Grace Sawdon
Los Angeles, Calif.

There were other readers, however, who had different comments to make:

Gentlemen: Judging from the article, the Kitty Kats are the sort of people who give Americans a bad name in Europe....

Nowhere is it considered proper to go barging up and ask to speak to anyone like the Dean of Canterbury without an appointment. I would also be ashamed to admit that I had griped about the food in England until some chauffeur offered me his meager lunch. . . . Please tell the Kitty Kats, though they may have meant well, to visit Antarctica next time they have money in the pot.

Alvin Crocker Jr.
Fort Lee, Va.

We trust that the foregoing criticism won't upset the Kitty Kats unduly, because it seems that not even our casual remarks in this column are immune to the censure of some eagle-eyed reader:

The Editors: From cover to cover the AMERICAN MAGAZINE shows excellent discretion in its choice of material—except in the *Letters Across the Editors' Desks*. I refer to a recent issue where you talk of the "tight-lipped Yankee from New England who rarely has a kind word for anyone."

Hailing from North Attleboro, Mass., I demand an apology! Aboard the U. S. S. Mississippi, I manage the ship's library. Lately, many sailors have been puzzled as to what to give friends and relatives. . . . I have suggested to many of them a subscription to your magazine. If you consider my actions "tight-lipped," then kindly cancel my own subscription.

R. J. Macaruso
SN, U.S. Navy

If Seaman Macaruso will reread his November AMERICAN, he will find that we referred to the "*supposedly* tight-lipped Yankee. . . ." We consider his own actions far from tight-lipped, and typical of New Englanders we know.

Nothing has inspired us more than comments received on the recent article, *Stalin's Greatest Defeat*, in which the Negro leader, Roy Wilkins, told how this country's colored population has defeated Communist attempts to organize them as a fifth column. Here is one of many letters:

Dear Sirs: I have just finished reading Roy Wilkins's article, and I must express my gratitude. . . . People, regardless of race, creed, or color, are dependent on each other, and we of the white race should be grateful for colored leaders like Dr. Ralph Bunche and Roy Wilkins.

Mrs. Martin M. Dahl
Onamia, Minn.

We were reminded in another way that people are dependent on one another, with this letter from one of America's well-known fiction writers:

Dear Editor: Specialized weeks have, I know, been cheapened by trivial and commercial causes. But there's one week, from February 17th to 24th, to which we might all give a bit of constructive action. It is called Brotherhood Week. It is based on the Golden Rule, and if we all observed it, this week and every week, the world would be a better place for everybody. Don't you think so?

Sophie Kerr
New York, N.Y.

Dick Crenna, Eve Arden, Jeff Chandler

A reader caught our Radio-TV editor slightly off base last month with a picture in which he identified Eve Arden and Dick Crenna as two of the stars of the *Our Miss Brooks* show.

The reader who said he was wrong was a pretty secretary in our art department. "I think that curly-haired man with the dimple is Jeff Chandler, and not Dick Crenna," she said. The editor observed that they looked pretty much alike to him. "That," she sighed, "is because you're not a girl."

Turns out she was right, so we show the correct line-up in the photo above.

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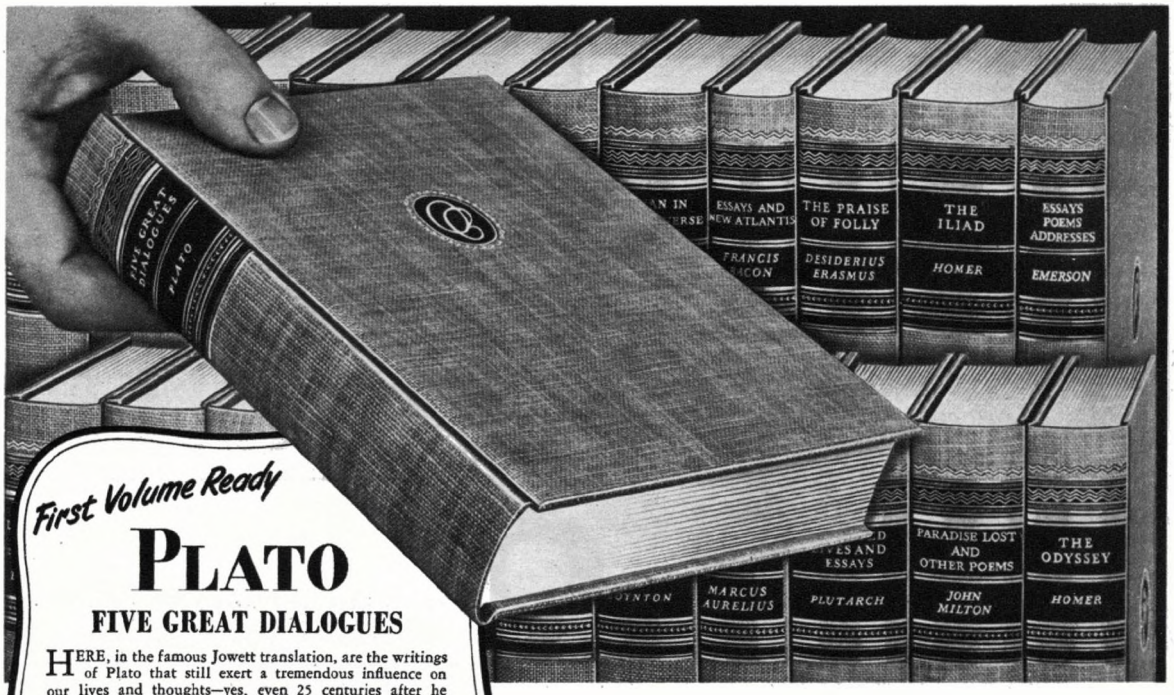

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Betty Hutton and Cornel Wilde enter the ring

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It's Jimmy Stewart!

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CECIL B. DEMILLE plus six top-bracket Hollywood stars plus the entire Ringling Brothers-Barnum and Bailey Circus equals "The Greatest Show on Earth"—a high-wire treat for the whole family. Besides regular circus performers in exciting action, you'll see Betty Hutton as the trapeze girl, James Stewart as the clown, Cornel Wilde as the star aerialist, Charlton Heston as the circus manager, Dorothy Lamour as the "Iron Jaw" girl, and Gloria Grahame, who lets an elephant put its foot on her face. One of your biggest thrills will be watching Betty Hutton perform her flying-trapeze stunt and her 40-foot drop into a net. No shots are faked; Betty learned the difficult routine after many neck-risking hours. Centered around behind-the-scenes life under the "big top," the story includes a daring robbery and a spectacular DeMille train wreck. (*Paramount*)

THE AFRICAN QUEEN ★

HUMPHREY BOGART AND KATHARINE HEPBURN went on location to the heart of darkest Africa to make this film, which strikes an interesting balance between high adventure and tender romance. Far from the luxuries of Hollywood, the actors faced actual jungle perils, including wild animals, poisonous snakes, and malarial swamps. Acting the role of an organist in a tiny African mission, Miss Hepburn finds little time for Humphrey Bogart, captain of a river steamer, until fate throws them together on a perilous journey into the unknown. (*United Artists*)

As they travel downriver, Katharine Hepburn begins to see Humphrey Bogart in a new light

A tense moment for the Nelson family

★ HERE COME THE NELSONS

AND HERE COMES A FAMILY COMEDY STARRING A FAMILY. It's just about as funny a picture as you're likely to see in many an evening of moviegoing. The entire Nelson family—Ozzie and Harriet, long known to radio fans along with their two sons, David and Ricky—prove in this film that just about anything can and does happen to the average happy family. The high jinks are touched off as rodeo time approaches in Hillsdale, and Barbara Lawrence, playing a beautiful rodeo rider, moves in on the Nelson family. This kicks off a plot of hilarious confusion. (*Universal-International*)

of the Month

★ LONE STAR

CLARK GABLE AND BRODERICK CRAWFORD FIGHT FOR AVA GARDNER'S HAND in this epic film of the Texas of more than a century ago. Gable portrays a rugged ranchman who, with a band of patriots, struggles against enormous odds to annex Texas to the Union. Miss Gardner, who was teamed with Gable in *The Hucksters*, is cast as a pioneering newspaper editor, while Lionel Barrymore makes a thoroughly effective President Andrew Jackson. Highly dramatic throughout, this picture is a super-western based on one of the most colorful periods of American history. Anyone who likes exciting action—and that includes most of us—with a strong element of romance, should find this vigorous portrayal of a bygone day to his liking. (*MGM*)

Clark Gable and Ava Gardner in romantic love scene

March finds he still has his son's love

Dissension in the family comes close to blows

★ DEATH OF A SALESMAN

FREDRIC MARCH as Willy Loman, the little salesman who always wanted to be a Big Man, gives one of the finest performances of his career in this moving drama adapted from the play which held Broadway spellbound for almost two years. Willy transfers his false values to his sons, and when they learn the truth, it's too late. (*Columbia*)

ALSO RECOMMENDED for Family Enjoyment

NAVAJO *brings to the screen a charming 7-year-old Indian lad caught in the conflict between his native culture and that of the white man.* (Lippert)

ROOM FOR ONE MORE *is a warm family comedy with Cary Grant and Betsy Drake as the parents of 3 youngsters who will win your heart.* (Warner Bros.)

PHONE CALL FROM A STRANGER, *a dramatic love story, divides honors among Bette Davis, Shelley Winters, Gary Merrill, and Helen Westcott.* (20th Century-Fox)

ON DANGEROUS GROUNDS *stars Ida Lupino and Robert Ryan in a human story of how an embittered cop is changed into a man with a heart.* (RKO)

RADIO - TV

Garroway gives out with a scoop

CURRENT ON NBC-TV is a brand-new kind of program beamed at audiences across the nation. For two hours early each morning, Monday–Friday, Dave Garroway posts his viewers on what has happened in the world since they went to bed. Besides the latest news by wire, live and filmed pickups from news centers, round-robin telephone and short-wave radio circuit calls are included. Garroway also casually interviews authors, stars, and other celebs; reviews movies, books, plays.

THE HARDY FAMILY of movie fame recently made its bow on Mutual's nationwide radio system. From the avalanche of fan mail pouring in, they're apparently going to be more popular than ever. Mickey Rooney, still playing Andy, has grown up a bit and is working on his first job. But being a little older doesn't prevent his getting into all kinds of comic difficulties. Lewis Stone as Judge Hardy and Fay Holden as Ma Hardy have their hands full with Andy.

The Hardys in a huddle

Nancy Lewis, Paul Whiteman, and Junie Keegan

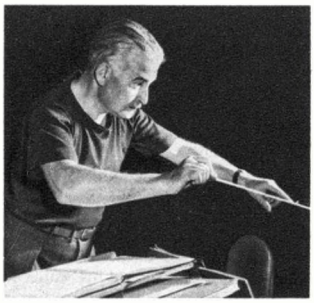
THE PAUL WHITEMAN TEEN CLUB on ABC radio brings the cream of America's young talent into listeners' homes. Ace of talent sleuths, the genial "Pops" spotlights youthful artists who, he feels, are on the ladder to stardom. Besides the music—a 10-piece orchestra under Bernie Lowe's direction is a regular feature—the program is full of impromptu humor. The maestro emcees a similar program on ABC-TV.

KEN MURRAY plans super-entertainment on his CBS-TV show this month. On Feb. 2 he salutes the movie industry by putting 7 screen stars on his program. Feb. 9 features an original Norman Corwin drama, *Ann Rutledge*, with Ray Middleton as Honest Abe. Feb. 16 highlights Monty Woolley, while Feb. 23 will be devoted to *The Edgar Bergen Story*, with Bergen and, of course, Charlie on hand.

Ken Murray's girls are always purty

AMERICAN ENTERTAINMENT

Records of the Month



Arthur Fiedler conducts the Boston Pops Orchestra

Girl Crazy, sung by Mary Martin, with chorus and orchestra conducted by Lehman Engel. Includes *I Got Rhythm*, *Embraceable You*, *Bidin' My Time*, and *Sam and Delilah* (Columbia album, LP and 45 RPM). This Gershwin score is superbly handled by all.

1952 Treasury of Immortal Performances, originally recorded by the great artists of the "Golden Age" of opera, now authentically reproduced on modern speeds (RCA Victor albums, LP and 45 RPM). Includes *Caruso in Opera and Song*, *Famous Duets*, *Rosa Ponselle in Opera and Song*, *Aida of Yesterday*, *John McCormack in Opera and Song*, *Stars of the Golden Age* (Tetrazzini, Scotti, Melba, etc.), *Great Pianists of the Past Play Chopin* (Paderewski, Rachmaninoff, Cortot, and others).

Strauss Polkas, with Arthur Fiedler conducting the Boston Pops Orchestra (RCA Victor). Includes the ever-popular polkas from *The Gypsy Baron* and *Die Fledermaus*.

Leroy Anderson Conducts His Own Compositions, Volume II, played by Leroy Anderson and his Pops Concert Orchestra (Decca). Includes *China Doll*, *Belle of the Ball*, *Penny Whistle Song*, *Horse and Buggy*.

Keyboard Kings—album of Vincent Youmans' "memory tunes" styled by pianist Walter Gross (M-G-M).

Melodies for Sweethearts—played by Paul Weston and his Orchestra (Columbia).

Stephen Foster in Song and Story—sung by Robert Merrill, with Clifton Fadiman as narrator and the RCA Victor Orchestra and Chorus (RCA Victor).—M.R.W.

CAVALCADE OF SPORTS

...Allie Reynolds

ALLIE WAS RIGHT AT HOME WITH HIS FIRST MAJOR LEAGUE CLUB—THE CLEVELAND INDIANS. WITH ANCESTORS IN THE FAMOUS CREEK NATION, HE'S PART INDIAN HIMSELF

ALLIE ("THE CHIEF") REYNOLDS IS A MAINSTAY OF THE CHAMPION NEW YORK YANKEES' PITCHING STAFF. THE BIG RIGHT-HANDER HURLED **TWO NO-HIT VICTORIES IN 1951 TO SET AN ALL-TIME AMERICAN LEAGUE RECORD!**

FUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET

NO CONTEST: The Worcester (Mass.) County Safety Council announced sadly that it was giving up trying to make a weekly award to a courteous driver: "Too tough to find a courteous driver every week. There just doesn't seem to be enough of such motorists to keep the program going."

TOUCHÉ: A Grand Rapids, Mich., citizen who advertised in a local newspaper, "The man who picked up my wallet was recognized; he is requested to return it," got his answer in another ad: "The recognized man who picked up your wallet requests you to call and get it."

ALWAYS A WAY: After some study, the Economic Stabilization Agency in Washington, D.C., found a new use for government red tape—putting it on corridor walls to show employees where not to stand in case of air raids.

TASTE TEST: In East Hartford, Conn., after an irate woman had her husband arrested because he cut the cord of their TV set in a quarrel over which programs to watch, the judge decided to sample personally some of the woman's choices, promptly dismissed the case against the husband.

HANDOUT: While the secretary of the Helping Hand Club in Washington, D.C., was counting the proceeds of a club bazaar, a hand reached through the first-floor window and helped itself to $81 of the $239 on the counting table.

TARGET PRACTICE: Arrested for firing 35 pistol shots at the walls of his bedroom, a man in Philadelphia, Pa., protested indignantly to police that all he had been doing was rehearsing for suicide.

DOLLAR'S WORTH: In Wichita Falls, Texas, the county clerk got a letter, with $1 enclosed, from a woman who wanted to buy some civil rights.

BIG FREEZE: In New York, a meat-packing firm which customarily invites butchers to an annual party and exhibition of choice cuts, got caught by the meat shortage, invited the butchers and their wives to forego the inspection, and to dance in the company's empty icebox instead.

WHAT NEXT? After being scratched by a lion cub, stepped on by a camel, and bitten by a snake, all in the line of duty while welcoming newcomers to the Municipal Zoo, the Mayor of Baltimore, Md., bravely tried once more—was whacked in the eye by a chimpanzee.

BIG BLOW: A woman driver in Spokane, Wash., charged with speeding, explained earnestly to the court that it hadn't been her fault: "The wind blew so hard it made me go faster than I really wanted to."

NO, NEVER: In Denver, Colo., after his wife had shot him in the buttocks with a pistol, an understandably distressed husband announced firmly: "This marriage is all over. That's one thing a wife should never do to her husband."

OYSTER STEW: Some involved litigation arose in Baltimore, Md., when the owners of an oyster boat which struck a sunken battleship in Chesapeake Bay sued the Government, charging that the sunken ship was a navigation hazard not properly marked, and the Government denied responsibility on the ground that the helmsman on the oyster boat was cross-eyed.

MAMMA'S TROUBLES: Navy recruiters in Oklahoma City, Okla., signed up a young man named Tonsilitis Jackson, who explained that he got his name because his mother had a sore throat when he was born. A checkup showed he also has brothers and sisters named Meningitis, Appendicitis, Laryngitis, Jakeitis, and Peritonitis.

REWARD: At Mitchel Air Force Base, Long Island, N.Y., the *Daily Bulletin* carried a plea: "Will the person who came to Chapel on Friday evening to meditate and pray, and who got so deep in meditation that he took off with the chaplain's trench coat, please return the same? The reward will be great—in heaven!"

SOME TEACHER: A man in Los Angeles, Calif., got the court to set alimony to his estranged wife and former dancing teacher at $1 a month after he testified that he was still paying $73.33 a month on dancing courses she had sold him.

REAL DANGER: 30-year-old Sergeant Ralph Ripley, of Portland, Ore., steadfastly refused to be rotated home, explained: "You're safe from women overseas. I had a lot of buddies who went back and they got hooked."

ARTHUR LANSING

WHY DON'T THEY ?

START a hamburger stand where you're given a chef's cap and apron and allowed to cook your own patty over a glowing charcoal fire?—*A. P. Sherben, Montreal, Canada.*

INSTALL mower blades between the rear wheels of a tricycle so Junior could cut the grass while playing in the yard?—*Linda Lackey, Junction, Ill.*

Magnetized hatband

MAGNETIZE hatbands, so fly fishermen won't have to set hooks in the cloth?—*Mrs. E. E. Kaufman, Raton, N. Mex.*

LIMIT the minimum amount of filler a restaurant may place between slices of bread and still call it a sandwich?—*Matthews Walters, Philadelphia, Pa.*

CUT wedges of ice cream in restaurants for pie à la mode, since balls don't behave well under a fork?—*R. W. Aretz, Waconia, Minn.*

SET cough drops on safe, pliable, lollipop sticks, so children won't choke on them?—*Mrs. Margaret MacIntosh, No. Plainfield, N.J.*

Phone fire alarm

ATTACH a thermostatic device to the telephone to warn the phone company if a fire breaks out while occupants of a home are out?—*Mrs. E. Schuster, Tulsa, Okla.*

BUILD battery-operated lamps in women's purses to light up when the bag is opened?—*Eva Waldo, Ida Grove, Iowa.*

MARK men's shirts so you needn't unfold them to see if they have French or barrel cuffs?—*Mrs. A. E. Warrick, Front Royal, Va.*

MAKE PEOPLE learning to drive in traffic hang a warning sign on their automobile?—*E. W. Nippo, New York, N.Y.*

Clear-view umbrella

INVENT an umbrella whose handle comes down from the tip of a rib, to keep the center unobstructed and allow clearer view?—*Herbert Buetow, Chicago, Ill.*

MANUFACTURE a double-faced clock for the night table between twin beds?—*Mrs. R. J. Penz, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

PLACE coin lockers on the outside of busses for passengers who don't like to carry suitcases to their seats?—*Williston Wirt, Berkeley, Calif.*

Have you any ideas no one else seems to have thought of? Send them on a postcard to the "Why Don't They?" editor, The American Magazine, 640 Fifth Ave., New York 19, N.Y. We'll pay $5 for each suggestion accepted. None can be returned.

SEE PAGES 142 AND 143 FOR AMERICAN BUY-WAYS

TODAY'S FABULOUS FIGURES

AFTER YOU reach 30, you lose height at the rate of about ½ inch every 20 years, a recent anatomical study shows.

THERE ARE over 1,000,000,000 ties along U. S. railroad tracks. It takes 3,000 ties for each mile of track, each tie costing $3 to make and $2 to install. Their life has now been extended to 30 years.

ONE OUT OF every 5 Americans now changes his residence each year.

LATEST SCIENTIFIC estimate of the sun's brightness is 4 billion billion billion candle power (4 followed by 27 zeros).

THERE ARE about 65,000,000 hogs and pigs a year being raised in this country.

IF YOU'RE AVERAGE you eat 6 pounds of salt a year in your food. But your sweet tooth wins out and you consume 95 pounds of sugar.

ONE FOURTH of all married women are now working outside the home.

HOW LONG does it take you to shave? Figure for the average man today: 7 minutes.

ONE OUT OF EVERY 100 Americans now lives in a trailer home. And the total is reported to be rising at the rate of 200,000 people a year.

BUSINESS MOVIES promoting various products now reach an audience of 20,000,000 people every week. 150,000 such films have been made and shown before clubs, schools, churches, and other groups.

BETWEEN 12,000,000 and 24,000,000 children require medical care each year because of accidents.

ONE OUT OF 5 youngsters bites his nails.

A BABY BORN in the U. S. in 1951 will live, according to latest statistics, for an average of 67.6 years. The expectation of life at birth is now more than 20 years greater than it was in 1900.

THE NATION'S DOG POPULATION has been increasing faster than the human population for 30 years, soaring 200 per cent, while for humans the increase has been only 50 per cent. The canines, 22,000,000 strong, now consume $200,000,000 worth of dog food and an additional $300,000,000 worth of clothing, shelter, training, and medical attention.

YEARLY INCOME EARNED by Americans on foreign investments has hit a new high: $2,186,000,000. LAWRENCE GALTON

HELP FOR YOUR

DOES YOUR BREAD TEND TO TOAST TOO DARK in your automatic toaster? Since some breads tend to bake out drier at the top, it may help if you insert slices of bread top side down.

IF YOU'RE TROUBLED WITH SMUDGES ON THE WALL and ceiling above a radiator, this is why: Warm air currents rising from the radiator carry along dust, which is deposited on the wall. Type of fuel you burn in your furnace doesn't matter. Solution: Radiator covers to deflect the rising currents of air away from the wall.

WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW whether to wash a nylon garment by hand or by machine, examine the raw or partly finished seam edges. If the threads pull out easily, it would be better to wash the garment by hand, a University of Illinois textile expert advises.

TO REMOVE MUD STAINS from white cloth, try dipping the soiled area in kerosene, drying thoroughly, then laundering in hot, soapy water.

TO ADD A TOUCH OF NOVELTY TO THE HEARTH in your living room, save up a generous supply of orange peels and dry them well. Because of their oil content, dried orange peels kindle quickly and burn with a pleasant aroma.—*Eleanor BeVier, Kenmore, N.Y.*

LIKE ONIONS BUT THEY DON'T LIKE YOU? Food-testing experts say that a small amount of sugar added to the cooking water for onions cuts objectionable odor and raw flavor without imparting too much sweetness. A little salt along with the sugar was found to give the best flavor.

YOU CAN STORE MANY OTHER THINGS BESIDES FOOD IN A FREEZER. Dampened clothes can be kept there with no danger of mildew, until you find the time or energy to iron them (they'll be safe even for months). Many freezers are equipped with locks and become veritable safes and, since they're fireproof too, they're fine for jewelry, insurance policies, other valuable papers. And, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, furs and woolens, placed in a freezer for 24 hours, come out mothfree.

YOU CAN MAKE GOOD USE of your tube-and-bulb meat baster for such other purposes as skimming cream from milk and watering plants.

WORN TURKISH TOWELS can be made into various-sized pairs of mittens for every family member to wear at bathtime. They work up a good lather, allow a stimulating scrub of the body with both hands.

TO GIVE YOUR POLISHED BRASS A SOFT, toned-down sheen, try sprinkling a few drops of olive oil on a piece of warm flannel and rubbing the oil well into the brass.

IF YOUR FAMILY IS ACCUSTOMED TO LOSING THE TOOTH-PASTE CAP, just glue the cap to the area above the washbasin. The same cap can be used indefinitely if it is glued on a flat surface. The tube of paste can thus be attached to a permanent cap.—*Dewey Turner, Atlanta, Ga.*

TO CURE STIFF COUNTERS when you're breaking in a new pair of shoes, try rubbing dry soap into the lining and "working" the back of each counter with your hands until it limbers up.

REMOVE SCOTCH TAPE FROM WRAPPINGS YOU WANT TO SAVE by pressing the tape with a hot iron. The tape can then be peeled off easily without tearing the paper.—*Mrs. Harold Sinclair, Westbrook, Maine.*

IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE KEEPING DISHES USED BY A SICK PERSON separate from those used by the rest of the family, buy an inexpensive, dime-store set for one person, different from any you already have. Keep this for sickroom service only. Not only will it simplify the sterilizing job but the novelty of using the "special" dishes will be an added inducement for convalescing small fry to take needed nourishment.—*Alice V. Kelly, Rhinelander, Wis.*

HOUSE

YOU NEED NOT DISCARD AN OLD CLOCK OR WATCH that refuses to run any more. Use it in the sickroom to tell when it is time to give the next dose of medicine by moving the hands to the time medicine is to be taken. Or do the same to show when it's baby's next feeding time.—*Mrs. Steve Hensel, Lakeside, Calif.*

HAS THE FABRIC ON YOUR UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE BECOME FADED and a little worn? Buy some dye as nearly like the original color as you can get it, dissolve in hot water, using a little less water than what the directions call for, only enough to fill the spray jar of your vacuum cleaner twice. Then spray the fabric with the vacuum spray. Results will be far beyond your expectations. The spray helps to get the dye even, and the brightness of the color will make your overstuffed furniture look like new. —*Mrs. Edgar Dickson, Stafford, Kans.*

GOOD THING TO CARRY IN YOUR CAR is an empty milk carton. Makes a fine night flare, giving emergency light for changing a tire.

HOUSE-BREAKING THAT PUP? Try a sand box at first, gradually moving it outdoors. Each time the pup makes it to the box, try smearing a little butter or meat on your finger and let him lick it off, while you praise him elaborately. You will be amazed at how quickly he will learn.—*Mrs. Marion Haggarty, Detroit, Mich.*

PLANT LEMON SEEDS AND TREAT THEM AS HOME PLANTS. They grow into pretty shrubs and you can use the leaves for flavoring. A few leaves tied in a cloth and put in applesauce for a few minutes give a delightful flavor. One or two placed in the bottom of the pan before pouring in the loaf cake batter will give a delicate flavor to the cake.—*Mrs. M. Carey, Boonton, N.J.*

If you know of a new trick that has helped you fix or improve things around the house, and might be useful to others, send it in. We will pay $10 for each suggestion published. Address Help for Your House, The American Magazine, 640 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N.Y. No suggestions can be returned.

ANN SOTHERN, STAR OF MOTION PICTURES, STAGE AND RADIO, SELECTS AVON COSMETICS WITH THE HELP OF MRS. CLAIRE MATHEWS, AVON REPRESENTATIVE.

"Avon 'To A Wild Rose' Cologne is so delicately fragrant!" says Ann Sothern.

"The right lipstick means so much ...I choose mine the Avon way!"

Ann Sothern

"It's so easy to choose the correct lipstick in the shade best for me ... here in my home with an Avon Representative," says lovely Ann Sothern. "And Avon lipsticks are *so* creamy, *so* lasting. Like all Avon cosmetics they're so delightful to use ... always of the finest quality."

You, too, will find the "Avon way" beneficial to beauty, economical, and most convenient. Your Avon Representative will help you choose the cosmetics best for your needs, in your own home.

... Welcome her when she calls.

Avon COSMETICS

RADIO CITY, NEW YORK
MONTREAL, CANADA

The man who broke the TAX SCANDAL

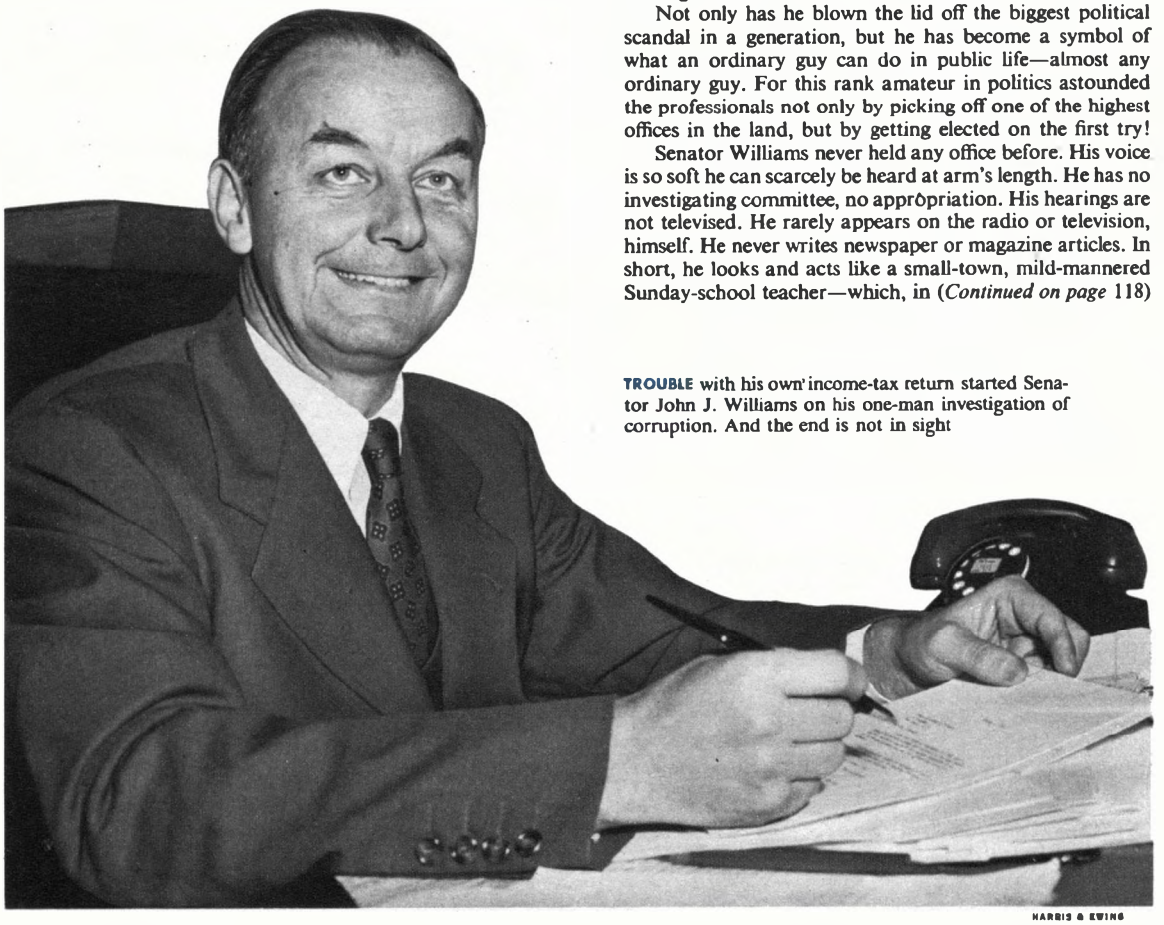
Just an ordinary, small-town guy, going quietly about his business, "Honest John" Williams, of Millsboro, Delaware, set off the income-tax exposures which have rocked the nation. He has shown us all what any wide-awake citizen can do about graft and corruption if he once makes up his mind

by Roul Tunley

SENATOR John J. Williams, a man known to practically no one outside his small state of Delaware a year ago, has become, today, a national figure. You can find his name almost every day in headline stories and broadcasts about the income-tax-fraud exposures which he launched singlehanded, and which have resulted in the resignation and dismissal of many high government officials. To 51,000,000 taxpayers he has become a knight in shining armor.

Not only has he blown the lid off the biggest political scandal in a generation, but he has become a symbol of what an ordinary guy can do in public life—almost any ordinary guy. For this rank amateur in politics astounded the professionals not only by picking off one of the highest offices in the land, but by getting elected on the first try!

Senator Williams never held any office before. His voice is so soft he can scarcely be heard at arm's length. He has no investigating committee, no appropriation. His hearings are not televised. He rarely appears on the radio or television, himself. He never writes newspaper or magazine articles. In short, he looks and acts like a small-town, mild-mannered Sunday-school teacher—which, in (*Continued on page* 118)



TROUBLE with his own income-tax return started Senator John J. Williams on his one-man investigation of corruption. And the end is not in sight

HARRIS & EWING

by Jean DeWitt Fitz

ILLUSTRATION BY LUCIA

He is Mine

Sally had always stretched out her pretty little hands and taken what she wanted. How could Chris's husband be kept out of her reach?

THE moss-green print was not only well cut, it was real silk.

"A bargain," the salesgirl said, "and just your type. You like tailored things, don't you?"

"Yes," Chris said a little ruefully. She did, of course, and wore them ninety per cent of the time. But she had her feminine moments! In the shopping for her limited trousseau two months ago she'd been torn between the trim red flannel bathrobe with navy piping and the creamy chiffon negligee, woven, it seemed, of gossamer. In the end, she'd taken both and skimped on the dresses she badly needed. On her wedding night she'd worn the chiffon and wondered if John thought it as beautiful as she did. He wasn't the kind of man who commented on women's clothes.

"All right. I'll take it with me." She glanced at herself hastily in the mirror, just long enough to make sure that this was a good little dress, wearable for at least three seasons at college social functions. As a librarian, she'd got by with one party dress, but as the wife of Dr. John Rhodes, head of the history department, she needed more. The pink wool, high light of her trousseau, would have been perfect for the Dean's tea next week. But when Sally had written that she had nothing to wear for a week end in Bucks County, Chris had sent the dress to her.

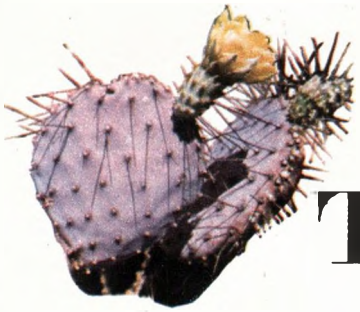
Sally might bring it with her tomorrow, or she might not. Anything Sally borrowed had a way of disappearing for all time. Chris smiled warmly at the salesgirl as she paid her. Lithe and cuddly and prettily animated over the sale, she resembled Sally.

"I have a young sister who looks a lot like you," Chris said impulsively. "She's modeling in New York."

"I'd like to go to New York." The girl's eyes were wistful. "Boston's no place for a career."

That's what Chris had once thought, only she didn't go so far as to say "Boston." Sharon Center, suburb of Boston, is no place for a career, she'd said at twenty-two when her father died. But Sally was only twelve then and she didn't dare leave the only place that actually offered her a job, the only home town she'd ever known. Father had been professor of philosophy at Deane and she a graduate librarian of that school. What else was there to do but accept the opportunity of working in the college library? How else could she have been sure of providing for Sally?

HER sister, ten years younger, had been Chris's responsibility almost from the beginning, because their mother had died at Sally's birth and a succession of housekeepers had been inadequate except for providing a bare minimum of creature comforts. Father, himself, had been inadequate, Chris thought, as she raced to South Station. To him, her mother's death had been an act of God no personal philosophy could redeem. Nor could his two daughters in any way compensate for it. Always he had been stern and indifferent, especially to (*Continued on page* 124)



DESERT FLOWER: Yellow blossom of the purple prickly-pear cactus

The Wonder of

MONUMENT VALLEY in northern Arizona . . . "towering rocks that look like vast ruins of sculpture"

the Desert

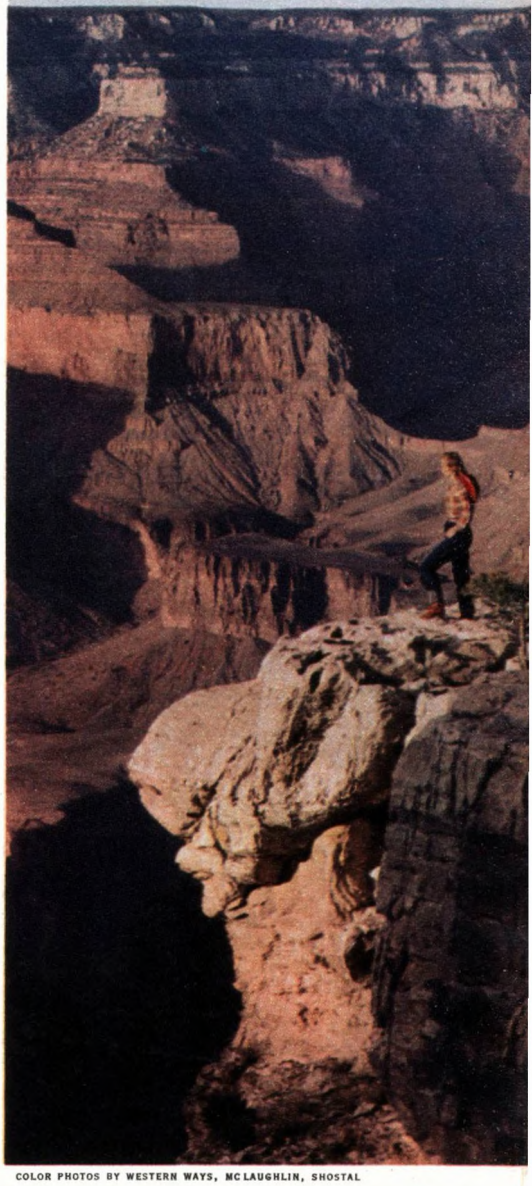
". . . where there is glory for the eye and peace for the heart and soul." . . . A noted English novelist tells why he finds our magnificent Southwest an ideal holiday place for folks with modest incomes and growing families

by J. B. Priestley

MANY of the happiest days of my adult life have been spent in the Southwest of the United States, in what may be called the American desert country. I have come to know that country better than any of my American friends, with the exception, of course, of those on the spot; and if I had my way (and I haven't, because I am still an English citizen and we are not allowed to spend our dollars as we please), I would still pass the greatest part of every winter somewhere in Arizona. For it is there that this desert country is found at its best.

It was motion pictures that originally sent me to Arizona. In the early 1930's I was working for the Ealing Studios, in London, writing films for Gracie Fields. I put up the idea for a comic musical Western, in which Gracie, the Lancashire lass, would inherit a ranch in Arizona. So the studio sent me there, to look around, and I took my wife along. We had been told in New York that the most promising dude ranches were in the neighborhood of Wickenburg, and so there we went, branching off from the main Santa Fe line at Ashfork.

We arrived, as I have done so many times since, in the early morning. It was in the late fall. There was not much to see, and what could be seen did not suggest a desert. We caught glimpses of rolling hills covered with scrub and cacti. No leagues of sand, no palms, such as we had seen in North Africa. No camels, of course. (We learned afterward that camels had been tried out here in Arizona, and that they had found the going too rough.) There was, however, a most distinctive and entrancing smell, in which sharp-scented herbs appeared to be mixed with fragrant wood (*Continued on page* 91)



GRAND CANYON, marvel of marvels . . . "of all things on this earth it is the one which most exceeds all expectations"

COLOR PHOTOS BY WESTERN WAYS, MCLAUGHLIN, SHOSTAL

AN AMERICAN SHORT SHORT STORY

PARTY

LITTLE Miss Jones's arrival in Greenvale was as unexpected as a summer rain squall and, to Mrs. Minnie Martin, just about as refreshing. As soon as she had settled Miss Jones in the upstairs front room, she hurried down to the telephone, rushing along more like a youngster than a woman of sixty-five who weighed nearly two hundred pounds.

The party line was buzzing like a swarm of disturbed hornets, when Minnie broke in: "Soon's you girls get through talking about the potluck supper, I got some real news."

"Your new boarder?" That was Adelaide Bemis's high-pitched, querulous voice. "Humph, that's not news. We all heard it at the store this morning."

"There's more to it than that," Minnie said triumphantly. "This Miss Jones is a schoolteacher from San Francisco. As sweet a girl as you'd ever hope to meet. And pretty!"

Olgabelle Trescott's metallic voice broke in: "'*Jones*,' eh? Sounds fishy. Seems odd, too, a pretty girl like that passing up the Inn for a stuffy boardinghouse."

"Stuffy boardinghouse!" Minnie began wrathfully. Then, choking down her anger, she said, "It isn't odd at all. She's looking for a young man who lives in this county, and she doesn't know his name. Oh, it's so romantic! Exactly like in a story I read once. There was this young couple who happened to run into each other in the city, but they couldn't get themselves introduced and, afterward, they had the worst time finding each—"

"Get to the point, Minnie," came Rhoda Richards' pleasant, eager voice.

"If you'd only give me a chance, Rhoda! As I was saying, Miss Jones has been spending the last three summers up here in the Sierra country looking for this young fellow and, girls, it must've been fate that brought her to my house. I know everybody hereabouts, so I knew right away who she was looking for. I asked the mailman to stop by the Macklin ranch and tell Tod Trescott to come to town in a hurry—"

Olgabelle Trescott screamed shrilly, "Minnie Martin! If she doesn't know his name, how do you know it's my son?"

"Why, she described him to a T. She said, 'He's taller than I.' And you know how tall Tod is. And she said, 'He's got dark hair and laughing eyes.' Everybody knows what a sense of humor Tod's got. And— Oh, yes! She didn't know if he owned a ranch or was just working on one, but even if he's just a hired hand like Tod, it wouldn't make any difference, because they'd work together until they've got a spread of their own."

"Darn you, Minnie!" Olgabelle exploded. "You know very well that Mr. Macklin's daughter is getting interested in Tod and it'd be fine for him if—"

"If he married that mouse? Land's sake! All that Macklin girl has is a little money of her own. When Tod takes one look at Miss Jones— What's that, Adelaide?"

"I was just thinking," Adelaide Bemis piped. "Tod doesn't fit that girl's description at all. Why, it's as plain as day who the fellow is. Herb's riding out that way right now. I'll have him tell Johnny Capp to hurry into town."

Irene Capp roared, "Adelaide! Wait!"

"She's hung up," Minnie said. "What's eating you, anyway?"

Irene Capp's deep-throated groan reverberated. "Here my son's been stuck with that no-good ranch. Now he's got a chance to sell, but some empty-headed female might talk him into keeping it."

"For heaven's sake!" Minnie exclaimed. "Don't carry on so. Johnny's got no more of a sense of humor than you have. He can't be the one."

"For once," Olgabelle said, "I agree with you. But anyone with any sense would know just who the girl is after. Met this fellow in Frisco, eh? Well, who goes there on a buying expedition every year? Who's tall, dark-haired, and buying his own ranch? Couldn't be anyone except Glenn Burke!"

"Oh!" Minnie gasped.

Olgabelle pressed her advantage: "Too bad, eh, Minnie? Wasn't your granddaughter figuring on marrying Glenn?"

"Gracious!" Irene said. "Past four and I haven't started supper!"

COMPLETE ON THESE PAGES

LINE

by Blaise Whitehead Lane

"Me, neither," Olgabelle said.

There were two clicks.

"Still there, Minnie?" came Rhoda Richards' sympathetic voice.

"Uh-huh," Minnie wailed. "Oh, dear, Rhoda! Glenn's a nice boy, but he's only human. Next to this Miss Jones, my poor Mabel is going to look kind of washed-out. And he'll be so flattered because this brazen hussy is chasing him, he'll lose his head for sure. What'll I do?"

There was a long silence. Then: "What about Judson MacIntosh?"

Minnie said despairingly, "Jud doesn't fit the description. Hasn't got dark hair. Why, he has hardly any hair at all."

"But he's the richest cattleman in the county, Minnie, and a widower—a catch for any girl. Tell you what, Minnie. You put a bee in Miss Jones's bonnet, and I'll get word to Jud." . . .

THE next morning Minnie lifted the receiver. "Yes, it's me, Rhoda," she said with a groan. "That no-good adventuress is still around, even though I keep telling her there isn't another man within a hundred miles."

"Didn't Jud show up?" Rhoda asked.

"He came. Right after Johnny Capp left. Tod Trescott was here first—"

"But, Minnie! Didn't you tell her Jud was worth nearly a million?"

Minnie sniffled. "She wasn't interested. It must be Glenn she wants. Oh, why did I take that little viper to my bosom? I— What'd you say, Adelaide?"

"I just got back from the store," Adelaide chirped, "and your granddaughter was there. She sure must've heard about Miss Jones. She told me she was getting a cold, but if you ask me she looked like she'd been crying. I bet it didn't make her feel any better, either, to hear Jud MacIntosh raving about Miss Jones to some of the ranchers who'd come in for supplies. The way one fellow acted, I've a hunch he might show up at your place."

"Why," Minnie cried hopefully, "maybe he's the one!"

"Don't get your hopes too high, Minnie," Adelaide said. "Even if he does show up, he won't be Miss Jones's man. In the first place, he's got fair hair, and he isn't awfully tall. In the second place, I heard him say he took a big loss in the '48 blizzard and hasn't been away from his ranch since."

"Yes, but—" Minnie paused. "Maybe it wasn't Frisco where she met him."

"Wishful thinking!" Olgabelle Trescott said tartly. "Why, if he hasn't been off his ranch, how could she have met him anywhere? Stop kidding yourself, Minnie. It's Glenn she's after."

Minnie sobbed softly. She glanced through the front window. Suddenly she gasped. "Rhoda! A jeep's driving up."

"So!" Olgabelle chortled. "Glenn's finally got there, has he?"

"Back in a minute, girls." Minnie trotted down the hall to the door.

But she never reached the jeep. Miss Jones was in the garden and she went to the gate. The young man in faded jeans came toward her, half shy, half purposeful. . . .

Quite some time passed before Minnie returned to the telephone. "Well," she began, "it wasn't Glenn in the jeep. It was that young man Adelaide saw at the store. Maybe he's not so awfully good-looking, but he has such merry eyes—"

"Minnie Martin!" Rhoda said. "Get to the point. Is he Miss Jones's man?"

"I think so."

"For goodness' sakes, Minnie! Doesn't she know, by *now?*"

"How *could* she know, *positively?*" Minnie asked indignantly. "Like she said to him, she's been spending her summer vacations in little towns here in the cattle country because this is where she wants to settle down. And so she's been looking for a man. Not just any man—she's a very particular girl. But I wouldn't be surprised if she's found the one she's dreamed about. . . . Oh, girls! You should've heard her telling him how wonderful us ladies have been, bringing around all the young men for her to meet."

Little Miss Jones's arrival in town was grist for the gossips

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY BENNETT

"WE BLEW THE WHISTLE as our train roared across the border . . . we were free men!"

We stole a ride

EDITOR'S MEMO

Last September two Czechoslovakian railroad men startled the world by commandeering a train loaded with their families and friends and highballing it through the Iron Curtain. Their daring escape left Red Commissars raging from Prague to Moscow.

Jaroslav Konvalinka, 40, ruddy and plain-spoken, was the engineer. He brought with him his wife and two children, Jaroslava, 9, and George, 6. Quiet, shrewd Karel Truksa, 30, was train dispatcher at the Cheb station near the border. He brought along his wife and their baby, Paul.

The Konvalinkas and Truksas recently arrived in America, where they were guaranteed jobs and homes by the Lionel Corporation. They are now living at Scotch Plains, N.J.

Here, through an interpreter, the two family men tell for the first time their own story of the escape from the Communist "workers' paradise" with their wives and children.

Exclusively for The American Magazine, the two Czech railroad men whose daring escape from the ruthless Red regime electrified the whole world, tell why they and their families were willing to risk their lives to make the break

UNTIL a few short months ago, when we miraculously escaped to the United States with our wives and children, we were locked away from the free world behind the Iron Curtain. In America, where you take your precious freedom as much for granted as we did, ourselves, when we still could enjoy it in Czechoslovakia, we find that most people think of the Iron Curtain as just a phrase to describe the border of Soviet Russia or one of its Communist satellite countries.

But we know from bitter experience that the Iron Curtain is as real and terrifying as the wall of any prison.

In our case, the physical Iron Curtain was just a few miles from our homes in the small Czech city of Cheb, which is not very far from Pilsen. We knew this Curtain as a terrifying strip of land, 3 miles wide, where you could always hear bloodhounds baying as you approached at night.

If you had ever lived in terror behind the Curtain as we did, you would know that you could enter this forbidden area only at risk of death. Homes and forests in it have been razed. In their place are road-blocks, barbed wire, and lookout towers manned by Communist guards. A maze of fine wires is strung just above ground level. If you trip over one of them at night it sets off an alarm bell.

All night long searchlights sweep the horizon. Every hour or so you are apt to hear a burst of machine-gun fire. Sometimes there are screams. Another family, trying to escape, has been broken up. Often they are all killed. Occasionally a mother and child will get through, leaving a father and one or two children dead in the barbed wire.

We were lucky, miraculously lucky. All of us got through.

The question we have been asked most often in America is: "Why don't more of you people behind the Iron Curtain try to make a break for freedom?"

The answer is that if you want to escape from any country in Communist Europe, and if your family ties mean anything to you, you must escape as a family unit. If you leave any member of your family behind, the Red police will arrest and torture them.

Despite this terror, in our sector alone about 30 Czechs on an average night would try to break through the strip and make their way to freedom. Perhaps 3 or 4 of them would succeed. . . .

IT WAS on last September 11 that our two families decided to make the gamble. We had found what we hoped was a blind spot in the strip's defenses, a rusty spur of railroad track that runs across it. The unimaginative commissars had never conceived of a runaway train. There were grave risks of mishap at several points but we felt we had to take them. We raced a passenger train with a big Red Star on its boiler across this track at 65 miles an hour.

The normal punishment imposed on anyone caught trying to escape the "workers' paradise" is 12 years in the concentration camp. That is the punishment our wives would have gotten if caught alive. Our three children would have been taken over by the state and raised in special camps as faceless Communists.

As the men perpetrating this escape, we had several additional counts against us. We were guilty of stealing state property, damaging state property, carrying a gun, threatening with a gun, kidnapping, and treason. In addition—it turned out—we were guilty of causing monumental embarrassment to the state. Our sentences would surely have been death.

You may wonder what would (*Continued on page* 112)

to FREEDOM

by Jaroslav Konvalinka and Karel Truksa

WIDE WORLD

FREE OF COMMUNIST OPPRESSION, the Konvalinkas smile at the success of their miraculous, daring escape

LIKE ANY AMERICAN FATHER, Karel Truksa helps his wife feed their baby in their new-found land of opportunity

Nick was Uncle Tony's pride and joy until he did the one thing...

NICE BOYS DON'T

by Sam F. Ciulla

ILLUSTRATION BY FREDRIC VARADY

AS FAR as Mamma and Papa are concerned, Uncle Tony is the salt of the earth. In fact, we all like him, when you come right down to it. But the trouble is that after all these years, he's just as old-fashioned as the day he got off the boat. That's what's been causing all the trouble in our family. And that's why Anna, my girl, decided she couldn't marry me.

If there was only Papa to deal with it wouldn't be so bad; you can always talk to Papa. But once Uncle Tony gets the idea that a thing has to be a certain way, an army couldn't budge him. And, to make matters worse, Papa always sides with Uncle Tony, even when he knows darned well Uncle Tony is wrong.

"Who's the head of this family, anyway?" I say to Papa. "Why don't you let him know who's boss?"

But Papa just frowns. "Mind your own business," he says. "Mind your own business and respect your elders." And that's as far as the matter ever gets.

Before anybody knew what was happening, she was kissing Uncle Tony, mustache and all

Uncle Tony is our uncle because years ago he married Papa's sister. Then, before they even had time to raise some children, she died and he was left without a family because none of his relatives had ever followed him to America. Maybe that was why he adopted our family as his own. Anyway, whatever the reason, he has lived with us for as long as I can remember. I guess Mamma and Papa feel sorry for him.

Well, that's all well and good, and I can respect my elders as well as the next man, but when he started interfering with Anna and me, it was time to throw respect out the window. Maybe it was wrong, what I did, but it was something that had to be done.

It all started on a Sunday. I had just come home from church. Papa and Uncle Tony were seated at the kitchen table, and Mamma was standing by the stove, frying eggs for breakfast.

"Nephew mine!" Uncle shouted as soon as he saw me. "And how are you this beautiful morning?"

"Fine, fine," I said. I kissed Mamma good morning and sat down at the table. I was hungry, and the eggs smelled delicious.

"Tell us, Nephew," he went on, "tell us, will you be getting married soon?" And without waiting for the answer he roared with laughter, and Papa joined him, and even Mamma smiled, because the question is a joke in our family. Uncle Tony has been asking me that ever since I was eight years old. Maybe it was funny once, but not any more.

While they were still laughing I decided now was as good a time as any to tell them about Anna. Maybe that would stop them.

"Sure," I said, real casual. "Sure, I'm getting married. I haven't decided when, but it's gonna be soon."

They stopped laughing, (*Continued on page* 82)

From young American wives in 33 states comes a double-barreled load of Leap Year advice on the best place to find a good husband. He may be nearer than you think—so Happy Valentine!

Why not marry

BETTMANN ARCHIVE

CULVER CITY, CALIF.: Warren G. Shafer is a bus driver. Says Mrs. Shafer, "I met him at the Hollywood Roller Bowl and asked him to waltz on skates with me"

ATLANTA, GA.: R. D. Cobb is an efficiency expert. His wife: "I always said I would marry anybody but Bob Cobb. He was my brother's best friend, and too much like my brother"

LANSDOWNE, PA.: B. Valentine is an insurance agent. Mrs. Valentine says, "I used to try to catch the same trolley as he did because I admired him"

the boy next door?

by Robert Crandall

IF YOU'RE a girl under 30, unmarried but in the mood, what should you do about it?

Well, millions of American girls believe that, to find a husband, their best bet is to move out of their home town to some place—usually a big city—which they believe is filled with eligible men ready and waiting to be led to the altar. Older girls, in particular, tend to take this view as they begin to get anxious about their marriage prospects at home.

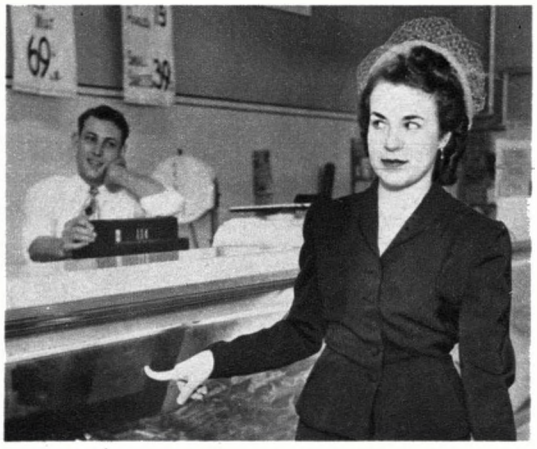
Statisticians and marriage counselors alike have long been urging small-town girls to get out of town if they want to get married. They issue maps which show you where men ripe for marriage can—and cannot—be found. Such phrases as the "irregular geographical distribution of men" and "shortage of suitable males" are widely used.

Today, however, our population distribution, and thus our pattern of mating, is undergoing a drastic change. For purposes of convenience and profit America is "decentralizing." Huge companies (taking their employees with them) are moving from the city to the country, to cut costs and be closer to sources of supply. Simultaneously, thousands of individuals are rediscovering the superiority of small-town life over that of the crowded city, and are packing up their families and going "back to the land."

So it is high time to re-examine the whole problem of husband-hunting. Where is the best place today for a marriage-minded girl to meet a congenial man in a similar frame of mind? Is the small-town girl well advised to shove off for the metropolis? Or are the friendly home towns of America the best place of all in which to build a lasting romance?

To find the answers, I have just (*Continued an page* 106)

ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX.: John Winn is an Air Force sergeant. He and his wife met through one of her girl-friends. . . . "The fastest way to meet boys is through other girls"



POCATELLO, IDAHO: Bruce Hill is a butcher. Mrs. Hill recalls, "Love lighted up like a neon sign when we saw each other across his butcher counter"

LIVONIA, MICH.: Larry Pflieger is an accountant. Says his wife, "We met at our Tip Topper Club for tall teen-agers. He told my girl-friend he thought I was silly"

WIDE WORLD

THROUGH THE GLASS of a home aquarium a child can watch the wonder of life unfolding in all its color and beauty

Angels IN YOUR LIVING ROOM

A tank full of colorful tropical fish . . . That's real, live fun for every member of the family, from 2 to 72. More than 20,000,000 Americans now enjoy the fascinating antics of finny beauties—from ordinary goldfish and guppies to exotic neons

by Jack Long

A FRIEND of mine recently got socked with the question that's thrown at every parent sooner or later. Son Peter, age 5, wanted to know where his new baby sister had come from. He wasn't satisfied with any evasive stories about birds and bees, either.

"You can't show a kid a pregnant bee to explain the thing," his father complained, "so he doesn't understand what I'm talking about. But, being a bachelor, you wouldn't know about these problems," he added.

"Maybe I wouldn't," I said, "but how about bringing Pete around to my apartment on Saturday? I'll bet I can explain the whole thing to him in half an hour."

My friend gave me a funny look.

"I've got a couple of platies and a mollie that are about ready," I said. "One of them is almost sure to give birth on Saturday."

"Now, wait a minute . . ."

"They're *fish!*" I hollered. "You forgot I keep tropical fish?"

After a slightly embarrassed pause my friend agreed to give the fish in my aquarium a chance to demonstrate the facts of life to his son. He was still skeptical, however. "Never did know why you kept those things around," he said. "Maybe Pete will enjoy looking at them, but I don't think he'll know what's going on."

I didn't bother to point out that where fish are concerned, anyone who pays attention to them can't miss what's going on. So many millions of people are keeping live fish in their homes these days that I was surprised at his ignorance. Fish-raising is one of the fastest-growing family hobbies in the country, and importing, breeding, and selling exotic specimens to collectors has become a multimillion-dollar business.

Instead of bringing all this up at the time, however, I just prayed that my expectant mothers wouldn't double-cross me by giving birth at the wrong moment.

They didn't let me down. When Peter and his dad arrived on Saturday I had my sleeves rolled up and was playing midwife to a beautiful 2-inch-long red-and-gold female platy. The fish was busy dropping babies, and I was dipping the young (*Continued on page* 103)

FEEDING TIME in the aquarium is an endless source of pleasure for the whole family

by Sarah-Elizabeth Rodger

ILLUSTRATION BY ARPI ERMOYAN

LET ME LOVE YOU

The famous model's face was a beautiful mask . . .

What kind of woman hid behind it? Her husband had to know

IT WAS their fourth wedding anniversary and Steve had asked Janet to meet him for cocktails and dinner in town that evening. Seldom as she came to New York on these golden days, for she loved the country and had become an enthusiastic gardener, Janet was aware that her wardrobe wasn't what it should be and that the occasion definitely called for a new dress.

She took the commuters' train with Steve in the morning, silently planning her day while he was preoccupied with some memos in his brief case.

The hairdresser, shopping, lunch with an old friend . . . a pleasant prospect, but Janet had a moment of vague regret for her garden, which lay behind her in Old Jordan, beautiful and deserted. Steve hadn't understood why she had refused the Garden Club's request to put it on their spring tour.

"I don't get it," he had said bluntly. "Most women pant with eagerness to show off their gardens, but you seem to guard yours as though it held hidden gold. What is it—a secret?"

"No, of course not."

But it was. A secret and a refuge; something of her own to be kept and cherished. She couldn't attempt to explain it to Steve. Perceptive as he was, she felt he could not possibly have understood.

"Do you love me, Janet?" Steve asked. "Or have you just taken refuge with me?"

She leafed idly through the morning paper, noting the dress advertisements. Then, without warning, she stumbled on the item which made her breath catch sharply.

Though she had feared and disliked Lucretia Hutchinson in life, and though the silence between them had lasted a long time, Janet nevertheless felt sadness blowing like a cold wind over her heart.

Lucretia had been old; (*Continued on page* 121)

PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK MANNING

BROOKLYN DODGER CAPTAIN Harold (Pee Wee) Reese relaxes at home with daughter, Barbara, and wife, Dorothy

MY HUSBAND IS A BUM!

Flash—Bulletin—Scoop! Once again it's "in the bag" for the Brooklyn Dodgers. 1952 is the year! You *still* don't believe it? Ask the wife of the Bums' peppery captain. This is her story of life with Pee Wee

by Mrs. Pee Wee Reese

IT WAS a warm day as I sat in our back yard in Louisville, Ky., running my fingers through my hair in hopes the sun would dry it faster. Suddenly, out of the rear door of Mrs. Carman's house, next to ours, came a nice-looking boy with a puckish grin and sandy hair.

As he toyed with some baby ducks waddling around on Mrs. Carman's side of the fence I hoped that he would speak to me, but he didn't. It wasn't until three days later that I saw him again in the yard. Determined to find a way to meet him, I asked Mother, "Don't we have garbage or something I can take out?"

In her knowing way, Mother immediately sensed my interest. In a matter of seconds she gathered up some trash that gave me an excuse to go out to the garbage pail and thereby attract the boy's attention.

The trick worked. In no time at all he was offering me one of the ducks. "A fellow gave them to me as a gift," he explained, "but we don't have much room and I don't think my sister is too fond of having so many around."

Although I knew he had moved to our block to live only a few weeks before, I still didn't know his name was Harold Reese. And it wasn't until later that I discovered he was Pee Wee Reese, who, despite his boyish appearance, was even then the star shortstop for the Louisville Colonels, the local baseball team.

He held a duck in his hands and thrust it at me, but I didn't reach quick enough and it fell to the ground and started to waddle away. Pee Wee vaulted the fence and together we chased it, knocking over the garbage pail in the process. The duck finally ended up under the house, while we both knelt to gather the trash off the lawn.

"You've got your hands filthy," I said. "Come on inside and wash up."

Mother offered some coffee, and during the conversation I challenged Pee Wee to a game of table tennis in our basement. During the game my 14-year-old brother, Bobby, started down the steps, but stopped short. His mouth hung open as he stared at my visitor. Without a word he turned and raced upstairs.

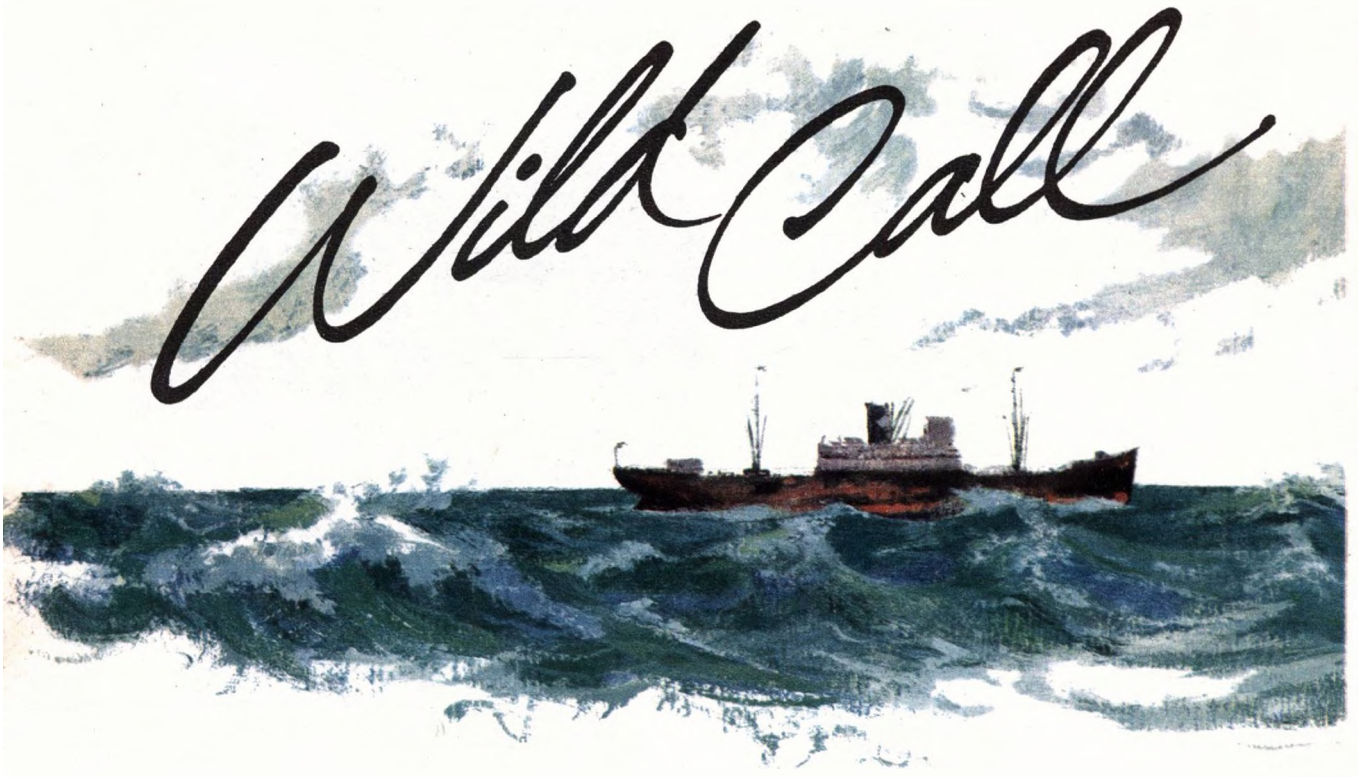
After Pee Wee had gone, promising to call me, my brother said in awe, "Jeepers, Sis, why didn't you tell me who your new fellow is?"

"He's not my new fellow," I answered in feigned indignation. "He's just a boy I know. And, besides—"

"You're really dumb, Sis. Don't you know that's Pee Wee Reese, the shortstop for the Colonels? Boy, wait till I tell the fellows about this!"

That was the first I knew of it. I was that dumb and really dismayed in the next two weeks, waiting for Pee Wee to call me, and he didn't. I never realized his team was away on a road trip. To complicate everything and make it seem really hopeless, our family moved to another part of town during that time. I practically mourned him as lost. "How will (*Continued on page* 100)

Wild Call



Only the magic of Mr. Ridley's secret could take him to Zanzibar at night and to the office in the morning

by Gordon Gaskill

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES AVATI

THE newspapers never heard about it, and Mr. Ridley never told anybody at the office. It is all written down, in technical language, in a certain book in a certain building in Brooklyn, but the public never sees such books. Even if you did—and then saw Mr. Ridley—you would never believe it happened. Because Mr. Ridley looks, and always did look, like one of the dullest threads in the fabric of this world.

For 35 of his 50 years, ever since his father died, Mr. Ridley worked in the bookkeeping department of Babson & Sons, Est. 1875. Never married, he supported his mother in one of Staten Island's duller cottages. Every workday morning Mr. Ridley took the ferry to Manhattan, and every evening he took it home again. Every Thursday night he took his mother to the movies; every two years he bought a new suit, every five years a new overcoat.

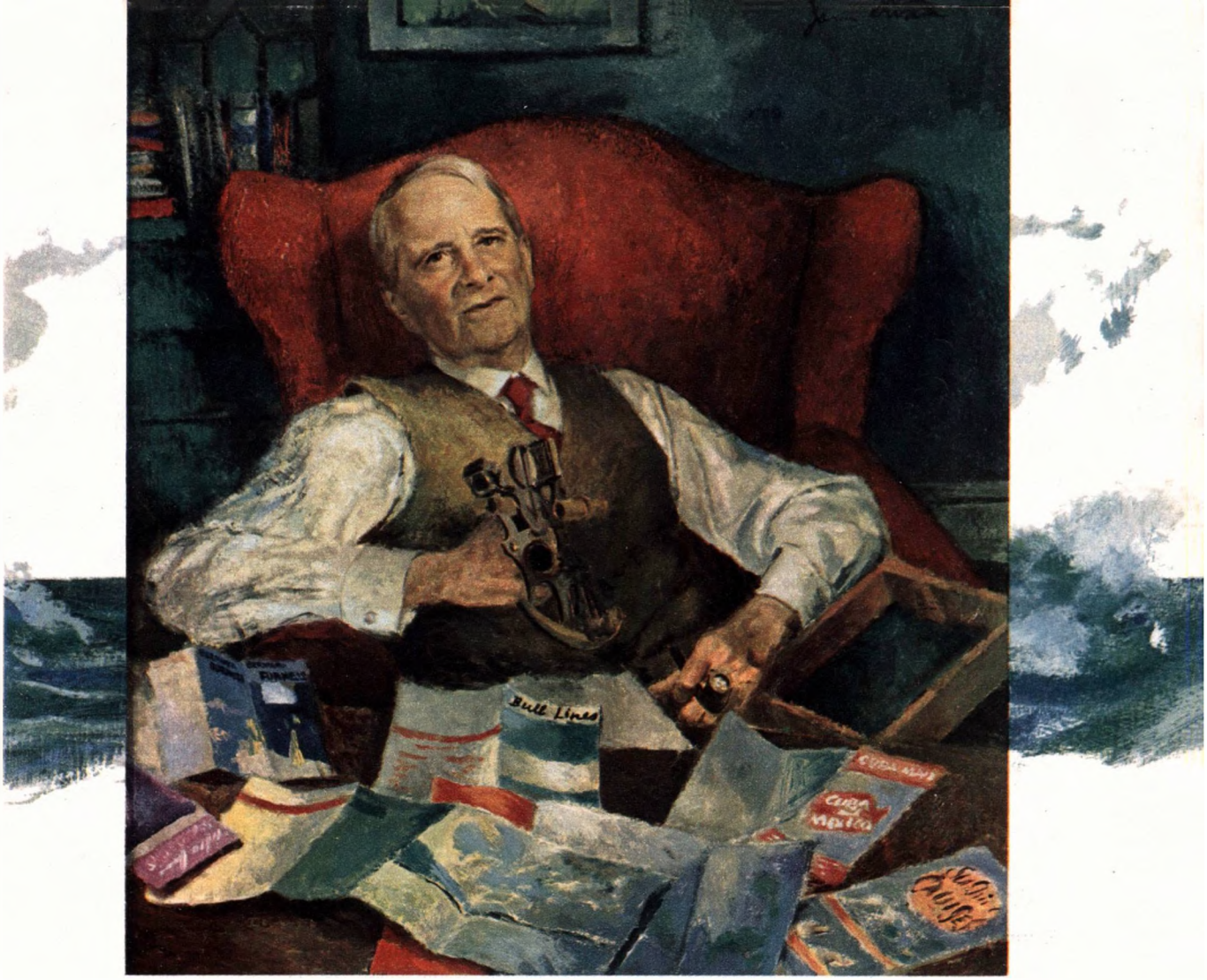
Yet deep-hidden in all this humdrummery, like a shining diamond in a nest of old papers, there was a spark.

Mr. Ridley loved the sea.

Except for the Staten Island ferries, he had never been in a ship in his life, and yet, in his heart, Mr. Ridley knew all the seven seas. He had gained this knowledge in a curious way: via the nautical publications of the United States Government and those richly colored travel folders of faraway lands and oceans.

Mr. Ridley had made the astounding discovery that for a few cents, the price of a movie, you could buy a wonderful chart of the whole Mediterranean Sea, for instance. And for the cost of two movies, a fat and fascinating volume called the *Sailing Directions for the Bay of Bengal*, including the coasts of India, Burma, Thailand, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Such books were a literature in their own right for



The travel folders were like treasures to Mr. Ridley

Mr. Ridley. He liked them especially for their simple, everyday language which suggested that people really went to such places, and quite normally. The *Sailing Directions* told you where dangerous reefs lay, told you how to steer to avoid a sandbank, advised you where to get water, where there was a hospital, described castles and forts you would see along the coast. With a little imagination, and the travel folders for inspiration, you could cruise around the world the captain of your ship, and never leave Staten Island.

Over the years, Mr. Ridley had "visited" hundreds, even thousands, of places. From time to time he would stop by the various travel agencies and pick up handfuls of the free booklets and maps and folders that cried the beauties of lovely Capri or mysterious Istanbul or the glittering Bahamas.

Back home, he would spread them out, and then, like a boy poring over Aladdin's treasures, he would read the shining words that called like golden trumpets.

He would pick out some dream destination, and read about it until his head was full of noble temples or silver beaches or crowded bazaars. Then Mr. Ridley would take down his government nautical publications and his navigation instruments and plot his course, as if he were really sailing there. He had nearly all the 60 volumes of *Sailing Directions*, and they, with his travel folders and charts, filled half his bedroom. He made racks for them, and he made a kind of chart table, too, for inevitably he had become interested in the mechanics of sailing. Especially navigation.

He would lay out a course on his chart, say, from Marseille to Istanbul, then read all that was known about

"Get off this bridge!" the officer roared.
"But in another minute she'll hit," Mr. Ridley warned

the coasts and islands and currents along the way. In 1923, for $1.25, he bought his first nautical instrument: a secondhand pair of parallel rulers. Then some brass dividers for 80 cents.

But 1925 was the big year. It was the Golden Jubilee year for Babson & Sons, Est. 1875, and there was a bonus for everybody. With part of his, Mr. Ridley daringly bought a secondhand sextant he had long worshipped in a pawnshop window. The $30 was a great deal of money for Mr. Ridley, but the gleaming sextant gave him a sense of new dignity. As if he had become the master of the sun and moon and all the stars.

He learned how to use it, too, buying for only 80 cents the Hydrographic Office's Publication No. 211. Ten years later, newer and faster systems came out, like H. O. 214, but Mr. Ridley stuck to old 211, with the aid of a secondhand *Nautical Almanac* he had purchased.

Sometimes he would go to a deserted beach (for you needed a clear horizon), shoot the sun and work out his position. Lighthouses were best for this, for he could check his results against the exact positions given in the *Light List*. He worked out the precise position of his own cottage, for somehow the latitude and longitude readings seemed far more impressive than a mere street address. He became very good indeed with the sextant.

Once Mr. Ridley played a trick that he never even admitted to his mother: He went to City Island and pretended he wanted to buy a boat, and the closeness to all that beauty was something he never forgot.

Over the years, he read almost everything ever written about ships and great voyages and seamanship—everything, at any rate, that the public libraries had to offer. In one book he ran across a poem by an Englishman named Masefield, about a sailor who had to sail again because the call of the running tide was such "a wild call and a clear call" that it could not be denied.

That said something to Mr. Ridley, and he often thought of it as he stood on the deck of the Staten Island ferryboat.

THEN came 1950. Mr. Ridley was quite gray now, as shabby-old as his desk. He could remember so clearly when the desk had been new; he could hardly believe it was already the Diamond Jubilee year for Babson & Sons, Est. 1875. At the company banquet the president, Mr. Frederick Babson (Mr. Ridley remembered when he had been born) announced the Diamond Jubilee bonus: $20 to each employee for every year of service.

And that night Mr. Ridley went home with his head towering among Aldebaran and Betelgeuse and all the other great stars. For his forty years' service meant a bonus of $800, and he had made a mighty resolve.

Mr. Ridley was going to sea.

And so it happened that he stood, muffled in his overcoat and dazed with glory, on the deck of the S.S. Queen Iris as she passed Ambrose light and on to the Atlantic.

It had been so easy. The office, still in jubilee mood, had made no trouble about his month's leave of absence. "Take two, if you want," they had said. His widowed aunt came to stay with his mother and, after paying his passage, there was enough left of the $800 to keep things going at home.

The Queen Lines had freighters going almost everywhere, and the passage was cheap. He could have taken the Queen Helen to South America, or the Queen Dido to the Far East, but since he did not have unlimited time, he picked the Queen Iris, bound for Algiers, Leghorn, and Alexandria.

His mother had wanted him to take one of the great liners, but the Queen Iris was exactly what Mr. Ridley wanted. She was no longer young, and her old reciprocating engines gave her a mere nine knots cruising speed. But she was informal and friendly. She had only five other passengers, and they ate with the officers and had the run of the ship. To Mr. Ridley, that was the important thing.

THE first meal at sea fascinated him. Never before had he been with real seafaring men, and he felt now like a street urchin who had somehow strayed into a banquet of the gods. He admired the gold sleeve stripes that spoke mutely of authority, and when the captain himself came in Mr. Ridley had a hard time to keep from bowing.

He was surprised that they talked so little about the sea. Mostly they argued about baseball. The only time they touched on proper sea talk was when Mr. Melvin, the second officer, brought up the grounding of the battleship Missouri. The first officer, Mr. Hendricks, did not entirely agree with Mr. Melvin's opinions on the incident and the discussion turned surprisingly bitter.

Mr. Ridley knew all about the Missouri. He had read every word of the evidence and plotted the positions on his own charts. Thus, when the second officer made a wrong statement about the Missouri's course, Mr. Ridley corrected him before he realized he was speaking out loud.

He could have bitten his tongue off. All the officers stared at him in surprise, and he felt himself go red. It was even worse when the first officer burst out laughing and said, "He's right, too!"

Mr. Melvin stared longest. "Thanks, Pop," he said dryly.

Mr. Ridley did not know what to say. The laughter seemed friendly enough, however, and even Captain Donovan wore an amiable grin.

It was that grin which encouraged Mr. Ridley, when he later managed to find the captain alone, to ask the favor that would make or ruin the voyage for him. He knew that the bridge was sacred territory, and that not even the ship's owner is supposed to go there without the master's express permission. Although Captain Donovan was a good ten years his junior, Mr. Ridley felt like a schoolboy asking teacher for permission: "I wonder, sir, if it would be possible—that is, I've never been on the bridge of a ship, and—"

"Sure, Pop," the captain grinned. "Go up whenever you like. Just don't bother the men when they're busy, and keep out of their way."

Mr. Ridley promised fervently. He felt like a good soul ascending to heaven as he climbed the steep steel steps and found himself, after so many years of dreaming, on the real bridge of a real ship—at sea.

"Hiyuh, Pop!" It was the first officer, Mr. Hendricks. "Want to look around?" He took Mr. Ridley in tow, explaining the wheelhouse, the radar equipment, the fathometer, which showed magically how much water was under the Queen Iris's keel each instant.

But mostly Mr. Ridley was fascinated by the chartroom, where the navigation was done. He looked with awe at the chart table, big enough for the biggest charts, at the great, shallow drawers neatly filled with the charts of all the world, at the rows of *Sailing Directions* and other nautical books. But especially at the chronometer, a sort of super-clock that Mr. Ridley could never afford. Gleaming with heavy brass, it was mounted for protection behind plate glass and cushioned against any shock.

"What's her error?" Mr. Ridley asked, so absorbed he did not see Mr. Hendricks's surprise.

"Minus 4 minutes 23 seconds," the first officer replied, and Mr. Ridley nodded understandingly.

Out on the bridge, Mr. Hendricks showed him the repeater compasses, geared to the ship's main gyro compass. Mr. Ridley glanced at the course and saw with silent satisfaction that the Queen Iris was on exactly the course he had himself figured out—the great circle course from New York to Gibraltar.

It was here on the bridge, he reflected, that the navigator stood to shoot the sun at noon. Mr. Ridley wondered how high the bridge was from the water, a most important figure in celestial navigation.

"What's your height-of-eye here?" he asked.

"Twenty feet 4 inches to the deck here," the first officer said. Then he laughed. "Say, Pop, you sound like a real old salt. Chronometer error . . . height-of-eye . . . Where'd you learn about all that stuff?"

Mr. Ridley flushed with a mixture of pleasure and embarrassment. He felt a sudden warm comradeship with Mr. Hendricks. So he told him. Not everything, of course, but enough. He told him about the sextant he had brought with him, and the *Sailing Directions for the Mediterranean*, and the charts and the other things. Things which, in fact, took up more room in Mr. Ridley's suitcases than did his clothes.

"Well, what d'ye know!" Mr. Hendricks exclaimed. "Why, that's fine! If all of us got sick you could take her out and bring her back yourself."

Mr. Ridley laughed with him.

"Well, make yourself at (*Continued on page* 94)

An American Vignette

MUSEUM PIECE

ANTHONY BOOKHAUSER nodded curtly at the front-door guard as he entered the museum, and then started for his office. But two steps later, when he saw the petite woman with the fine white hair and spectacles, he stopped. She looked like what people mean when they say "little old lady." There was white lace around her neck and the dress she was wearing rustled as she moved about the museum, but it was the way her eyes sparkled when she looked about her that really attracted Mr. Bookhauser's attention. Her face was radiant with the kind of intelligent curiosity he had not seen in a long time.

When he had taken on the position of head curator eighteen years ago, the job had been a stimulating challenge. But, of late, summoning up enthusiasm for his work had become increasingly difficult, so much so that he began to think seriously of resigning. It seemed to Mr. Bookhauser that the true significance of the museum's treasures was being lost on people these days. They came because they had time on their hands or because out-of-town guests wanted to be shown around. What was missing was the intellectual eagerness of old-timers like this white-haired lady.

At lunch today he had almost convinced himself that in this, the age of the future, there were more important things for a man to do than presiding over the past. But now, noting the shining, thrilled expression on the little old lady's face, a thought began to gnaw away at him.

Maybe there were others like her—after all, he was confined pretty much to his office. Perhaps his impression of the reaction of people to the museum was an inaccurate one. It might very well be that a lot of people hid their interest in the exhibits behind impassive faces. Perhaps it wasn't fair of him to expect everyone to show his feelings openly.

"Anyway," he mused, "it doesn't really matter if only a few people, like this old lady, have a true understanding of what museums have to teach. Isn't it always the perceptive few who lead the world?"

Mr. Bookhauser watched the little old lady as she moved gracefully into a far and musty corner of the room. Then, smiling happily at the front-door guard, he headed toward his office. It seemed incredible that he had ever considered resigning. . . .

Another person who was also in a happy frame of mind was the guard by the front door. It had been some time since Mr. Bookhauser, who'd been such a grouch lately, had smiled at him. In fact, the guard felt such a pleasant glow inside him that when the little old lady was leaving he remarked amiably, "I trust you enjoyed yourself here, ma'am."

"Oh, yes, indeed," she said, an unmistakable undercurrent of pleasure in her voice. "I come here every now and then. I love this old place. It will always have a soft spot in my heart. My husband proposed to me here."

HAROLD HELFER

TO BID GOOD NIGHT to the 500 dancers who visit their Laddin's Terrace, near Stamford, Conn., on a Saturday night, 8 Dalys line up on the orchestra stand during the last dance. They are (l. to r.): Charlie, Bobby, Mother, Dick, Father, Carol, Marie, and Dot

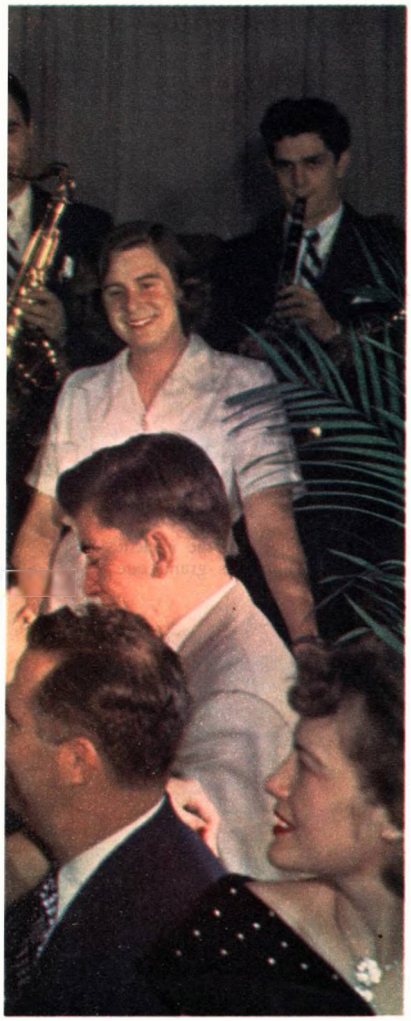
IT'S FUN TO

TOP VOCALIST in the family, 10-year-old Carol tries on a new "singing" gown, with the aid of Mrs. Fannie Julian, dress-shop owner

MOST U. S. towns, I've noticed in my travels, have roadhouses on their outskirts. And most of these neon-lit roadhouses have a pretty shoddy reputation with local parents, ministers, and law-enforcement officials. They are condemned as "joints" that are corrupting young people.

A few weeks ago I discovered a wonderfully different kind of road dine-and-dance place on the Boston Post Road outside Stamford, Conn. It is Laddin's Terrace, the biggest in Connecticut and one of the most extraordinary.

It is made extraordinary by a remarkable family of 9, the Dalys, who own it, operate it, and have built it into a clean, wholesome, friendly place where most local parents are glad to have their dating sons and daughters go for dancing and parties. The Dalys regard it as their



AS A HOBBY, Charlie (in ticket office) runs a small movie theater for youngsters in the basement of the Daly home. Shows are held every Sunday

THE AMERICAN FAMILY OF THE MONTH

After years of harsh struggle this family of 9, in Stamford, Conn., have achieved their big dream . . . a roadside dance spot, where they all work to provide clean, safe recreation for teen-agers and their parents

BE A DALY

by Vance Packard

crowning achievement. They have known more disastrously harsh times, and probably more joyous times, than most of us.

Frank Daly, his wife Stella, and their 7 children—Carol, 10; Bobby, 14; Marie, 18; Frank Jr., 22; Dot, 23; Charlie, 25; and Dick, 26—handle all the important roles at their dance place, and they have an uproarious time doing it. They sing the songs. (Carol, 10, is top vocalist.) They lead the band, they beat the drums, they greet the customers, they cook the French fries, they sell the soft drinks, they scrub up afterward. And they really scrub!

MR. DALY hardly fits our conventional notion of a cigar-chomping roadhouse proprietor. He is an ardent, proud family man, and his warm Irish face exudes earnestness. Church and civic leaders by the dozens hail him affectionately, as do the town's policemen. Hundreds of fellow parents not only hail him, but try to steer their sons and daughters of courting age toward his place on Saturday nights—and away from notorious joints which stay open most of the night.

"We built the Terrace as a place where our whole family could work together," Mr. Daly explains. "With our own children here, Mrs. Daly and I could not run it as a dive, even if we wanted to. This fact has pretty much shaped the character of the place."

The result has proved to be not only pretty wonderful for his family, but also pretty wonderful for his community. It is with pleasure that we introduce to you the 9 Dalys as our *Family of the Month* for February. . . .

When I dropped in unannounced at Laddin's Terrace it was almost 5 o'clock on a Monday afternoon. Most of

THE DALY FAMILY'S 5 CARS belong (front to rear) to Dad, Charlie, Dot, Dad (again), and Dick, whose car was the family's only one a few years ago

OLD AND NEW DALY HOMES: They've lived in the ancient one (inset) for 17 years, are moving into this grand one

COOKING FUN: Mother Daly makes some of her famous spaghetti, while Bobby, 14, whips up a chocolate pie

the 9 Dalys were busy cleaning up after their Saturday-night dance. Dick, at 26 the oldest Daly offspring, was running a large vacuum cleaner near the beautiful sunken dance floor—"largest between New York and Boston." He hollered, "I'm the drum and vacuum man." (He also drums in the band.)

Lean, soft-spoken Charlie, the 25-year-old chef, was polishing his 20-foot battery of stoves. Bobby, 14, a happy-go-lucky butterball, was hauling soft-drink crates to the back entrance. Dot, 23, the family's irrepressible hepcat, was merrily washing 600 glasses.

I looked for Mr. Daly. He was sitting on the thick red rug in the main lobby scrubbing to a gleaming white the woodwork on the door to the ladies' lounge. (After every party he personally scrubs that door.)

Mr. Daly was obviously flustered by my appearance. "I'm sorry," he said, "but I was just getting ready to leave for an appointment. Can you see me in an hour?" Then apologetically he added, "I'd hate to miss this appointment, because I've been keeping it for nine years." With that, he vanished.

LATER I learned where he vanishes to every Monday afternoon at 5 o'clock. He slips into nearby St. John's Church to offer a prayer of thanks. When he first began slipping into the church on Mondays 9 years ago, however, it was for a different purpose. He was making a distraught plea for divine help and guidance. Then, he was up against it, bad. With 7 children to feed, he was an unemployed drummer.

Only a few months before he began praying he had thought he was all set. He had his own little 4-piece band in a place out in the country. Then, wham! came the war-time ban on gas. The place was 5 miles out from Stamford, a thriving industrial city of 73,000 which is 35 miles from New York City. The place closed. He had to disband his orchestra. "It was like being hit on the head with a bat," he recalls.

The ban put him out in the street. What sickened him was not so much the new setback but the fact that the set-backs never ceased. They had never ceased since that first stunning setback in the late twenties when talkies came in, and knocked him out of his movie-theater job making mood music for the "silents."

HE HAD assumed he could make a lifelong career of playing in theater orchestras when he asked Stella Vuono (pronounced View-no) to marry him. She was the cute daughter of a respected Stamford family. He was the son of a mother whose husband left her soon after Frank's birth. She had to work as a household domestic to support him.

Stella and he set out to raise a nice, big family; 4 years, 4 children. Dick, Charlie, and Dot were already born and

Frank Jr. (Frannie) was on the way when the "talkie" blow fell. Then came the depression years. The music business was all shot. But Frank Daly kept hoping and taking odd jobs to fill in, and feeling lousy the weeks he couldn't give Stella $20 to run the house.

First they lost the new house on Broad Street they were trying to buy, and all the money they had in it. Then they had to leave a cold, draughty place they had rented on Hillside Avenue because they couldn't pay the rent.

That was when Marie was born—and Dick and Charlie started having running ears, from the cold. After he took them to the doctor the nurse said, "That will be ten dollars, five dollars each." And afterward Frank Daly sat down and cried. If he could have taken Charlie back to a doctor, Charlie probably wouldn't have become hard of hearing in that one ear.

As he began praying for guidance 9 years ago he was tormented by doubts about where he was headed in life. He wondered if he was just being a bullheaded Irishman in trying to remain a musician in a small city while raising a big family. A musical career, he was beginning to admit, just doesn't mix with small towns and big families.

All the old pals he used to play with 15 years before, where were they now? Every one of them had either gone off to New York bands or settled down to a sensible career, like selling insurance.

And his 7 children! What were they thinking of their dad, now that they were skimping on food again? Maybe a musician had no business trying to be a family man. That survey he had seen made him wonder. Some Midwestern professor had found that, out of 50 occupations, musicians make just about the poorest husbands and fathers. Sure, he knew the reasons: irregular income, night work, travel.

Well, at least he hadn't traveled. He had had that chance to go on the road as drummer with the band Paul Whiteman had helped organize, and turned it down. He had turned down plenty of chances to go into New York jobs. And it wasn't that he wasn't good enough to make the grade. He had given drumming lessons to Jackie Cooper. Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw used to come out to Stamford to jam with his little (*Continued on page* 86)

FAMILY SUPPER: Around table (l. to r.) are Mother, Charlie, Dot, Dad, Marie, Bobby, and Carol

CRACK SWIMMER of the Dalys is Marie. She thought of trying the Channel

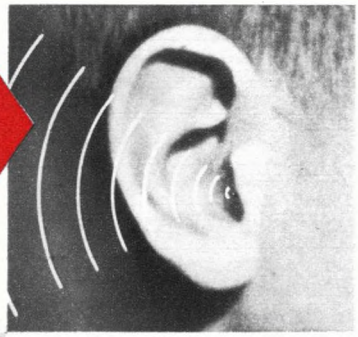
PHOTOS BY OZZIE SWEET

FRIENDLY ROUGH-HOUSING is part of the Daly children's fun. Here Carol and Marie enjoy a pillow fight

OFF TO SERVICE: Frank Jr., the 9th Daly, gets a send-off from his family as he returns to Fort Dix, N.J. Before he joined the Army, Frank played saxophone in the Daly dance band

Do You Know You Have Ears?

VANITY MAKES HER SHUN HER FRIENDS and keeps her from joining the fun. Like millions of others, she considers deafness shameful and tries to hide her handicap instead of wearing the hearing aid she needs



by J. D. Ratcliff

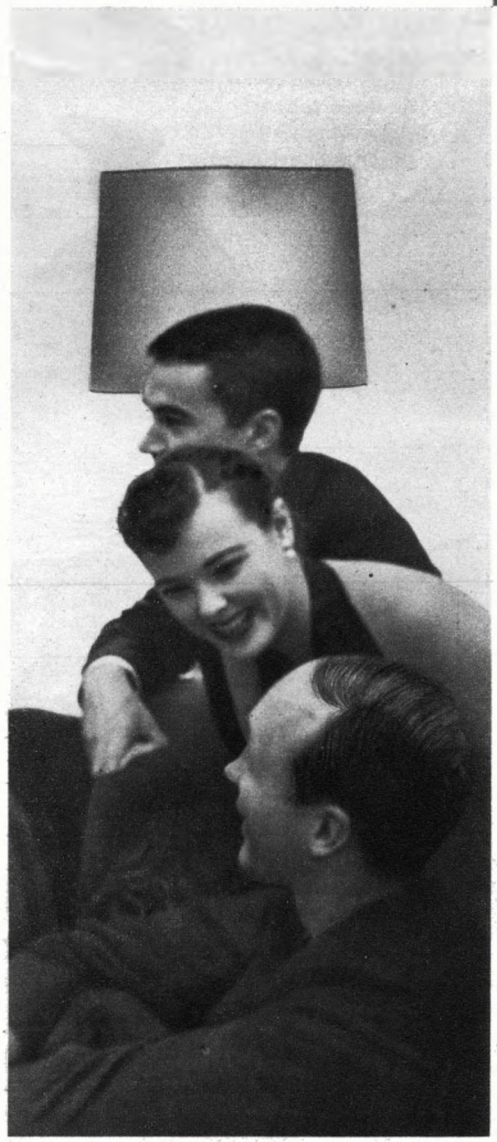


PHOTO BY PHILIP STEARNS

In the shattering din of modern life, it's doubly important not to neglect the delicate instruments that bring you the priceless world of sound. This article tells how to prevent deafness—and what to do if voices begin to grow faint and far away

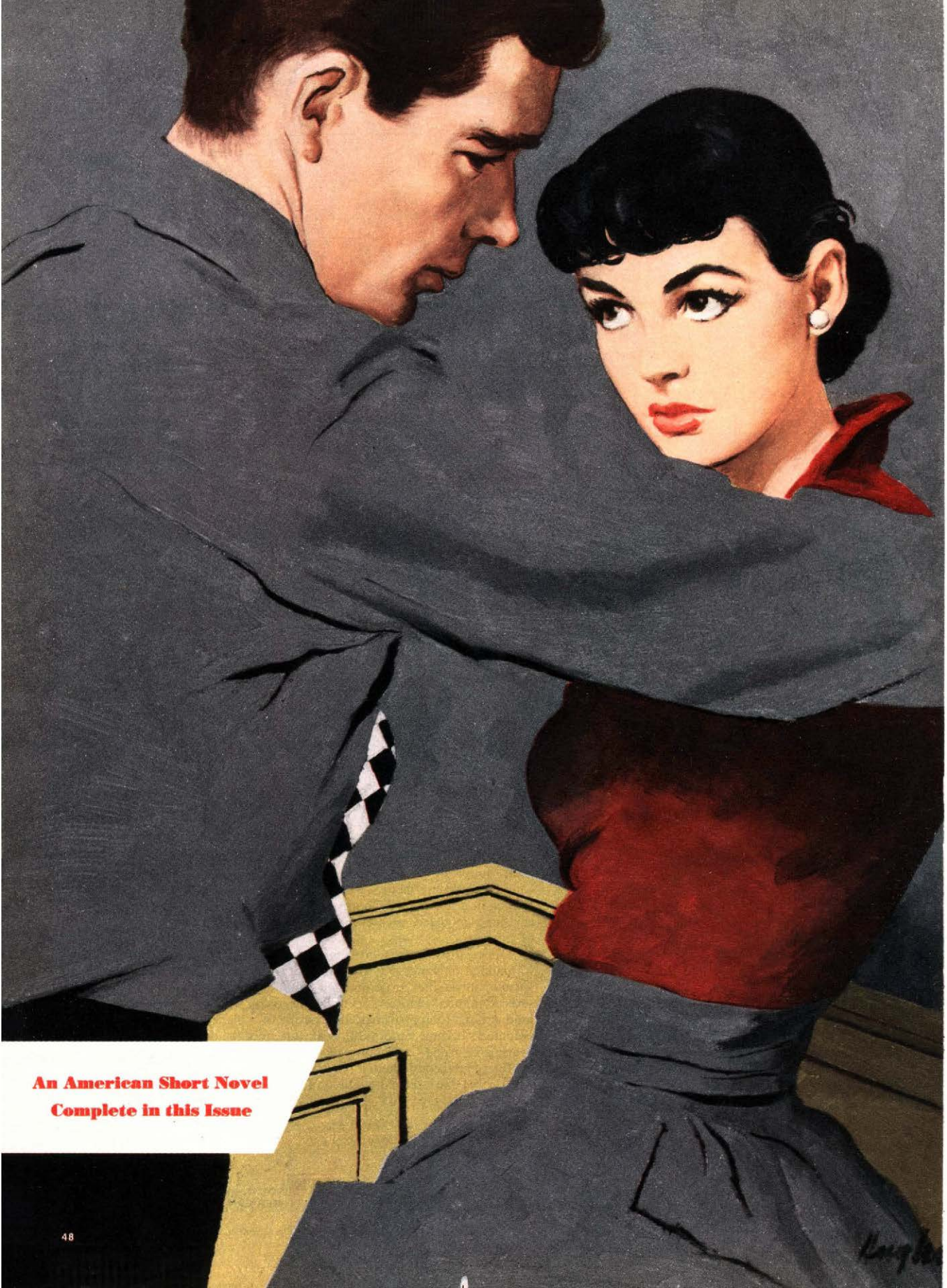
MAYBE you remember the story. Two men were riding on a bus one Sunday morning. A church carillon was playing. "Aren't those chimes beautiful?" one man asked. "Speak louder," said the other; "can't hear you." The man shouted—with no result. Finally he screamed out his statement. The other shook his head. "Those bells are making so much noise," he said, "I can't hear a word you say."

Although church chimes could scarcely be classified as "noise," one solid fact remains: In this noisy mechanical age we are inflicting on our ears sounds they were never built to stand—screeching auto horns, wailing air-raid sirens, clattering pneumatic hammers and riveting machines. Indeed, the ears are the most misused organs of the body. Ear specialists say it is little wonder that ear difficulties are on the increase and that deafness is becoming more prevalent.

In certain respects nature let us down in designing our ears. The reason, perhaps, is that in nature there are no very loud noises—the voice of the waterfall, the crash of thunder, and the pounding of the surf being the loudest. And they are pretty poor competitors for some man-made noises. Niagara Falls can't compete with a boiler factory, or surf with a plane engine. As a protection, our eardrums tighten with low-pitched sounds—such as are found in nature. But they have no protection against high-pitched sounds—booming factory whistles, screaming car brakes, blaring radios. Maybe in a few more million years nature will provide us with protective ear flaps, modeled after eyelids, which will close automatically in times of stress.

During the war, the Germans experimented at length with sounds meant to madden or paralyze enemy troops. The U.S. Army, co-operating with various universities, experimented along the same line. For periods up to several months volunteers spent 8 hours a day listening to recorded sounds loud enough to approximate the roaring of a plane engine. Almost all the volunteers became temporarily deaf. But, once the din was shut off, normal hearing returned—indicating the ear's remarkable recuperative powers.

Everything considered, it is a wonder that our ears do as well as they do. Most of us can expect a lifetime of good service from them. To be sure, hearing ability tapers off with age. Ears, like eyes, (*Continued on page* 97)



An American Short Novel
Complete in this Issue

the Charmer

She yearned for his smile, she thrilled to his touch, she seethed with jealousy over the love he had lost . . . this man she had sworn to hate

by

Gertrude Schweitzer

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GEORGE HUGHES

CHRISTINE FRENCH climbed the rickety stairs that led up from the printing shop of the Prescott Direct Mail Advertising Agency to the offices on the second floor. She scarcely noticed the clatter of the typesetting machines and typewriters any more, nor the peculiar odor of the place—a mixture of printer's ink, fresh stationery, mucilage, and the indefinable dusty, old-wood smell of an ancient building. It had all become so much a part of her daily life in the year that she had been a copy writer for the agency that she was rarely aware of it. When she did notice it, it was with a sense of pleasure. She loved this place. She loved being a part of it.

When she reached her own bare little cubicle of an office she could still feel under her feet the throb of the machines on the floor below. Just as palpable, it seemed to her, was the excitement and curiosity that ran through the entire personnel of the building. For this was the day when Adam Prescott was coming to share with his brother, Clive, the management of the company.

"I don't think Mr. Clive likes it a bit," Miss Gregory, Clive's secretary, had said to Chris at lunch the week before. "Of course, he'd never let on or show it—he's never unpleasant about anything, that man—but, after all, he's been head of the company for three years now, ever since the father had that stroke, and now to have his younger brother just walk in and take over—"

Chris had looked at Miss Gregory's plain, middle-aged face and smiled to herself. Poor woman; with her half-maternal, half-amorous solicitude for Clive she was inventing troubles for him so that she could share them.

"I'm sure it will work out," Chris had said. "After all,

"You don't know anything about me," Adam said sternly. "Not anything at all"

Clive always knew Adam was coming into the business as soon as he got back from Korea."

"To serve an apprenticeship, maybe," Miss Gregory had said. "But not as another boss right off. That just isn't fair." . . .

CHRIS had mentioned his secretary's concern to Clive at dinner the next night. They were at their favorite restaurant, a little out-of-the-way French place they had discovered in New York's lower East Side.

"Miss Gregory's ready to protect you with her life," Chris said, laughing, "against any invasion of your authority."

Clive smiled. It was his trade-mark, Chris thought; that quick, frequent, engaging smile, lighting the even-featured face. It was what had first attracted her to him. "She'll meet her match in Adam," he said.

Chris looked at him questioningly. Clive had never talked very much about his brother, only to say that he had one, a few years younger, who had gone straight from graduate business school to Korea, at the very beginning of the conflict there.

"Adam's like Father," Clive said now. "Father's favorite phrase has always been, 'I won't stand for any nonsense.'"

His gentle blue eyes filled with amusement. "At home, Mother and I were always the ones who performed the nonsense. As soon as Adam was old enough he joined Father in not standing for it."

Chris laughed. "Adam," she said, "sounds like a perfect prig."

"No, you'll like him," Clive answered. His look was tender and anxious. "Women always do."

"I'm not 'women,'" she said softly. "I'm Chris."

She might have added, "And I have eyes for only you, Clive." But it was not yet time for that. Clive had been taking her out for just a few months, and only in the past weeks had she begun to feel that he might be falling in love with her. When a man had lost a beautiful first wife he could not be expected to hurry into marriage again, less than two years later.

"Just the same," Clive had said that evening at dinner, "he'll probably charm you. Wait and see." . . .

Chris thought of this now, as she hitched her chair up to her desk and began looking over her work for the day. She was sure she was not going to like Adam. Clive was her kind of man: fine, warmhearted, dependable, with a disposition that nothing could ruffle and a sense of humor that kept him from ever being dull.

She had had enough of charmers before she was fourteen, when her father, whom she had thought the most fascinating, delightful man in the world, had gone off with another woman and left her mother and herself to make out as best they could. Her mother had not made out at all—she had died two years later—and, ever since, Chris had been on her own. She had managed to educate herself by going to school at night and working during the day, and she had done all right. At twenty-two, she had a good job and she made enough money to live very comfortably. She had thought she might never marry at all, until she came to know Clive, his goodness and kindness.

"He's too good," Miss Gregory was always saying indignantly. "People take advantage of him."

It was true, of course. The organization was not as efficient as it might have been. The production manager, Frank Sipprell, was, to Chris's mind, lazy and incompetent, but when she hinted at this to Clive he said, "Frank's all right. He's an old friend of mine. When a man has a family to raise you can't be too hard on him. He does get the work done." Clive smiled. "I'll speak to him, though, and try to jog him a little."

IF CLIVE ever did speak to Frank, or to anyone else whose work was not up to par, Chris was sure he did it with the greatest tact and gentleness. He would never deliberately hurt anybody. And there were certainly those who failed to appreciate such goodness and took advantage of it. But Chris had never worked in a place where everybody was so contented.

She wondered whether Adam Prescott was going to change all that. Clive had said that Adam would not "stand for any nonsense." It struck Chris that Clive was not especially fond of his brother. . . .

She began to write, losing herself in the task at hand. It was her job to write advertising for the agency's accounts. All this advertising went through the mails, so that after her copy had been written and approved, it went downstairs to the shop to be processed in the form of letters, booklets, or folders, which were then sent out to those on the mailing lists of Prescott's clients.

These clients were advertisers of a very wide variety, from manufacturers of farm implements to Fifth Avenue shops, and it was Chris's particular talent to be able to write as convincingly about the virtues of a certain type of threshing machine as about the charms of cashmere sweaters on sale in a New York specialty shop.

At the moment, she was writing a letter that was to go to flour mills all over the country, about a new kind of wire mesh for screening flour. She had steeped herself in the descriptive material that the Kingsman Metal Company had sent her, so that now she felt herself to be an expert on flour-screening mesh, and believed wholeheartedly in the superiority of this particular product.

"That's what makes you a

good copy writer," Margaret Warriner, her superior, had said to her once. "You're sincere." She had shaken her sleek blond head. "Maybe when you've been at it as long as I have you'll lose the fresh touch, too, and just produce out of a highly trained, mechanical little brain. But I hope not."

Margaret was in her late thirties, beautiful in a shellacked way and hard-boiled, but Chris liked her and got along with her. It was Margaret who had hired her.

"I asked the agency to send me a man," she had said. "I haven't much use for women. But they said you are unusual. Are you?"

Chris had said without embarrassment, "I'm a good copy writer, if that's what you want."

It had evidently been the right thing to say. "That's what I want," Margaret had said, and almost smiled. "You don't look like one of those soft, foolish young things, anyway. We'll try it."

CHRIS, typing away at her desk now, looked neither soft nor foolish, but she looked very young. She had a way of running her fingers through her dark hair when she was working, so that its once-neat curls tumbled all over her head, and there was a pencil smudge on her short nose. She had the kind of skin that always appeared a little tanned, like a healthy child's, and she sat as straight at the typewriter as though she were in a classroom. She was completely absorbed in her work when Adam Prescott came into her office.

"Miss French?" he inquired.

She jumped, and looked up into a dark, irregular face with eyes blacker than her own under thick, coal-black brows. There was no smile on the face. "What is he angry about?" she thought first, and then, "Who is he? What does he want?"

"I've been ringing for you for ten minutes," he said. "I thought I'd better come along myself and see what was keeping you."

He explained no further, but Chris was an alert girl. So this was Adam Prescott, the man who had the whole office on tenterhooks of curiosity. He looked disagreeable enough, certainly; not charming at all, unless you counted an apparent vitality as charm. Chris had known she was not going to like him.

"I didn't hear you ring, Mr. Prescott," she told him coolly. "The buzzers don't work; they haven't for years, I'm told."

"Why not?"

"That isn't my department," she said. "I'm a copy writer. But there seems to be no need of buzzers. When we want each other we use the extension telephones."

Or shout, she thought. It was possible to hear almost all over the floor through the thin partitions. But she did not mention this to Adam Prescott. She was sure he would disapprove.

"Buzzers save time and energy," he said. "However—" He came in out of the doorway, and sat down. "As you say, that isn't your department."

All at once he smiled, and she thought she saw a resemblance to Clive. Then she was not sure. His smile was like Clive's, but it was less gentle, more brilliant, and it completely transformed his saturnine face, making it warm and attractive.

"I been here a long time," Pop said. "It would be tough to have to go"

Chris turned a little away from it. "What can I do for you?" she asked him.

"I want to get acquainted with the staff," he said. "Since copy is my specialty, I thought I'd start with you."

It was foolish, she thought, to feel this strong antagonism toward a man she did not know, but she found herself wanting to take exception to everything he said.

"Miss Warriner is head of the copy department," she said. "Shouldn't you have started with her?"

"I already know Margaret," he said curtly. He reached out a muscular, deeply tanned hand. "May I see what you're working on now?"

She rolled the sheet of paper out of the typewriter and handed it to him, and as he began to read he scowled. It mattered very little to her whether or not he liked it. Margaret approved highly of her work and so did Clive. Against their expert opinions Adam's disapproval could scarcely weigh very heavily. Yet she found herself oddly dismayed by his apparent displeasure.

HE FINISHED reading and tossed the paper back onto her desk. Then he looked at her closely. "That's good," he said. "That's very good. How long have you been writing copy?"

She was pleased in spite of herself. "As long as I can remember," she said. "I used to go to the library and get the magazines and sit there rewriting all the ads."

"You did that on your own? My father had me doing it almost as soon as I could hold a pencil. Only, I had to rewrite them as letters, of course: 'Dear Mrs. Higgin-

bottom, When your children come home from school today, just open a can of delicious, nourishing Henset's Chicken Soup—'" He laughed and shook his head. "You'd think I'd have hated it, but I never did, not any of it. One summer, when I was sixteen, I folded letters down in the shop for two months, eight hours a day, because my father thought I ought to know what every kind of work in the place was like. I didn't even hate that. When I helped supervise production two summers later, I understood more than just the problems of the office, I can tell you."

CHRIS was aware that this was no idle recital of Adam Prescott's experiences. He was telling her that he was no novice at the business he had come to manage with his brother, and she was certain that he would make it clear to everyone in the organization before the day was over.

"I learned a lot of valuable theory at school," he said, "but the things my father taught me no school can teach." He patted her desk with a gesture that was almost caressing. "I worked in this office, too, one summer, right where you're sitting." Suddenly he smiled again. "But everybody's new here now, except a few of the people in the shop, and they're all waiting suspiciously to see what fool mistakes young Prescott is going to make."

His unexpected frankness disarmed her. "Don't let them worry you," she said. "They're a good bunch. I'm sure they'll like you."

He looked amused. "I'm not here to make them like me, Miss French. This isn't a social club. Just as long as they do their work properly and recognize my authority when necessary—" He broke off and stood up, his dark face unsmiling, as it had been when he first came in. "But there won't be any trouble about that."

When he had gone, his last words echoing in her ears like a threat, Chris found it difficult to get back to work. Whatever Adam Prescott was or was not, he was certainly disturbing. In the short time that he had been in her office she had disliked him, been momentarily attracted to him, felt sorry for him, and, finally, become violently angry with both herself and him because she had offered him sympathetic encouragement and he had rejected it. She was still sitting there, staring at her empty typewriter, deciding that Adam Prescott was an impossible, arrogant man, when her phone rang.

"Chris, come into my office a minute," Margaret Warriner's voice said. "Bring the Kingsman copy with you."

"I haven't quite finished it."

"Well, finish it, and then bring it in," Margaret said, with an uncharacteristic trace of annoyance in her tone. "It has to be processed this afternoon."

Chris worked steadily for half an hour, and then went to Margaret's office with the copy. "I'm sorry if I held things up," she said. "You didn't tell me there was a rush on it."

"I didn't know it." Margaret looked over the letter with an expert eye, nodded, and then yelled, in a startlingly loud, carrying voice, for the office boy. "We really ought to have the buzzers fixed," she said to Chris. "I'm beginning to sound like a hog-caller."

When the boy came, she gave him the copy, with instructions to take it to Mr. Sipprell, who was to get it into production that afternoon.

THEN she sighed and turned back to Chris. "Lord Adam's orders," she said. "He wasn't here an hour before he found out that the Kingsman letters should have gone out three days ago."

"Why didn't they?"

Margaret shrugged. "I don't know. My job is checking copy. But I'd guess it was Sipprell's fault. He's always messing something up and then adjusting the production schedule to cover himself." She looked at Chris with her wise, lovely eyes. "Well, what did you think of our Wonder Boy?"

"To put it bluntly," Chris said, "I think he's a pain in the neck."

Margaret smiled. "You'll change your mind." Before Chris could answer, she said, "You don't know, do you, that he invented the Prescott process when he was still in college?"

"I didn't even know there was a Prescott process."

"Tsk-tsk! As Adam says, we people up here in the office really ought to know what goes on in the shop." Margaret picked up a letter from her desk and handed it to Chris. "There's a finished letter, ready for mailing," she said. "It's addressed to Mrs. Norman Cullen in Chicago. It looks like an individually typewritten letter, doesn't it? You can't tell the difference between the name, address, salutation, and the body of the letter, can you?"

Chris shook her head.

"Well, as you know, they aren't the same," Margaret said. "The body of the letter was done on a special typesetting machine that simulates typewriter type, and the name, address, and salutation were filled in individually on the typewriter. Yet they match perfectly."

"Yes, I see," Chris said. "I just took it for granted. How is it done?"

"I don't know, exactly. The actual process is secret. Before Wonder Boy invented it we could get a pretty good match, but anyone who looked closely could tell that the letter he got in the mail was not written individually to him but was one of thousands." Margaret screwed a cigarette into a long, black holder and lit it. "Human nature being what it is," she said, "that made an enormous difference in results."

Chris said, "I'm properly impressed, but it doesn't make me feel any tenderer toward the young man. He knows exactly how good he is."

Margaret made a circle of her heavily lipsticked mouth and blew a series of perfect smoke rings at the ceiling. "I like a man who knows his own worth," she said.

"You like Adam, then?"

Margaret did not answer immediately. When she did, her voice was softer than Chris had ever heard it. "He reminds me of his father," she said, and then turned abruptly back to her desk. "I've got work to do and so have you. Run along now." . . .

CHRIS lived in a small, attractive hotel for women, where she had two rooms with bath and kitchenette. She liked to cook, and once or twice a month she prepared dinner for Clive and herself instead of going out with him.

She knew he enjoyed it. He was obviously a home-loving man, and he must be very lonely, she thought, in the large apartment where he had lived with his wife. Most of what she knew about Clive's wife she had heard from Miss Gregory. "You never in your life saw anyone so beautiful," the secretary had told her. "One of those white-skinned ash blondes, tall and with a perfect figure. They were so crazy about each other, it was like a story. She'd come for him at the office sometimes, and they'd go out holding hands."

Clive had spoken of his wife only once, the fifth or sixth time he had taken Chris out. "You know about my marriage?" he had asked her, and when she nodded, he said, "I want you to understand, if we're to see each other like this. Because of Thea, perhaps I'll never care for another woman. But I want to try. The idea of brooding indefinitely seems unhealthy to me— (*Continued on page* 64)

America's *Interesting People*

MR. AND MRS. OUTDOORS

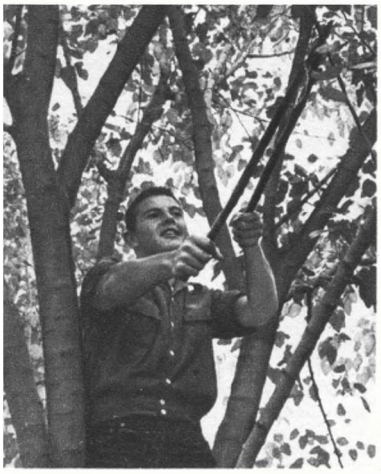
RALPH AND MURIEL ANDERSON, of Greenville, Maine, are, as far as they know, the only husband-and-wife guide team in the country. Every year they take parties into the woods around Moosehead Lake for fishing, camping, and hunting. But that's not all. Although both are full-fledged guides, Ralph is also principal of the junior high school at Greenville and on Saturday nights plays piano in a night club. Muriel is a baby-sitter and has a fly-tying business. These activities are side lines to earn extra money to pay for their new home. Guiding is their main interest.

Until 4 years ago Muriel had never been in the woods. She was a nurse in a Portland, Maine, hospital, and she liked city life. Ralph, on the other hand, had hunted and fished around Moosehead as a boy. Although he longed to live in the great outdoors, he worked before the war as a credit manager in New York, an insurance adjuster, and a salesman. When he came out of the Army, after 5 years of service, he received a teaching degree at the University of Maine. He thought of Moosehead, and got the teaching job in Greenville. Muriel hated the life at first, but soon she became interested in the new world, learned to fish and hunt, and last year obtained her professional guide's license.

Today you couldn't pay her to go back to the city. Every fall she and Ralph hunt deer—they're allowed one apiece—and in winter Ralph hunts bobcat, earning a $20 bounty for each one he kills.

Husband-and-wife guide team, Ralph and Muriel Anderson, hunting with their dog near Greenville, Maine

PHOTOGRAPH BY KOSTI RUOHOMAA FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE



TREE TRIMMER, Klair Mendenhall, prefers outdoor jobs; likes to mow lawns, rake leaves

TARGET HERE is Carol Richey, 15, who earns money baby-sitting and who is being "shot" at by Tommy Grundy, 8. Others are Nancy and Jimmy Grundy

SOFT WATER is not easy to find in Phoenix. Donald Baron works for a service which supplies soft-water tanks

YES DIRECTOR, Jo Hared, who heads employment agency run by kids, interviews applicant Bob Groom. Available jobs are shown on blackboard

VARIETY STORE CLERK, Paul Chacon, who got his job because he speaks Spanish, waits on John Slattery, a rancher

TYPING AND FILING for a plumbing company occupy the afternoons and Saturdays of Christy Emery

QUICK DELIVERY is Bob Barker's motto as he carries proof and mats to advertisers for Phoenix newspaper

YES—JOBS FOR SCHOOL KIDS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILL SEARS FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

ANY PARENT who has had to beg or bribe John or Susie to do ordinary chores like mowing the lawn will appreciate the amazing thing that has happened in Phoenix, Ariz. There the youngsters not only work after school, but have their own agency to get themselves jobs. What's more, the idea was theirs in the first place.

The agency is Youth Employment Service—called YES from the initials of the name—and Jo Hared, a teen-ager, is director. Under Jo's supervision, the kids run their own organization and in 3 years have found for one another over 2,000 after-school, week-end, and summer-vacation jobs. The jobs range from yard work to bookkeeping, from baby-sitting to photography, from sales girl to delivery boy.

Jo, who was in high school when she became director and who now attends Phoenix College, runs the agency on a strictly businesslike basis. There are offices in a downtown office building. Jo directs a regular office staff, who work in shifts in order to attend classes. Hours are 1:30 to 5:30 P.M. on weekdays, 9 to 5 on Saturdays during the school year, and 9 to 5 every day during the summer months. The agency is nonprofit.

It all began in 1948, when a group of the youngsters decided they had too much time on their hands and were having difficulty finding jobs. The kids sold some public-spirited adults on the idea of an agency and a Phoenix paper donated space in its plant. Other firms donated equipment, and when the agency opened for business there were hundreds of applicants. The average age of these high-school youngsters is 16. Their interviewers at the agency are the same age, and this makes for frankness in discussing job preferences and capabilities. The age limit is 21.

The agency is operated according to the state labor laws. No youngsters are placed in places where liquor is served. Job-seekers are not permitted to loiter around the employment office. Jo does a lot of the interviewing herself, and when she is in classes an assistant, Susan Lindsay, high-school senior, takes over. All the jobs available are listed on a blackboard.

Business leaders, clergymen, and heads of civic organizations all agree that the agency has done more than any other group to stimulate the interests of youth in a constructive direction and to prepare them for their careers.

AMERICA'S *Interesting People*

HAVE YOU A LOT OF SPARK?

ALMOST EVERYONE gets a shock now and then when he touches a doorknob or a car handle, especially in cold weather. The spark seems pretty harmless, doesn't it? Actually, though, it could cause a fire or an explosion, according to Robin Beach, of New York, the country's top expert on static electricity. Beach has a unique business investigating the causes of electrostatic hazards, the biggest single source of industrial fires and explosions, and reducing them to a minimum. Among the causes are some people whose abnormally dry skin, under certain conditions, leads them to build up a dangerous 30,000-volt charge. This is more than enough to start a fire or an explosion. Manufacturers throughout the country call on Beach to study any mysterious fires or to prevent their occurrence.

For instance, one manufacturer of rubber products asked Beach to look into a series of small fires. Using his electrostatic voltmeter, he tested all the employees for voltage and discovered the "culprit" was a woman. She was transferred to a less combustible area of the plant and the fires ceased. Beach travels all over the country making his tests, diagnosing problems, and suggesting cures. A job may take him anywhere from a couple of days to 2½ years.

This private "electric eye" says that rubber, plastic, paper, and textile industries are particularly hot spots, but that hardly a phase of manufacturing and transportation is free from danger. Sparks have set off explosions in operating-rooms, munition plants, the petroleum and chemical industries. People are not entirely responsible. Beach figures that improperly grounded conveyor and power belts alone cause over $4,000,000 fire damage annually.

Beach, who was for 25 years head of Brooklyn Polytechnical Institute's electrical engineering department, started his business some 7 years ago. He is a graduate of M.I.T. and in his 50's. He first experimented with electricity as a boy by short-circuiting the wires in his parents' home. Beach is married and has two children. For relaxation, he enjoys mountain climbing, skiing, and figure skating.

While an electric shock from touching a doorknob is usually harmless, the voltage is greater than that necessary to start a fire or explosion. Below: Beach checks employees at Hercules Powder Plant, Kingston, N.Y., as they measure their static voltage charges

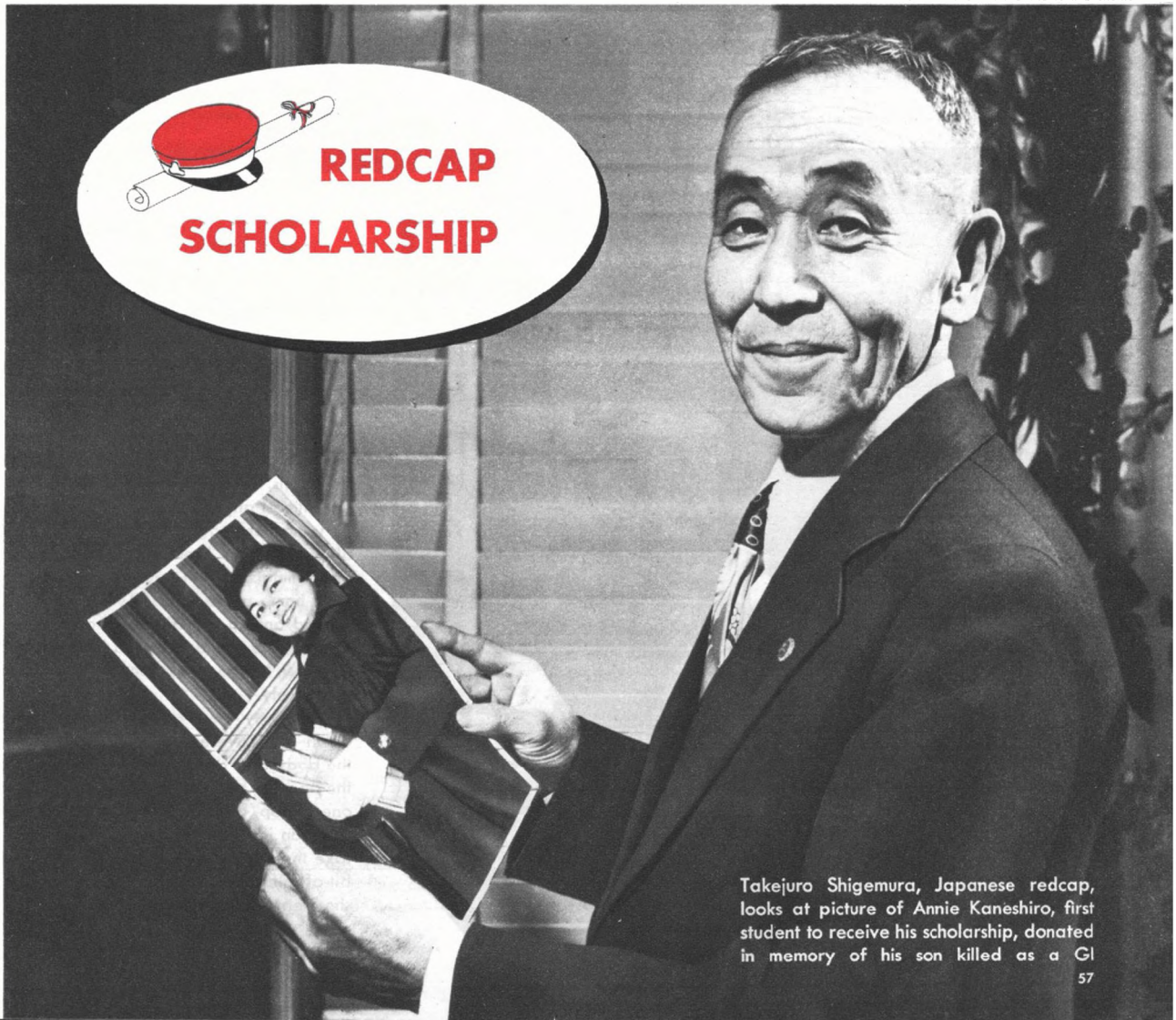
PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK WARRING FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

THERE'S NOTHING VERY UNUSUAL about donating a scholarship, but there's lots unusual about Takejuro Shigemura, a Japanese-born redcap in Seattle, Wash., and his gift to Carleton College, Northfield, Minn. Digging deep into his life's savings, made during 40 years of carrying bags in Seattle's Union Station, Shigemura has donated $1,000 to the college as a memorial to his only son, Frank, who was killed in action while fighting for Uncle Sam in Europe. Shigemura says he has donated the money as a scholarship because he "wanted to do something for the living, as Frank did." The first grant of $200 was won by Annie Kaneshiro, of Hawaii, a senior at Carleton. Shigemura's son had been a student there, before he went into the Army.

Shigemura's story of sacrifice begins in 1942, when his son was moved from the West Coast because he was a Japanese-American. Accepted at Carleton, Frank was a good student and well liked by students and faculty. First rejected for officers' training because of his nationality, Frank was later drafted and sent overseas, fought in France and Italy, and was killed in 1944. Two years later Carleton College asked Shigemura for Frank's picture to be published in a booklet in memory of students killed in the war. The porter and his wife sent the pictures and an unasked-for donation of $100. Next Shigemura heard of a new building going up at the school, dedicated to the war dead. He dug again into his bank account and came up with $1,900, saying that he felt "honored" and grateful for the friendliness Frank had found there. Then came the scholarship.

At the University of Washington, near their home, Shigemura and his wife are making another kind of gift. They have instituted a $50 annual award for the senior who contributes most during the year in the field of international understanding. Shigemura was born in Yamaguchi, Japan, and his wife was born in Seattle. They have no other children.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK MANNING FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE



Takejuro Shigemura, Japanese redcap, looks at picture of Annie Kaneshiro, first student to receive his scholarship, donated in memory of his son killed as a GI

JEWELRY FROM JUNK

AARON ROSEMAN, a tool inspector for the aircraft engine division of the Ford Motor Company in Chicago, has a hobby and sideline business of making attractive costume jewelry from junk that you throw away. Roseman takes pieces of wire he finds in the street, leather shoelaces, the point from an abandoned car distributor, stones he picks up at the beach, and fashions them into beautiful pins, cuff links, necklaces, earrings, and pendants.

He started 3 years ago, when he saw some costume jewelry in a store and wondered if he couldn't make some pieces, himself, out of odds and ends. He is entirely self-taught, and his workmanship and imagination have been such that his pieces have been exhibited in jewelry shows in Chicago, Detroit, Wichita, Kans., and New York. In addition to his work as a tool inspector and a maker of jewelry, Roseman is a talented designer of modern furniture and is also a fine-arts painter.

The attractive pendant which Aaron Roseman, of Chicago, Ill., holds in his hand was made from the junk shown above

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARCHIE LIEBERMAN FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

FAVORS FROM WASTE

Maker of favors from waste, Mrs. Josephine Revel, of Indianapolis, Ind., is shown here with some of her finished products. Some of her material is shown in inset

WHEN HER DAUGHTER was growing up and giving parties for her friends, Mrs. Josephine Revel, of Indianapolis, Ind., started making favors from such waste products as scraps of wallpaper, empty beer cans, old corks, straws, pipe cleaners, and almost anything else you can think of. By using her imagination, Mrs. Revel was able to turn this "junk" into attractive dolls and animals, and the guests proudly took them home as souvenirs. As the word got around among her friends about her talent, she was urged to start a business, and today, in her home workshop, she is doing very nicely.

An empty beer can, when weighted down and covered with paper, becomes the body of a man. A small cork stuck into the opening becomes a neck, and a larger one on top, a head. Almost anything suggests an idea to Mrs. Revel. For instance, take the wishbone from a chicken. With a bit of gilt paint, some paper, and a head, she creates a bowlegged cowboy.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOWER STUDIOS FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

Small wonder Tom Trotter, Boston University student, does a double take as he sees coeds Mary Jane and Nancy Kilborn. Business Administration and Liberal Arts Building is in the background

BOSTON'S DAILY DOUBLE

THERE WAS DOUBLE TROUBLE in picking this month's coed. We couldn't decide between Nancy and Mary Jane Kilborn, for the understandable reason that they are twins. Furthermore, even if we had chosen one, we wouldn't have known for sure which twin we had. So THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE picked 'em both.

The pretty two-of-a-kind juniors at Boston University look alike, dress alike, and live alike. They are practically a corporate enterprise all by themselves. They earn all their tuition by hostessing during the summer months on the Northeast Airlines' New York-to-Boston run. They thoroughly confuse crews and passengers by flying separate schedules. During the school year Mary Jane and Nancy earn their clothes and spending money working for a catering service for four hours a day after classes. They set up tables for all types of banquets, wait on tables, and clean up.

They stretch their hard-earned income by haunting sales for doubles and by helping their mother make clothes. The Kilborns work particularly hard on their Spanish at Boston University, with an eye on full-time jobs as airline hostesses for Pan American Airways. They have no other career interests except marriage. Both are top students and commute daily to their home in Wollaston, Mass., a suburb of Boston.

About the only physical difference between the two is that Mary Jane has a mole—is nicknamed Moldy Midge—and this helps (but not very much) friends to tell her from Nancy. The twins were born 20 years ago in Preston Oriente, Cuba, where their father was overseer of a sugar-cane plantation. They have a brother, Jim, also a student at Boston University.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK WARRING FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

For pay, Charles Kent, Miami plumber, fixes a sink

HIGH-WIRE PLUMBER

WHEN YOUNG, many of us dream and hope for an exciting, glamorous career, and then are sidetracked by necessity or some other reason into more prosaic lines. Charles Kent, of Miami, Fla., has been different from most of us. Although he took up a "practical" career, he still keeps his boyhood dream alive. Charley is a master plumber by trade, but he also follows his boyhood yen to be a high-wire artist. At least once a week, in his free time, Charley puts on a one-man circus for neighborhood kids, school kids, and underprivileged children. At a birthday party he'll inch out on the high wire, balancing a glass of water on his head, and never spill a drop. He rides a unicycle on the wire, or rolls a hoop. He can also do turns on the trapeze. Charley accepts no money.

It all began when Charley was 12 and saw his first circus. He was fascinated by the aerialists and finally persuaded his mother to buy him a trapeze. After 5 years of intensive training he offered his services to Ringling Bros. Circus, but was turned down as not quite ready. Charley then took up the high wire and practiced some more. But he also had to eat, and so he took up plumbing. The result was that by the time he became so good on the high wire that Ringling Bros. and other circuses were bidding for him, he was on his way to becoming a master plumber. He turned down the circus jobs because his wife did not like the idea of being constantly on the road. Charley compromised by staying home and plumbing, but also putting on shows for the kids.

For fun, Kent entertains kids by walking the high wire with a glass of water on his head

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CARROLL SEGHERS FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

OLD WOODS

Dr. C. Audrey Richards, specialist to sick woods, with samples of some odd woods she is called upon to test

ARE YOUR WOODEN WINDOW frames rotting prematurely? The cellar beams weakening? Porch furniture falling apart? If so, C. Audrey Richards is the doctor for you. Dr. Richards, of Madison, Wis., is an outstanding authority for the U.S. Division of Forest Pathology in diagnosing sick woods. Folks send samples to her from all over this country, as well as from such faraway places as Burma, South America, and Europe. Dr. Richards' job is to determine the cause of deterioration, prescribe treatments, preventives, and cures.

Some of the samples sent to her are small, like the tiny mushroom sent by a householder who wondered if the fungus, a growth on his roof, would aggravate his hay fever. Other samples included whole telephone poles shipped by a company that wanted to know why the cores were rotting. Other "patients" have been outdoor theater seats, baseball bats, all types of flooring and furniture. Wood experts from Siam to Sweden constantly file in and out of her office asking questions and exchanging information. Sometimes, in legal cases involving woods, Dr. Richards is called upon to determine when and how the "patient" got the disease.

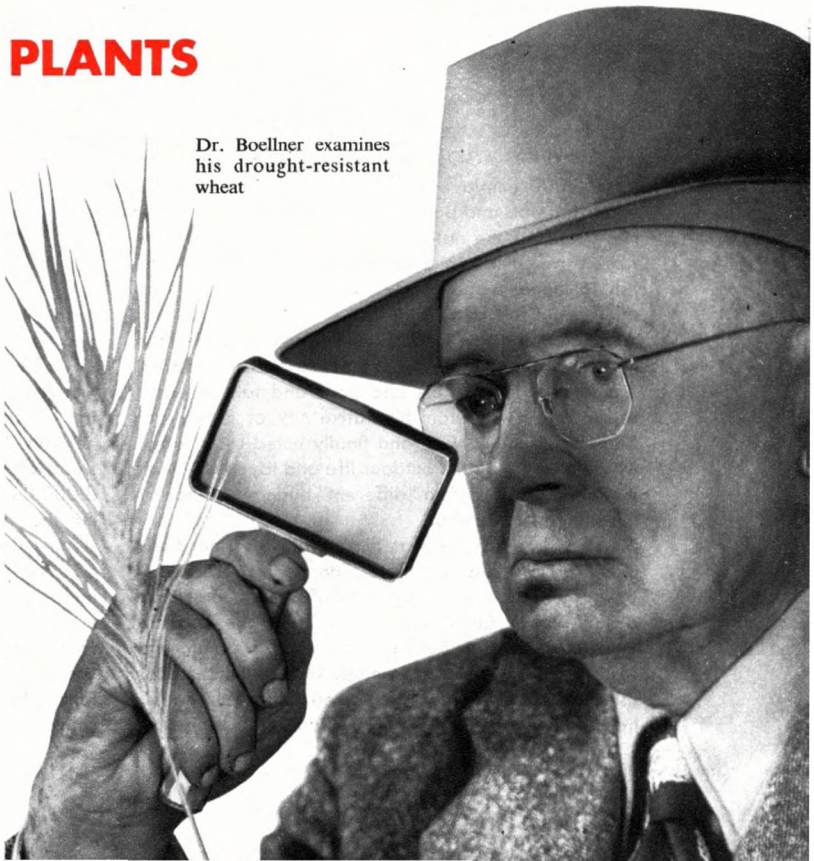
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARCHIE LIEBERMAN FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

NEW PLANTS

WHEN HE WAS A KID, Louis B. Boellner, of Roswell, N. Mex., was fond of black walnuts. Only trouble was they were so hard to shell that often as not he just about pulverized the meats. Most of us would have switched to peanuts, but not Boellner. He decided to develop a hybrid walnut, and succeeded after 24 years. This modern Luther Burbank fooled the experts who said it was impossible. Not only did he turn up with a thin-shelled, easy-to-crack walnut, but he also found a fascinating hobby.

An optometrist by profession, Boellner is a self-taught hybridizer. Plant men come from all over to camp on his doorstep and see what he's going to do next. Boellner has developed, among other things, a drought-and-disease-resistant wheat and alfalfa, a hybrid popcorn with kernels that pop to an inch in diameter, oversized oats, corn that grows as well in arid regions as in corn states, heavy-bearing pecan trees, and a fragrant, salmon-pink dahlia. He also has new varieties of potatoes, tomatoes, and peaches. Now 76, Boellner, a native of Kansas, credits his accomplishments to his wife, who has helped him in his hobby.

PHOTOGRAPHED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE



Dr. Boellner examines his drought-resistant wheat

FROZEN TROUT FOR EVERYBODY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM KING FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

Paul Christman, former pot-and-pan manufacturer, is shown about to bag one of his rainbow trout in a net, and (right) in his frozen compartment surrounded by some of his packaged catch

A FEW YEARS AGO, Paul Christman was the boss of some 2,000 employees in Pittsburgh, Pa., who made enameled pots and pans. Today, he lives outside Reno, Nev., and, as the nation's largest marketer of fresh-frozen trout, is doing a lot toward bringing this tasty fish to the average family dinner table. What was responsible for the switch?

Well, back in 1945 Christman's doctor told him that he was suffering from a case of nerves. He ordered him to give up his pots and pans and take it easy, preferably away from his native city of Pittsburgh. Christman headed west and finally holed up in Reno, where he enjoyed the outdoor life and toyed idly with the idea of going into a "different" business. He hadn't the slightest idea what.

Then, one day, he was dining with a former business associate in a Reno hotel. The man ordered rainbow trout, and was told it was out of season. Something clicked inside Christman's brain. Why not provide fresh trout the year round by freezing? Christman, who wasn't even an amateur angler, knew nothing about fish. But he had an idea. He talked to trout breeders; he asked questions of Fish and Game authorities. He read everything he could get his hands on about fish and freezing.

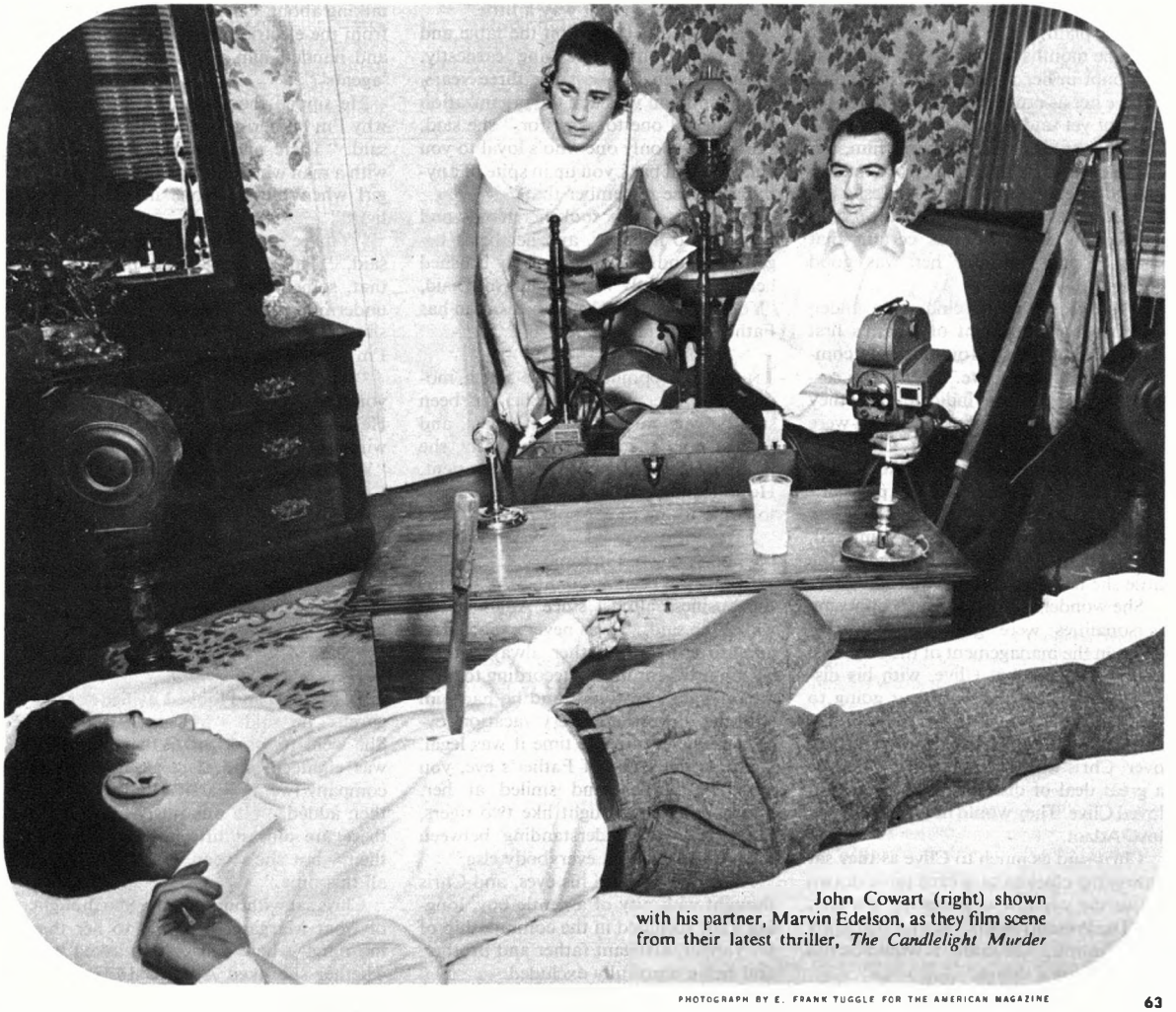
In 1947 he began breeding trout in ponds, and the first year raised 500,000. He introduced a new diet, a trade secret except that it contains Vitamin B-12, which, he says, brings trout to market size in 9 months instead of the usual year or more. Now he raises over 3,000,000 annually. He conceived the idea of freezing the trout and selling them to grocery stores and super-markets. Because of his mass-production methods, his trout are within the price range of the average housewife. Christman's trout are now found in many markets west of the Mississippi and soon will be sold from coast to coast. His methods have been so successful that they have been adopted by a number of long-established trout breeders. Christman is 49, married, and his hobbies are golf and horseback riding.

HOMEMADE WHODUNITS

HOMEMADE MOVIE-MAKING has become a popular pastime with a lot of Americans, but John Cowart, a young amateur movie "mogul" of Atlanta, Ga., has demonstrated that the way to get full enjoyment is to have a regular script, preferably written by an amateur, then have friends and neighbors play all the parts. Cowart, who is 20, has been shooting film since he was 7, and never without a definite story line in mind. He specializes in whodunits.

Last spring he entered a film in the American Cinematographer's 1951 International Amateur Film Competition and was awarded an "Oscar." Recently, teaming up with a lifelong playmate and friend, Marvin Edelson, of LaGrange, Ga., plus a borrowed $2,000 for equipment, Cowart filmed a mystery called *The Candlelight Murder,* which lasts 27 minutes and which the young film magnates hope will find its way into television. Consequently, Cowart has decided to make his youthful hobby into his career. Cowart's latest movie was a week in the making and amateurs played the various roles. Two of the cast were real-estate brokers, another a secretary. The script was written by Gy Waldron, a University of Georgia freshman.

You don't have to spend $2,000 to make home movies. It can be done at modest expense if you don't insist on getting a professional result. When Cowart won his "Oscar" he was using a rented camera and sound equipment. He finished high school last fall, and instead of going to college has formed John Cowart Productions, taking as his partner Edelson, who is a student at Auburn University. They hope to put out a number of short whodunits, using accepted movie techniques, plus some of their own. They are probably the youngest producing team in the country. Edelson handles the sound; Cowart is director-photographer.



John Cowart (right) shown with his partner, Marvin Edelson, as they film scene from their latest thriller, *The Candlelight Murder*

PHOTOGRAPH BY E. FRANK TUGGLE FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

A SHORT NOVEL

The Charmer

(*Continued from page* 52)

perhaps you can help me to stop it." He had given her his quick, sweet smile. "You're the first woman I've felt might be able to do it, Chris, if you're willing to go along with me for a while."

"I'm willing, Clive," she had said.

He had taken her hand and looked at her gravely with his gentle blue eyes. "Any time it begins to look like a bad bargain to you, Chris, pull out. I don't want you to get hurt."

She had been deeply moved. In any other circumstances she would have been wary of attempting to succeed Thea, the wife he had loved so much and lost. But she felt that Clive needed her and that he would be wholly honest with her. If he could not love her completely he would make it plain.

In the months that followed, there was no doubt in her mind that he had come to love her as much as she loved him. He had not yet said it in so many words, he had not yet asked her to marry him, but she knew he would. He was not a man to plunge ahead impulsively, and she respected him for this. She knew he would speak only when he was certain that what he had to offer her was good enough.

As she slowly fried a chicken to golden crispness, on the night of Adam's first day at the office, she found herself comparing him with Clive. There was certainly very little to indicate that they were brothers. Even physically they were unlike; both were tall, but Clive was built broad and solid, while Adam was rangy; Clive was blue-eyed and pleasant-faced, Adam dark and angry-looking. Clive was easygoing and good-humored, while Adam, if Chris could judge by the little she had seen of him, was neither.

She wondered how two such opposing personalities were going to come to terms in the management of the business, and she hoped that Clive, with his distaste for friction, was not just going to give in to his brother to avoid trouble. If he did, if Adam was permitted to take over, Chris was sure that there would be a great deal of dissatisfaction. The staff loved Clive. They would not, she thought, love Adam. . . .

Chris said as much to Clive as they sat eating the chicken at a card table drawn up to the window overlooking the city.

"The Prescott Agency is a pretty happy organization," she said. "It would be too bad to change things."

Clive smiled at her across the table, and she thought, as she had thought so often during these past months, that this was how it would be if they were married. She would cook for him and he would smile at her, and they would talk through the long evenings, secure and happy and peaceful. She would be loved, she would belong to someone again, for the first time in so many years.

"I like your loyalty," he said. "I may need it. Adam, I'm afraid, does want to change things. He's young and intense and a little angry at the world. He may be hard to handle."

"Angry at the world? Why?"

Clive shrugged. "Oh, I don't know. He's always been that way a little."

She leaned her arms on the table and bent toward him, speaking earnestly. "You've been the boss for three years, Clive, and you've made the organization a wonderful one to work for," she said. "I'm not the only one who's loyal to you and who will back you up in spite of anything. Please remember that."

"Chris, I—" He took her hands and looked into her eyes, and her heart began to pound. But then he only brushed her fingers lightly with his lips and said, "You see, the difficulty is that Adam has Father's backing."

In her disappointment she felt a momentary anger with him. She had been sure he was going to speak at last, and he had not. Then, almost instantly, she thought, "I've no right to be impatient. He still isn't certain of himself; he wants to come to me as a whole man."

"What do you mean, your father's backing?" she asked him.

"Father's been grooming Adam for the business almost since Adam could walk," he said. "I was never expected to go into it at all; Father always said I wasn't fitted for it. But according to him, Adam was born for it, and he had him working down there every vacation, every summer, from the time it was legal. Adam is the apple of Father's eye, you see." He turned and smiled at her. "They've always fought like two tigers, but there's an understanding between them that shuts out everybody else."

A shadow crossed his eyes, and Chris thought with pity of a gentle boy, longing to be included in the comradeship of his violent, arrogant father and brother, and being scornfully excluded.

"While Adam was in school," he went on, "I worked for another direct-mail agency, hoping that eventually Father would realize I was really interested in the business and would ask me to come in with him. But it was only when he became ill and couldn't carry on, himself, that he reluctantly let me take over. You can imagine, now that Adam's back, which one of us Father will stand behind if there's any disagreement between us."

Chris was indignant. "But doesn't he know what a wonderful job you've done in these three years? Doesn't he realize, now, that you are fitted for the business?" She pounded her small fist softly on the table. "Oh, if only he could come down to the place and see how things are, how happy everybody is!"

Clive smiled. "He doesn't have to come down. He sits in his wheel chair, and knows exactly what's going on in the plant."

"How?" Chris asked impatiently. "Is he psychic?"

Clive shook his head, laughing a little. "He has his—shall we say, agents?"

"What do you mean? What are you talking about, Clive?" She poured coffee from the electric percolator on the table and handed him a cup. "Who are his 'agents'?"

He sipped the coffee. "I don't know why I'm bothering you with all this," he said. "There must be something wrong with a man who talks business to a pretty girl when they're alone in the candlelight."

"You're not talking business," she said. "This is something bigger than that, something that's hurting you and undermining you, and it's right that you should tell me—that I should share it. I'm your friend, Clive," she said.

"Yes." He spoke softly. "Yes, I know you are. And more than that, I hope." He got up from the table and stood at the window, looking down into the street. "What do you want me to tell you, Chris?"

"Who, in the office, spies on you and then reports to your father?"

"'Spies' is a harsh word," he said. "I'm sure she doesn't feel she's doing that. I'm sure she thinks she's just being loyal to Father."

"She? Who?"

He turned and looked at her. "Margaret," he said. "Margaret Warriner. She went to work for Father when she was eighteen, and she's been with the company twenty years." He paused, and then added, "He was thirty-two then—there are almost fifteen years between them—but she's been in love with him all this time."

Chris sat without moving. She thought of what Margaret had said to her that morning, when Chris had asked her whether she liked Adam. "He reminds

me of his father," she had said, in a voice filled with tenderness.

Margaret, she thought, in love with Mr. Prescott, spying for him; ready now, of course, to side with Adam against Clive. Margaret Warriner, whom Chris had liked so much, admired so much, stooping to this kind of ugliness.

Stooping to other things, too, perhaps . . .

She would not have asked the question in her mind, but Clive answered it.

"I'm not implying that there was ever anything wrong between them," he said. "Father is an upright man. I don't think a back-street love affair would be his dish of tea."

She looked at him, standing with his head bent toward her a little; such a big, powerful man, and yet so gentle, so unwilling to speak of anyone in anger or disparagement. She thought, "He's alone, terribly alone, and he needs me."

"We'll work it out, Clive," she said. She got up from the table and stood near him. "Don't worry. We'll work it out."

His eyes traveled over her face for a moment. Then he took her by the shoulders and drew her to him. "Chris," he whispered. His kiss was long and urgent, and she responded gratefully. "Chris, I love you." . . .

LATER they sat on cushions on the floor, before Chris's little imitation fireplace, watching the make-believe flames, and they talked of nothing now except each other.

"You have such a clean kind of beauty," he said. "Like the sun and the wind. I can't imagine that it will ever fade or blur." He kissed her closed eyelids. "You're good for me, Chris."

"I want to be good for you," she said. "I want to be everything you need."

"Sweet! There was never anyone like you."

Not Thea? she thought. But she felt no jealousy of the woman who had been his wife. Clive had told her he loved her. He had waited until he was sure, and now she was content. She would never have mentioned Thea at all, but Clive spoke of her.

"Sometimes I think a man's life is lived in chapters," he said. "And if he wants to be happy he must know when each chapter has ended, and accept it, and keep going on to the next chapter and the next." His arm tightened around her waist. "It's because I was able to recognize that my chapter with Thea was over that I could go on to you, my darling, and find happiness again."

She could not resist asking him, then, "What was she like, Clive?"

"Beautiful," he said instantly. "Fragile, so that you were afraid she might break if you didn't hold her carefully. Charming—the kind of charm that radiated the minute she entered a room, and made everyone notice her." He chuckled softly. "There were a great many hearts broken when she married me."

"He is over her," Chris thought. "He can talk of her now and remember without pain or yearning."

"I haven't broken any hearts," she said, tilting her head up at him and smiling. "Is that awfully dull of me?"

He laughed. "If it is, we'll be dull together," he said. "Neither have I." Then he pressed his cheek against hers and said softly, "Don't ever wish you were like anyone else, or try to be anything you're not. I love you just as you are."

He left a little while later. She was aware that he had not yet made any definite mention of marriage, but she knew he would come to that, too, in time. Meanwhile, she had the knowledge of his love to warm her. . . .

As though it were a symbol of the changes that were taking place in the Prescott Agency, the first thing Chris heard when she entered the shop on her way upstairs a week or so later was the muffled sound of weeping.

She paused, trying to locate it over the noise of the machines, and finally realized that it came from under the stairs. There she found a girl no more than eighteen, dark and pretty in an undistinguished way, her too-thin shoulders shaking and her eyes red-rimmed. Chris recognized her as a girl named Dora, one of the girls who folded letters.

"What's the matter?" Chris asked her. "Is there anything I can do?"

The girl made an effort to compose herself. She took a brightly printed handkerchief from the pocket of her smock and wiped her eyes, sniffling like a child. "You know the production boss?" she asked faintly. "Mr. Sipprell?"

"Yes, I know him."

The girl hesitated, and then, her timidity evidently overridden by her emotion, she seized Chris's hand. "Please, maybe you could speak to him. He—he fired Tony, my boy-friend. Tony helps Pop on the typesetting machine, and we were figuring to get married soon." Her words tumbled over one another, and her fingers on Chris's wrist tightened until they hurt. "Tony didn't do anything wrong, miss. He never drinks, except maybe a beer sometimes. But there was a mailing supposed to be printed last week and it never was, and Mr. Sipprell said Tony was drunk and forgot it." She shook her head rapidly. "Tony never heard about that mailing. He wasn't even on the machine when it was supposed to happen. And so maybe if you'd speak to Mr. Sipprell—I mean, he won't believe Tony or anybody else in the shop. They're just trying to protect him, he says."

ORDINARILY, Chris would not have attempted to interfere in any such matters. She would not have considered it her place. But since Adam's arrival, since the night Clive had told her his problems and declared his love, everything had changed. The once-peaceful organization seethed with unrest and uncertainty. Already, in this short time, factions had sprung up. Chris had thought that everyone, except Margaret, of course, would stand by Clive, but she was wrong. The whole art department, for instance, was delighted with Adam because he had encouraged the idea of an impressionistic design for a booklet on paint. And several of those who disliked Frank Sipprell and considered him Clive's protégé were in sympathy with Adam's rumored desire to get rid of him.

Chris felt that she had to help Clive in any way she could, and this matter of the boy, Tony, might be important to him. She knew how the people in the shop talked. If it got around that Frank Sipprell had unjustly discharged one of the employees this might be used as another way to strike at Clive. Chris held no brief for Frank, herself—she had thought long ago that Clive should get rid of him—but for Clive's sake she did not want to see him made an issue between factions of the company.

"Where's Tony now?" she asked the girl.

"He's still here, Miss French. He's finishing out the day. You wait, and I'll bring him."

She darted off. Chris, waiting in the dark little alcove under the stairs, had no clear idea of what she was going to do. But in her years alone she had learned to improve as the occasion arose.

The girl came back in a moment, followed by a young, slim, swarthy boy. "This is Tony, Miss French," she said.

The boy said nothing. He seemed a bit sullen.

"What happened about that mailing, Tony?" Chris asked him. "Do you know anything about it?"

He looked at her without friendliness, but he spoke freely enough. "No," he said. "I wasn't even on the machine then. The boss, Mr. Sipprell, he came down and asked me if I was, and I said, no, and he said I was lying—a drunken liar, he says. He told me I was on, all right, and that's why the mailing didn't go out, because I was too drunk. 'Ask Pop,' I told him, but he said he didn't need to ask Pop, because he'd seen me himself. But he didn't, because I wasn't on." His eyes met hers, and she saw that the sullenness was only a cover-up for fright.

"All right," Chris said. "I think you're telling the truth. If you are, nothing's going to happen to you. Now, where is 'Pop'?" . . .

Pop, who was at work on his typesetting machine, was a little white-haired man in a striped engineer's cap. He told her at once that Tony had had nothing to do with any slip-up in printing, but it was a good while before she could get anything else out of him. As he moved his crooked old fingers almost faster than Chris could follow, the machine clattered rhythmically above her voice, and he pretended not to hear her questions.

"Okay," he said finally. "Okay." He peered at her with small, bright blue eyes. "The copy for that mailing never came down into the shop at all until two days ago, but I ain't gonna argue. I ain't gonna insist I was the only one operating the machine at the time this thing was supposed to happen. I told Mr. Sipprell once. I told him Tony was in the clear. 'If it wasn't Tony,' he says, 'then it musta been you.' " The old man sighed. "Well, I ain't gonna fight with City Hall. Tony's young yet, without responsibilities, and he can get another job easy. But I been here a long time, almost forty years. It would be tough to have to go." He turned back to his machine. "I never said none of this. Anybody asks me, I never said it."

CHRIS left him and went slowly upstairs to her office. She could not confront Frank Sipprell and ask him for an explanation; she had no such authority. Clive was the one to see now. If they could work out some way of dismissing Frank that would not seem a capitulation to Adam.

But Clive was not in his office. She knocked on his door and heard what she thought was his voice say, "Come in." But it was not Clive who sat at his desk. It was Adam.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I was looking for Clive." She began to close the door again, but he said, "Come in, Miss French. I'd like to talk to you."

She had seen him only in passing since the first day. Now she slipped just inside the door and stood with her hands in the wide pockets of her flannel skirt, looking at him. She wore a dark-red sweater that flattered her olive skin, and there was a faint, becoming flush in her cheeks.

Adam stared at her, his black eyes impossible to read. "Won't you sit down, Miss French?" he asked her, in what seemed to her a slightly mocking voice.

"Thank you. I prefer to stand."

He looked amused. "You don't like me, do you, Miss French?"

"Does it matter? After all, as you pointed out, this isn't a social club."

Adam laughed. "Oh, come now, Miss French, sit down," he said. "I wasn't suggesting that we be enemies. Surely for that you have to know someone better than you know me."

"No," she said, without moving. She looked at him levelly. "I'd be an enemy of anyone who tried to undermine what Clive has done here. This was a happy place to work before you came. Clive kept it that way. But now, in just this little while, it's full of unhappiness and bitterness and hatred."

HE NO longer looked amused. "You're very direct, aren't you? That's better, anyway, than the knife-in-the-back technique." He got up from the desk to come and stand towering over her. "Listen, Miss French," he said; "I love this business. I always have. I love everything about it, from the typewriters in the shop to the drawing boards in the art-room. My father built it up from a one-room office and an old hand press. And I'm not going to see it go to pot. I'm not going to coddle a lot of incompetents, so that they can ruin the work of a lifetime."

She said, "No one man ever built a business. A business is built by the people who work for it. Some of them give loyalty and hard work in place of perfect efficiency, and sometimes that's worth more. Your brother understands that. But you're different." She lifted her chin to look up into his glowering face. "You don't care about people, do you?"

He lifted his hands, and for a wild, absurd moment, she wondered whether he was going to hit her or take her in his arms, but of course he did neither. He rested one hand against the door, preventing her escape.

"You don't know anything about me, Miss French," he said softly. "Not anything at all."

They stood facing each other silently, and her heart began a rapid pounding. "I detest this man," she said to herself. But she could not exorcise the magnetic vitality with which his presence filled the room, nor subdue her response to it. She knew, and hated herself for the knowledge, that if he had actually taken her in his arms, she would have forgotten to resist. He dropped his hand to his side, and smiled.

"I'll leave now," she said. She fumbled for the doorknob.

Before she could open the door it swung in toward her, and Clive entered the office. He stood for a moment, looking from Chris's flushed face to Adam.

"Well," Clive said, in an odd voice. "You two."

His pairing them off that way disturbed Chris. She wondered whether her thoughts about Adam showed in her face.

But the next moment Clive smiled and took her hand. "Have you been getting acquainted with Chris?" he asked Adam. "I want you to be friends." He looked fondly into Chris's eyes. "You see, she's going to be your sister-in-law."

Chris's heart leaped. She had imagined that it would be a little different, that he would ask her, when they were alone, to be his wife. But it wasn't really important. What mattered was that Clive wanted to marry her, that he had come to it at last.

She smiled back at him, forgetting Adam until she heard his voice. "Congratulations," Adam said. "You have good taste, Clive. But then you always did."

Without another word he strode out of the room, slamming the door after him.

"What was he doing here?" Clive asked Chris.

"I don't know. He was sitting at your desk when I came in."

CLIVE frowned and went hurriedly to his desk. He opened the drawers and closed them again, as though he thought Adam might have gone through them. Finally he sat down. Chris thought he would make some further mention of his indirect marriage proposal, but he only said, "Did you want to see me about something special?"

She told him about the boy, Tony, and about her interview with the old man. "I'm sure that Tony had nothing to do with the mistake," she said. "It wouldn't surprise me if Frank was responsible, himself, and is just making Tony the goat. I don't trust Frank Sipprell, Clive."

Clive rubbed his hand over his face. He looked tired, Chris thought, driven. She had never seen him that way before.

"Chris," Clive said, "you've been talking to Adam, haven't you?"

"What do you mean? About Frank?"

Clive nodded, and Chris went over and sat on the edge of his desk.

"No, Clive," she said. "You've heard me on the subject of Frank before. Twice he's lost copy of mine, and the second time he swore he never got it. He's always mixing things up and then not taking the blame. It's so easy for him to

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The Month's AMERICAN Short Novel
begins on page 48

get out of it, since he handles the production schedule and can juggle it to suit himself. I think you'd save yourself a lot of trouble if you let him go."

Clive shook his head unhappily. "I can't, Chris. Frank's been my friend for years. He needs this job—he has three children. How can I kick him out in the street?"

Chris was half exasperated, half admiring. It was true, what Miss Gregory said about Clive. He was too good. He would risk losing everything rather than let a friend down.

"I'd agree with you if Frank was worth it," she said, "but I don't think he is. Aside from his incompetence, I don't believe he's much of a character." She thought of the dapper little man with the pale gray eyes in a doughy white face. "In a pinch, I think he'd go all out for himself, not for you," she said.

"What makes you think that?" Clive asked her gently.

"I don't know. I just have that feeling about him."

Clive smiled. "Woman's intuition?" He shook his head. "No, Chris, I think you're wrong. Frank's a little careless—I know that—but he's all right. He may not look like much, but I've known him a long time, and I believe he would stand by me in a pinch. I'll tell you what—" He looked better, suddenly, more like himself. "I'm going to talk to him, see if I can straighten him out. And I'll call down to the shop right now and see that Tony is kept on. I'll say Frank discovered the mistake." He bent toward her, smiling. "All right, boss?"

She touched his cheek gently with her fingers. "I guess so," she said. "You being you, I guess that's as much as can be expected. But, oh, Clive, don't be too good, too softhearted, or you'll be torn apart in the jungle!"

"Don't worry, dear." He took her hand and pressed it to his lips. "I'll be all right. With you beside me—" He broke off, looking into her eyes, his fingers tightening around hers. "Chris, promise never to leave me," he said.

"Of course," she answered. "I'd never want to leave you."

Back in her own office, she found it difficult to settle down to the work that was piled up on her desk. She should have been at it long before. Production had been stepped up in the past few days, which meant that everyone in the organization was working harder and under greater pressure. Chris was a naturally fast worker, and always before, in the rather leisurely pace that had been characteristic of the place, she had had her copy on Margaret's desk long before it was expected.

But on two recent occasions Margaret had called her to ask if a particular piece of copy was ready. She did not want it to happen again. She preferred to have as little as possible to do with Margaret, whom she saw now as a scheming woman and a threat to Clive.

She began writing, trying to concentrate. Weaver's, a large, old-line department store in Brooklyn, and Prescott's most important client, was having a sale on fine furniture. Like most department stores Weaver's had its own special staff to handle newspaper advertising, but its direct-mail work had been done by Prescott almost since the company had started in business. Chris, writing the letter that was to go to charge customers throughout New York announcing a private advance showing of the furniture, tried to put a sense of excitement into her words describing the magnificent pieces, the amazingly low prices.

But the sense of excitement would not come. Adam Prescott stood between her and the words. Adam looking down at her with his black eyes, filling the room with the force of his presence, raising his hands toward her, as if—as if—

She got up abruptly from her desk and went to the window, looking down into the streets of lower New York, and beyond them to a piece of the East River, glimpsed between tall buildings.

What was the matter with her? She loved and was loved by the finest man she had ever met. Yet, in spite of herself, in spite of her contempt for the hardness and ruthlessness of Adam Prescott, she was violently attracted to him.

"He'll probably charm you," Clive had said, but she did not find Adam charming. He infuriated her; she despised everything he stood for. But in the moment when he had seemed about to take her in his arms, she had wanted him to do so. He was one of those men, she thought, who through physical magnetism could make women follow them, no matter what they did. She had always hated such men.

"As long as I recognize him for what he is," she thought, "he can't really trouble me."

Her telephone rang. "It's impossible, I know," Margaret said, in her amused, brittle voice, "but can you have the Weaver copy for me in an hour?"

"It will be ready," Chris said.

As she left her office, forty-five minutes later, she met Frank Sipprell coming out of Clive's office. She nodded and was about to pass him, but he blocked her way.

"Miss French," he said, keeping his voice low, "hereafter if you have any complaints about me, won't you bring them to me personally?" He smiled at her without any apparent malice. "I mean, that's the fair way, don't you think? Instead of going over my head?"

She did not know what to say. She could not imagine why Clive had brought her into his discussion with Frank at all.

"It wasn't a question of going over your head," she said. "Clive and I were just talking about the office and the shop, and your name came up."

He shook his head. "My, my," he said. "I didn't know you were such an important little girl around here. The head of the company doesn't usually discuss the business with a copy writer."

His tone, patronizing and disbelieving, irritated her. "It wasn't like that at all," she said. "Clive and I talk about all kinds of things. You see, we're going to be married."

The little man's eyebrows shot up. "Is that right? Well, well," he said, amiably enough. He put out his hand. "My best wishes."

"Thank you," she replied, taking the soft, manicured fingers. "It hasn't been announced yet, so please don't spread it around."

She left him with a sense of unease that

"Whoever finds those ten dimes can keep them!"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

she could not define. He had said nothing, really, to cause it, and yet she felt that his friendliness was not genuine, and that he would make things unpleasant for her if he could. But it was only, she decided, in her own mind. Frank Sipprell was a harmless little man and he was Clive's friend.

She went into Margaret's office with the Weaver letter. Margaret read it, nodded, and tossed it into a basket on her desk. "Sit down a minute, Chris," she said.

Chris sat, her eyes on the beautiful, lacquered face. This was Clive's enemy, she thought, his father's mistress. . . . Well, perhaps not that. Clive thought not, but Clive thought the best of everyone, always. At any rate, she was his father's spy.

"What's the matter, Chris?" Margaret asked abruptly. "What's happened?"

"What do you mean?"

Margaret smiled a little, her eyes unexpectedly soft. "Between you and me, Chris," she said.

"I don't know what you mean," Chris evaded.

"Oh, come, of course you do," Margaret said impatiently. "You and I always got along. I'd almost say we've been friends, and I've never been much for friendship with women." She drummed on the desk with her long, scarlet fingernails. "It would be my guess that Clive has been talking to you."

Chris said coolly, "I'd rather not go into personalities if you don't mind."

"As you wish," Margaret said. "I regret it, though. I like you, Chris, and I've rather cared about having you like me." As Chris rose to go, Margaret smiled and said, "You're condemning me without a hearing, you know. I'd have thought you were too fair for that."

Chris hesitated. This was the second time within a half-hour that she had been accused of being unfair, first by Frank Sipprell, now by Margaret. Reluctantly, she sat down again. "Of course I'll listen to what you have to say."

Margaret gave a soft little laugh. "You're so young," she said. "Only the young presume to sit in judgment." She swiveled her chair part way around and stared up at the sky. "It isn't always possible to fall in love with the right person. Frequently Fate doesn't arrange things so neatly. You may find that out for yourself some day, though I hope you won't."

Unbidden, Adam Prescott's dark figure arose in Chris's mind. "But I am in love with the right person," she thought. "I am in love with Clive. Adam can't spoil that. Nobody can spoil it."

She looked at Margaret's averted face, at the little lines around her eyes that showed up in the light despite the careful, concealing make-up. Why did this clever, sophisticated woman want to explain herself to Chris, reveal her personal life to someone she scarcely knew, except in a business way? Was it really because she valued Chris's good opinion? Or was it, more likely, because she knew Chris had influence with Clive, and hoped to get at him through her?

CAN YOU

MAKE A WORD LADDER?

By Jay Foight

HERE'S your chance to build a word ladder, and, what's more, you get to supply the rungs for the ladder. Listed below are definitions for 6 groups of words. In each group, your task is to identify the 3-letter word fitting the first definition, and then add a letter to the original word to form, successively, the longer words. In scoring, count one point for each 3-letter word; 2 points for each 4-letter word; 3 points for each 5-letter word; 4 points for each 6-letter word; and 5 points for each 7-letter word. A total of 50–60 points is fair; 60–70 is better than average; 80 or better is tops. Correct answers appear on page 78.

1. Consumed ___
   Rend ____
   Vital organ _____
   Sire ______
   Plume _______

2. Age ___
   Rodent _____
   Soil _____
   Menace _____
   Auditorium _____

3. Beverage ___
   To glut _____
   Vapor _____
   Small river _____
   Subdues _____

4. Vehicle ___
   Concern ____
   Sped _____
   Followed _____
   Made _____

5. Pose for portrait ___
   A locale _____
   Retinue _____
   Fit _____
   Controversy _____

6. Observe ___
   A prophet ____
   Changes course _____
   Learned _____
   To earn _____

Presently Margaret spoke again. "Clive blames me," she said, "yet he fell in love with the wrong person himself."

Chris stiffened indignantly. "What do you mean? I'm not—"

"It's no secret," Margaret said. She turned and looked at Chris. "Adam met Thea while he was at college. There was no engagement yet, but he brought her home to meet his family. Six months later she was married to Clive."

So THIS was what Margaret had been leading up to. In this subtle way she hoped to undermine Chris's faith in Clive.

"If you are suggesting," Chris said coldly, "that Clive stole his brother's girl, I don't believe it. He's too fine."

Margaret shook her head. "I'm suggesting no such thing. Thea didn't consider herself Adam's girl, I'm sure, and she fell in love with Clive and he with her. But surely it would have been a better arrangement of Fate's if Clive had not loved the girl his brother wanted." She paused for a moment, and then added, "Especially because Adam is the kind to love one woman all his life. I don't think he will ever get over Thea."

Chris felt a dull, angry pain rise in her chest. "I must be out of my mind," she thought. Because what she felt was jealousy; jealousy of Thea, not because Clive had loved her, but because Adam had.

She sat with her hands clenched in her lap and stared at Margaret. "Why are you telling me all this?" she asked.

Margaret shrugged. "I don't know, exactly. I started out to defend myself—something I'm not in the habit of doing, believe me. But I seem to have ended by warning you."

"Warning me?"

Margaret nodded. "About Adam. In case you were thinking of falling in love with him."

"With Adam?" Chris heard her own voice rising strangely, too loud. "But that's ridiculous! I'm going to marry Clive."

Margaret's eyes widened, but the next instant her face was expressionless. "How wonderful," she said, in a voice that matched her face. "I didn't know."

But it was clear she didn't think it wonderful at all. Why? Did this somehow interfere with her plans? All at once Chris's bewildered emotions fused into a single flame of anger, directed at Margaret. She leaned forward, across the desk, and spoke in a trembling voice.

"Listen," she said; "this is all a lot of —of rot. I'm not interested in your love life or Adam's or anyone else's. Neither is Clive." She took a deep breath and went on: "What we disapprove of is your being here as Mr. Prescott's spy, to ferret out any mistakes Clive may make, to discredit him so that his father's beloved Adam can get full control of the business. You're just—"

"Hold on," Margaret broke in quietly. "There's no truth in any of this. It's absurd. I'm not here as anyone's spy. I've been here nearly twenty years, since Clive and Adam were little boys in knee pants. This is my life, all there is of it." She looked at Chris. "Mr. Prescott's spy!" she repeated contemptuously. "I have never seen or spoken with Randolph Prescott outside of this building except twice since I've known him. The last time was three years ago, when he was in the hospital after his stroke!" She gave an odd little smile. "We didn't talk about Clive or Adam on either occasion."

CHRIS was bewildered by the sincerity she sensed in Margaret's words. And yet she knew how easy it was for an expert to manipulate words so that they sounded convincing. She did it herself in every piece of copy she wrote.

"If you aren't keeping Mr. Prescott informed," she said, "who is? Clive says he knows everything that's going on, as well as if he were here himself." Her voice rose in anger again: "Yet no one has told him what a happy place it's been to work in—how much Clive has done to make it that way—until Adam came and disrupted everything."

Margaret looked out of the window again, and then back at Chris. "Mr. Prescott is still the head of the company, you know. He gets the business reports, the financial statements. Presumably, he talks them over with Clive from time to time. Now that Adam's home, living in the house again, perhaps he's getting an even fuller picture."

"Are you suggesting," Chris said, "that he didn't get a full picture from Clive?"

Margaret sighed. "I'm not suggesting anything," she said in an impatient voice, as though the subject was beginning to bore her. "Clive doesn't look for trouble, or even see it, sometimes, when it's there. Adam's of a different temperament. He has probably uncovered things since he's been here that Clive never knew existed."

She paused a minute, and then went on less brusquely: "I can tell you this, Chris: Randolph Prescott would never place one son above the other out of

favoritism. He wants only what's best for the business."

"Without regard for the people involved—is that it? No matter how much Clive may be hurt?" Before Margaret could answer, she leaned forward impulsively. "But if it's true that you haven't been reporting to Mr. Prescott, that you haven't even spoken to him," she said, "then I've been mistaken, and so has Clive, about a lot of things. I'm sorry I—"

"Wait a minute," Margaret said. She smiled a little. "Don't capitulate too soon. You'll go and report this conversation to Clive, and Clive will say, 'Nonsense. Of course she talks to my father, or writes to him. Of course she's seen him more than twice. They were lovers. Didn't Adam and I come home together unexpectedly one day and find them in the library in each other's arms? How can you believe anything a woman like that tells you?' "

Chris did not speak at once. She waited until she could ask quietly, "And what Clive is going to tell me—is it true?"

"What he saw is true. His inference is not, though I can't blame him for it. Rand wasn't well that day, and I went out to the house to do some work with him. His wife was out and we were alone there. Neither of us knew until that moment that I shouldn't have gone—that he and I couldn't be alone together in an empty house." She clasped her hands on the desk, and Chris saw the long, pointed nails digging into the skin. "That was four years ago," she said. "It had never happened before, and it never happened again." She added softly, "I don't really hope to have you believe me. I don't think. I'd believe it if it were somebody else."

Chris said slowly, "I think I do believe you, Margaret. Maybe I'm a fool, but I think I know the truth when I hear it."

Margaret smiled, her eyes warm. "The truth must have a different sound to different people, then. No one else believes it—not Clive, nor Adam, nor Mrs. Prescott."

"Mrs. Prescott? Did she find out, too?"

"Unfortunately for Rand, the boys—one of them, anyway—must have told her. She forgave him, in time." Margaret turned her head away, but not before Chris saw the glint of tears. "Some kinds of forgiveness are hell-on-earth to live with."

"I should think you'd have left here," Chris said. "I don't see how you could stay after that."

"I did leave," Margaret said. "I didn't see Rand or speak to him for a year. I tried to make another life for myself. But when I heard about his illness I came back. His wife has nothing to fear any more. He can't leave the house. He can't even get from one room to another without help."

Chris stared at her. "But why did you come back? Why, if you can't even see him?"

"I don't know." Margaret shrugged, her face emotionless again. "Because there's something of him here, I guess.

Because I can't be happy anywhere else. Maybe because I hope his wife will get tired of nursing an invalid some day and let me have the job. Everybody has to hope for something, however preposterous."

Chris stood up, her hands jammed deep into the pockets of her skirt. "Margaret, I don't know what to say."

"What is there to say?" Margaret turned briskly to her desk, waving her hand in a gesture of dismissal. "We've wasted enough time chatting. There's work to do." . . .

WHEN Chris left the building that night Dora and Tony were waiting for her out in the street.

"Gee, we don't know how to thank you!" Dora kept saying. "We don't know how to thank her, do we, Tony?"

Tony, hanging back a little, grinning, shook his head. "It sure was swell of you," he said. "When I came in this morning and got the bad news I never figured I'd be feeling okay like this tonight."

"If there's ever anything we could do for you—" the girl said.

"Thanks," Chris said. "I'll remember." She walked on to the subway, feeling the glow of their happiness and appreciation. It stayed with her for some time, until she had eaten dinner in her apartment and was curled up on the sofa, comfortable in a blue flannel housecoat, sipping a second cup of coffee. Clive had asked to see her tonight, but she had said she was tired. She had to be alone to think through the things that had happened during the day, to sort them out in her mind.

She had spoken briefly to Clive about her talk with Margaret just before she left the office. "I'm sure Margaret isn't reporting to your father," Chris had said. "She told me she hasn't even spoken to him for three years, and I believe her. I think she's a pretty wonderful person, Clive."

"Of course she is," he had answered. "I've always thought so."

"I don't believe there was ever anything between her and your father, either, except one kiss."

"Didn't I tell you that?" he had said. "Didn't I tell you I thought a secret love affair was beneath my father?"

"Beneath Margaret, too," she had insisted.

"Yes. I think that's probably true."

Chris had the feeling that Clive had not said what he meant at all. Was it because he knew things were not as Chris believed, but preferred to say nothing more about it? That would be like him, she thought. If he knew Margaret had been lying, or if he thought so, it would be typical of him not to expose her.

He was not the one who had told his mother about that embrace, she thought. Not Clive. He was too sensitive, too aware of people's feelings. And yet how could it have been Adam, who was so close to his father?

"I don't know why I care," she thought. "I don't know what it has to do with me, all this past history about other people. Clive is the only one who is important to me."

This was the day Clive had asked her to marry him. That was the thing to think about. He would ask her again, of course, really ask her. But this was the day on which she had first known certainly that he wanted to marry her.

It was not to be taken lightly, she thought, this thing of stepping into the shoes of a beautiful, charming, beloved first wife. Yet she had few fears. She was sure Clive loved her and needed her, and that was enough. A man never loved any two women in the same way, and each woman, because she was different, had her own way of making the man she loved happy.

It occurred to her that she really knew nothing about Thea, except how attractive she was, how fascinating. No one had mentioned her character or her disposition. But there must have been more to Thea than looks and charm, she thought, or Clive could not have been so happy with her. And Adam.

Adam had loved her first, Margaret had said. Adam would never get over loving her. Again, as in Margaret's office that morning, Chris felt the angry pain, the absurd, inexplicable jealousy that she had tried to ignore.

"All right, face it," she said to herself now. "Why are you jealous because Adam loved and still loves that other girl? Why do you care? You love Clive. You despise Adam."

That was true, she thought. She despised everything Adam represented. And yet she knew that she was deeply, desperately infatuated with him. She pounded the soft cushion with her fist, hating herself. It was like a disease that was suddenly in her blood. She did not know how it had come there, she did not want it, but she could do nothing except fight it until she was free. She stopped pounding the pillow and lay still, and slow, difficult tears stood in her eyes. Until then, she thought, she would not be free to marry Clive. . . .

In the days that followed, Chris was surprised that Clive said so little about their future marriage. He mentioned it occasionally, as he had to Adam, as an established fact—"when we're married," or "when we have a place of our own"—but he did not discuss any plans with her or suggest a definite engagement.

Chris wondered at it, but she was relieved. She did not know what explanation she would have made for refusing to set a date. She could not have said, "I love you, but I'm infatuated with Adam, and you'll have to wait until I get over it." Yet she could not have made definite plans to marry while Adam's somber face haunted her wherever she went, while she could not pass him in the hall without a wild acceleration of her pulses.

She thought of leaving, going where she would not see Adam every day, but she knew that would not solve anything. As Clive's wife she could not expect to avoid his brother.

Besides, Clive needed her there. He was trying, against all the pressures exerted on him by Adam and those who had fallen in with Adam, to keep peace in the office. There were constant complaints, now, about the stepped-up schedule; about promotions that Clive had promised and that Adam blocked, or that Adam wanted to put through and Clive opposed; about rumored dismissals. Clive had never dismissed anyone in the time Chris had been there, but now there was talk of changes all through the organization, from Frank Sipprell down to the office boy.

Sometimes Chris could hear their voices, Clive's and Adam's, coming from one of their two offices—the voices that were so much alike and yet, when heard together, so different: Clive's quiet, gentle, Adam's vibrant and forceful, sometimes almost violent.

"I don't understand how you can have her here, see her every day, knowing—" she heard Adam say one day.

"What can I do? Father wouldn't—" was all she heard of Clive's answer.

"Don't worry about that. I'll handle Father."

"Well, if you—"

"That's right. No one's indispensable."

She missed too much of it to have any idea what they were talking about, and when Adam sent for her a few days afterward she had put it out of her mind.

He was working on some papers at his desk, frowning with concentration, and he did not look up as she entered, merely indicated a chair and continued writing for several minutes.

"He's rude and arrogant and disagreeable," she thought. "He would make any woman miserable."

But then he threw down the pencil and smiled at her, and her heart began the now-familiar wild pounding.

"Christine French," he said, without preliminary, "do you think you could handle the job of copy chief?"

She was so startled that she stood up. "What's happened to Margaret?"

"We think Margaret would be happier somewhere else," he said brusquely, not smiling now. "Well, Miss French, do you want the job?"

Chris sat down again, slowly. She remembered now the snatches of conversation she had overheard between Adam and Clive, and understood their significance. Adam objected to Margaret's presence here because of what he thought had been between her and his father. Clive had evidently agreed, provided Adam would be the one to tell Mr. Prescott.

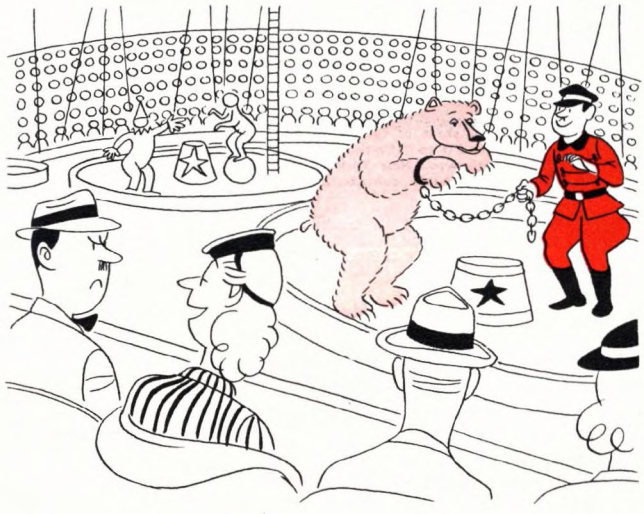
"I'd like the job, yes," she said. "That's not the point." She hesitated a moment, and then looked at him. "There are some things I must say about this, but it's difficult. I can't say them as an employee. I don't know whether I ought to say them to you at all. But I have to say them, anyway."

He looked amused. "Presumably, then, I couldn't stop you even if I wanted to, so you might as well go ahead."

She said, "I know why you want to let Margaret go. I know all about it. Clive told me some of it, and Margaret told me the rest." She waited for him to speak, but he only sat waiting, watching her with his unreadable black eyes. "I'm no child," she went on. "I know it's sometimes easy to be fooled into believing a lie. But I'd almost be willing to swear that Margaret was telling the truth."

She repeated carefully what Margaret had said to her that day in her office, trying as well as she could to use the exact words. "I'm sure it's true," she said, "but even if you don't believe it, you know she can't do any harm now, or be very happy. Her work here is all she has left. What good will it do anybody to take it away from her?"

Chris thought he was still not going to say anything. He sat watching her



"He must have gone to the same dancing school as you did, dear"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY WALTER GOLDSTEIN

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by Dick Hyman

ILLUSTRATED BY O. SOGLOW

Detroit, Mich., prohibits willfully destroying your old radio

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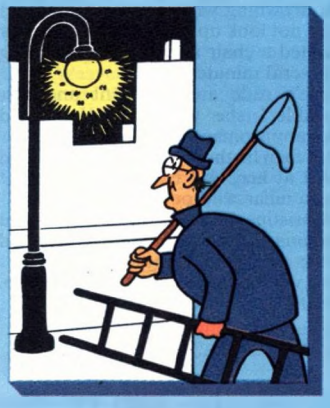

Los Angeles, Calif., forbids hunting moths under a street lamp

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for such a long time that she finally had to look away. Then she heard his voice, so quiet that it might have been Clive's.

"I was pretty young when Clive and I walked in on them that day," he said. "I thought my father was a kind of god, and I hated both of them for disillusioning me. When he became helpless I couldn't keep on hating him, but I never stopped feeling bitter about Margaret." He paused, and she turned to meet his eyes again. "You're quite a girl, Christine French," he said.

She clenched her hands in her lap. "What about Margaret?" she asked.

"My father should have told me," he said. "I'd have believed him. It was the kind of thing I wanted to believe." He laughed a little, shaking his head. "I suppose he was too proud to make explanations to his son. That would be like him." He looked out the window, and then suddenly stared at Chris again. "Yes, you're quite a girl. You'd have loved to have that job, wouldn't you?"

She realized he was telling her that Margaret would be staying on, and she felt an elation out of all proportion. She was glad about Margaret. But beyond that was an intense joy in the fact that she had been able to influence him and that he approved of her. She tried hard to fight it down.

"No job is worth somebody else's unhappiness," she said. "Nothing is. She lifted her chin and looked at him. "Not even the success of a business."

His momentary gentleness was gone. He stirred impatiently and said, "That's a sentimental generality. Would you let one incompetent fool ruin a business and throw a hundred people out of a job?"

"Of course not," she said, "but you're using an extreme example to prove your point. It's unlikely that one man could ruin a business."

"Do you think so?"

She almost answered, "Yes, I think so!" like a child in a quarrel. They were both leaning forward in their chairs, as though they were antagonists about to leap at each other's throat, and the sudden anger that pounded in her temples was as intense as all the emotions that this man roused in her. She stood up.

"I have work to do," she said. "If that's all, I'll go back to my office."

He looked up at her for a moment, drumming on his desk with a pencil. Then he smiled. "Why don't you tell Clive to bring you to the house for dinner one night?" he said. "It's time you met the family, if you're going to marry him. And Father would like you." . . .

Back at her desk again, Chris began pounding the typewriter keys savagely. She was working on another letter to Weaver's charge customers, this time announcing an advance sale of fur coats. She had beautiful color photographs of some of the coats before her, and the glistening skins, the striking styles, should have been an inspiration.

But Chris was not inspired. She could think only of Adam, of the way he had talked to her and looked at her, with arrogant indifference, with gentleness, with approval, with amusement. She could think only of how a word of his could infuriate her or delight her, a glance set her blood pounding.

And it was all so wrong, so hopeless. Clive was the man she wanted to marry, the man she loved—not with an unreasoning intensity that shook her and blinded her, but tenderly, deeply, with admiration for his goodness, his gentleness, his consideration of others. If only she could recover from the sickness that was her attraction to Adam, and marry Clive and be happy!

It was lunchtime before she knew it. She was having lunch with Clive at a hotel near the office, and he had asked her to meet him there, since he was going to be out during the morning to see a client.

Chris walked to the hotel, and had just arrived when Clive came in. He did not see her at once, and as she watched him walking toward her, swinging his big frame easily, his face bright with good

nature, she thought, "If I saw him going to meet some other girl I'd be envious. I'd think how lucky she was."

Then he saw her and smiled, quickening his stride, and she could feel the tears stinging behind her eyes, because he was hers—because she was the lucky one—and she was such a fool.

She greeted him so warmly that she could see he was pleased. He bent and kissed her, something he had never done before in a public place.

"Let's have a leisurely lunch," he said. "I feel as if I've been running at full speed for weeks."

She nodded. "We all feel like that. But I can't make it too leisurely, I'm afraid. My desk's piled high."

"What of it?" he said. "You're lunching with the boss, aren't you? If the boss says it's okay, why should you worry? You need this, too. You look tired."

This was why everyone in the organization had always loved him, she thought; because he never drove people, because human beings were more important to him than production schedules. But it was not the work that made her look tired; a fast pace never really bothered her. It was the conflict in her that was driving her, wearing her out; the conflict between her sound feeling for Clive and her irresistible attraction to Adam.

"All right, boss," she said.

"How do you feel about your career?" he asked her, his blue eyes full of fun. "Do you think you'll be willing to give it up for marriage, or will you want to go on with it?"

Before she could answer, he signaled the waiter to order lunch, and when they were alone again he began to talk of something altogether different.

For the first time since she had known Clive, Chris was annoyed with him. It was several weeks now since he had first mentioned their marriage to Adam, and he had still not suggested any plans, not even any definite engagement. Whenever the subject came up he was casual about it, or humorous, as he had been now, never pursuing it to any conclusion. Why? she thought. Was he afraid of something? She waited until he stopped talking, and then remarked coolly, "I really haven't thought about marriage versus a career, Clive. The necessity for a decision seems so far off."

He looked disturbed, but she was too angry to care. She forgot, for the moment, that she had been glad to avoid making definite marriage plans until her struggle over Adam was resolved.

"Some day," she said deliberately, "I suppose I'll have to think about it."

He looked at her searchingly across the table. "Chris, what's wrong? You sound angry."

"Angry? I was just answering your question. You asked me how I felt about going on with my work after marriage, and I answered that there didn't seem to be any reason to think about it for a long time."

"You aren't trying to tell me that you don't intend to marry me?"

"Intend? Oh, Clive." She laughed a little. "You've never asked me my intentions, or told me yours."

He looked so bewildered and distressed that she began to feel sorry for him. "But, Chris, of course I have," he said. "I've told you how much I love you, how much I need you. I never thought, since that night in your apartment, that there was any doubt. We've spoken of marriage—"

"Yes, Clive," she broke in quietly. "It's been mentioned. But a woman expects a man to ask her to marry him before he takes it for granted that she will. She expects him to ask her to set a date, to suggest that she meet his family—"

She stopped, wishing suddenly that she had not started this at all. She knew Clive loved her and wanted to marry her. She needed no romantic, formal protestations. She did not have to meet his mother and father to know that he was serious about her. Why had she even mentioned it? . . . Because Adam had, she thought. Adam had put the words in her mouth.

"I don't know what to say." Clive put both his hands over hers, his face sober. "I've been all kinds of a fool, of course. May I blame it on all the confusion of these past few weeks?" He smiled at her ruefully. "I love you so much. I wouldn't have hurt you for anything on earth, if I'd known what I was doing. And I should have known. I'm not usually such an insensitive clod."

Chris felt a rush of regret and tenderness. "No," she said. "You're everything you should be. I don't know what got into me."

THE waiter brought their lunch, and Clive reluctantly released her hand. "I'll telephone Mother as soon as we get back to the office and ask her when we can come."

She was embarrassed now. "There's no rush, Clive. It can wait."

"Of course it can't wait," he said. "It has waited too long already, through my thoughtlessness." He smiled, and the twinkle came back to his eyes. "Father will probably try to pump you about the business—"

"I'm sure I can manage that."

He nodded. "I'm sure you can. And Mother will love you," he said.

"Mother will love you." The words clattered in her brain. "Father would like you," Adam had said. . . . Adam—Adam. He was in everything she thought, everything she did. She could not get rid of him. And yet she had sat here with Clive and brought the matter of their marriage to a head.

"Maybe I ought to marry him," she thought. "Quickly, before it's too late, before I lose the little sense I have left."

He was so charming during lunch that she forgot everything but the pleasure of being with him. "I'll bring you flowers every night," he said. "I'll remember every occasion, every anniversary. That way, in time you might be able to forgive me for this clumsiness of mine."

She smiled. "You're very easy to forgive." . . .

Chris waited for Clive in her office two days later. Adam was going to drive them up to Riverdale to the Prescott home for dinner, and Clive had said he would let her know when they were ready to leave.


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Chris was very curious, and somewhat nervous, about the evening.

She wished that Adam was not going to be there. She did not think she could behave naturally with him in the room. And yet, perversely, she wanted him there, wanted to be near him.

Shortly before closing time Clive called her on the interoffice telephone. His voice sounded strained.

"Chris, I can't leave for a while," he said. "Something has come up. You and Adam will have to go ahead."

"But can't I wait, Clive?" she asked him. "I'd much rather—"

"No, no," he interrupted. "I want you to go ahead." It was the first time she had ever heard him annoyed or impatient. "I may be here for some time," he went on, more quietly, "and the family will be waiting for us. You and Adam hold the fort, and I'll take a cab and come up as soon as I can."

Adam knocked on her door five minutes later. "Ready?" he inquired, poking his dark head in and smiling at her. "Brother Clive says I'm to escort you to the family homestead. It seems he has some mysterious problem to wrestle with before he can join us."

"I hope he isn't in any kind of trouble," Chris said, as she settled herself in the leather seat of Adam's convertible. "I'd have liked to stay, but he didn't want me to."

"He shooed me out, too," Adam said. "It's probably something he'd rather we didn't know about." He sat with his hands on the wheel, not yet starting the car. "Clive can get himself awfully tangled up, saying yes to everybody."

CHRIS sat up straight, clenching her hands in the pockets of her black coat. "Don't criticize Clive for his good nature," she said. "Not to me."

Adam looked at her, and then suddenly laughed. "You're a hotheaded little thing, aren't you? Always ready to fight. Well," he said, "I don't mind a fight myself, in a good cause."

He started the car, listening with obvious pleasure to the rich purr of the engine. "How do you like that? It sounds all right, doesn't it? I tuned it up myself," he said. "I've always thought I'd have made a good mechanic if I hadn't been born to be an advertising man."

"You're good at everything, aren't you?" she asked him, and wondered as she asked it, in that tone of irony, why she always had to involve herself in some sort of emotional conflict with him.

But he did not rise to her bait. He only said, quite seriously, as they moved up the West Side Highway through the home-going traffic, "Nobody's good at everything, but it's more fun if you try to be." He jerked his head toward the Hudson, gray under the early evening sky, the Palisades brooding above it. "Look how somberly beautiful the river is to-

night. It has a dozen different moods."

"Like you," she thought. This was a new Adam, a man she did not know. "I had no idea you were a poet," she said, still with the irony in her voice.

He glanced down at her. "If you want to pick a fight," he said, "I'll start a good one: You have no right to marry Clive."

She jerked erect. "What are you talking about?"

"I happen to believe in love," he said. "You don't love Clive, and I doubt if he loves you."

She could feel her temples beginning to throb. "How can you possibly know what my feelings are?" she asked him in a shaking voice. "How can you know anything at all about what's between Clive and me?"

He said, "I can't know. I can't prove it. But I think it's true. I've watched you together; I've heard you talk. You admire each other and you feel you ought to be in love, that it would be a good solution for both of you, but you—"

"That's absurd," Chris interrupted, trying to sound calm, trying to speak with dignity. "You've made it all up in your own head."

"Maybe," he said. "Maybe I imagine it, because, to me, you and Clive are so obviously wrong for each other."

She said, before she knew the words were in her mind, "I suppose Thea was right for him," meaning to startle him or hurt him, she didn't know which.

He did not answer for some time. She glanced at him and saw that his jaw was set, his dark face still, his eyes intent on the road ahead. "Thea was right for anyone," he said finally, quietly. "But Thea was an angel."

Chris closed her eyes. "I hate Thea," she thought. . . . "Of course I can't compete with an angel," she said bitterly. "I'm only a woman."

Unexpectedly, he laughed. "Don't apologize," he said. "You're all right. I didn't mean to imply you weren't—only, not for Clive, that's all. You have spirit and intelligence and loyalty and honesty. I like you, Chris." He took one hand from the wheel and put it over hers on the seat beside him, and she jerked away as though she were burned. "What's the matter, Chris?" he asked her, quite gently. They had stopped for a red light, and he turned to peer down into her face. "Have I made you that angry? Or is it just that you hate me so much?"

She averted her face. "I don't hate you," she said in a low voice. "I've tried to, but I can't."

He did not answer her. He said nothing at all until they had reached Riverdale, on the edge of the city, and had turned into a rustic road that might have been deep in the country. Then he stopped the car and lit a cigarette and began talking without looking at her, staring straight ahead.

"Maybe I was pushing my own cause back there when I told you not to marry Clive," he said. "If I was, I didn't know it then. You can believe that or not, as you wish." He took several deep puffs of his cigarette, and she huddled into the corner of the seat, not speaking, her heart beating so violently that she could scarcely breathe. "I've loved Thea for so long that it's part of me," he said. "She was all the things a boy dreams a woman should be, and I'll never forget her." He paused, and when he went on his voice was so low she could hardly hear him. "But at this moment, Chris, I want very much to take you in my arms."

She said, "Clive—"

He turned and looked at her through the darkness. "If you tell me now that you love Clive, I won't touch you, and this will be as if it never happened."

"I don't know," she said, and the words made a little moaning sound. "I don't know."

Afterwards she could not have told which of them moved first; only that she was in his arms and his lips were on hers and it was like no kiss she had ever known.

Finally he let her go and moved behind the wheel again. "We'll be late," he said.

"Wait, Adam." She smoothed her hair back with her hands and opened the window of the car, letting the breeze cool her face, trying to collect herself. Finally she turned and looked at him. "You said before that this would be as though it never happened. I think it still should be." She lifted her chin

and spoke in a firm, quiet voice: "This attraction between us—there's nothing solid behind it, no future in it. You will never love anyone but Thea, and I—whatever you may believe, I know that Clive is right for me, and I think I can make him happy. I respect him. I love everything he stands for. I think—"

"Yet when I asked you to say you loved him," Adam broke in, "you couldn't."

"No," she said, still firmly, still looking directly into his eyes, "because, in spite of myself, in spite of everything, I wanted you to take me in your arms. But I say it now. I love Clive, not with this—this madness that makes me despise myself, but the way a woman loves the man she wants to marry." She took a deep breath, almost like a sigh. "I'm going to get over the madness, Adam. I'm going to forget what just happened. I must. There's no happiness any other way."

He started the car. "All right, Chris," he said. "I have no desire to take your happiness—I'd have nothing to offer you in return. And I certainly don't intend to interfere with anything my brother really wants. I just misunderstood, that's all."

He nosed the car between two stone pillars, up a winding driveway, and stopped before an old but well-kept Tudor house. "This is it. You know, there's something ironic in my bringing Clive's girl home like this to meet the family." He smiled at her and spoke lightly, but she felt that there was no lightness in the words at all. "When I last brought a girl home, it was for Clive, too—but I didn't know it at the time." . . .

CLIVE did not arrive in time for dinner, and to Chris it was an awkward, interminable meal without him. She did not know what he had told his parents about her. Mrs. Prescott, a small, fair-haired woman with a sweet, insipid face and a colorless personality, seemed bewildered by her, utterly unable to place her in the scheme of things.

Once or twice, in conversation, she paired Chris and Adam, and although Chris could see that she was a vague, easily confused person, it embarrassed her acutely.

"You're so dark—almost as dark as Adam," Mrs. Prescott said. "Yet they always say opposites attract."

Chris did not look at Adam, but she could have sworn that he was smiling, amused. She said, feeling both foolish and angry, "It does seem to work out that way, doesn't it? I'm so dark, as you say, and Clive is fair and blue-eyed."

"Clive?" Mrs. Prescott looked perplexed,

Mr. Prescott put down his fork with a clatter. He had scarcely spoken since he and Chris had been introduced, a few minutes after a husky houseman carried him downstairs and put him in a wheel chair at the table. But whenever Chris looked up she saw his eyes on her—Adam's eyes, black and unfathomable in a lean, vivid face under white-streaked black hair.

"Paula, my dear," he said now, his strong voice edged with irritation, "this is the young lady that Clive told us he was bringing home for dinner. In Clive's temporary absence, Adam has escorted her."

Chris gave him a grateful glance, and he looked back at her with just the suggestion of a smile. He was, she thought, a very attractive man, as vital as Adam, despite his disability. She could understand how a woman like Margaret Warriner had fallen in love with him.

"My goodness, Randolph," Mrs. Prescott said, "I know all that. You must think I'm an idiot."

Mr. Prescott did not answer. He fixed his eyes on Chris. "You write good copy, Miss French," he said. "I've read some of it."

THEY began talking about the business, Chris and Adam and Mr. Prescott, all of them eager and enthusiastic, people talking about something they loved. Once Adam and his father became involved in a fierce argument over some minor matter, and Chris watched them, thinking how much alike they were, these two violent, vibrant men, wondering how they could get along at all.

Mrs. Prescott had not joined in the conversation, had not even appeared to be listening, but all at once she said, "You're tiring yourself out, Randolph. I'll have Petersen take you up to bed."

Both men turned to her at once. "I'm not at all tired," Mr. Prescott objected, and Adam said, almost at the same instant, "Let him enjoy himself for once, can't you, Mother?"

Mrs. Prescott looked at Chris as she answered. "That's all very well, but if he tires himself—if he gets worse—I'm the one who has to nurse him."

Adam started to answer her, but Mr. Prescott put out a restraining hand. "Never mind, son, I'll go. Perhaps I am a little tired, at that." He turned his head and smiled at Chris. "Will you come up in a few minutes and talk to me for a bit, young lady?"

CAN YOU MAKE A WORD LADDER?

Answers to quiz on page 70

1. ATE
   TEAR
   HEART
   FATHER
   FEATHER

2. ERA
   HARE
   EARTH
   THREAT
   THEATER

3. TEA
   SATE
   STEAM
   STREAM
   MASTERS

4. CAR
   CARE
   RACED
   TRACED
   CREATED

5. SIT
   SITE
   SUITE
   SUITED
   DISPUTE

6. SEE
   SEER
   VEERS
   VERSED
   DESERVE

Chris went as soon as she could, glad to escape from Mrs. Prescott, from Adam's disturbing presence, from her own confusion. Mr. Prescott was not in bed, but in his wheel chair near the window.

"Sit down, my dear," he said. "Tell me some of the office news. Cooped up here like this, I get hungry for it."

"Father will try to pump you," Clive had said.

"There isn't very much I could tell you that you wouldn't know from your sons," she answered.

He watched her with the same intentness that was characteristic of Adam. "Have you found Clive a good man to work for?"

"Everyone has." She spoke fervently. "He's the kindest, most considerate man I've ever met, both as an employer and as a human being."

"And Adam?"

She sat straight in her chair, looking at him. "Adam, I'm sure, is running things exactly as you would want him to," she said.

Mr. Prescott smiled. "If I know Adam, he's running them exactly as he wants to." Then he stopped smiling, and although he could not move anything but his arms and his head, Chris got the impression that he was eagerly leaning toward her. "How's Margaret?" he asked in a low voice. "Adam told me what happened, the way you stood by her, and I thank you. How is she?"

Chris's voice matched his. "Margaret is wonderful," she said, "and beautiful, and she loves you as much as she ever did."

He nodded and smiled. Chris thought she had never seen anyone look so happy. "Thank you, my dear," he said. He was silent for several minutes. Then he turned his intent gaze on her again and said, "Wait for love. Don't settle for anything less. If you do, marriage can become a prison, shutting you out from the heaven you might have found."

"Are you warning me?" she asked.

"Perhaps."

"Against Clive?"

He smiled. "No, my dear," he said. "Against yourself."

Before they could pursue the subject any further the telephone rang. Mr. Prescott picked it up from the table beside his chair, and then handed it to Chris. "It's Clive," he said. "For you."

AS SHE took the receiver she heard a click, as though someone was listening in. Clive's voice, strained and hurried, was almost inaudible: "Chris, come down to the office right away. Don't say anything—just come. We're in a jam."

"What about Adam?"

He did not answer for a moment. Then he said, "Yes, I suppose so. I suppose he has to know sooner or later. But don't mention anything to Father."

He hung up without saying good-by, and Chris realized that he was terribly disturbed.

"Clive isn't coming. He's tied up at the office," she told Mr. Prescott. "He wants Adam to take me home."

Mrs. Prescott was waiting for her at

the foot of the stairs. "What's the matter with Clive?" she asked, grasping Chris's arm. "What's happened?"

Chris knew at once that Mrs. Prescott had been listening in on her telephone conversation. She did not even attempt to conceal the fact. Perhaps she thought it was within a wife's rights to spy on her husband.

"I don't know anything about it," Chris answered coldly.

"If something's wrong he ought to come to me," the other woman said. "I'm his mother. He knows I'll stand by him. I'm the only one in this house who will."

Because she was Clive's mother and she so obviously loved him Chris tried to speak gently to her. "I'll stand by him, Mrs. Prescott," she said. "Don't worry."

Mrs. Prescott shook her head. "No woman will stand by him," she said in a conversational tone. "Only his mother. He ought to know that by now."

Adam had come out into the hall from the living-room in time to hear this. His face clouded, and he seemed about to say something angry to his mother, but before he could speak Chris told him that Clive had sent for them, that they had to leave at once.

In the car Adam said, "You mustn't mind Mother. She's jealous of anyone Clive cares about."

"You seemed to mind. You looked furious." . . . "But not because she was belittling my loyalty," Chris thought. "Because she was belittling Thea's."

"I know," Adam said. "Sometimes I forget for a moment. She's quite ill, you see, and so we try to make allowances for her—her little vagaries. Her heart is bad, and there's no telling. It might be a long time, or very soon."

Chris could not help asking, "Does Margaret know this?"

"No," Adam said. "And don't tell her, Chris. It could be years. Father might go first. But, in any case, I don't think a woman like Margaret would want to find herself in the ugly position of waiting for someone to die."

Chris looked out at the dark road. She said, "That shows a more delicate perception of other people's feelings than I'd have thought you capable of."

He laughed a little. "I told you once before that you don't know anything at all about me."

"I know the kind of man you are," she said. "My father was the same type. Charming and magnetic, but altogether ruthless. In a different way, perhaps, but it's all the same. When another woman took his fancy, he walked out on my mother and me without a backward glance. It killed my mother, and he didn't so much as write me a post card when she died."

"I see," Adam said. He glanced at her briefly, and then stared straight ahead, watching the road. "Did Clive say why he wanted us at the office?"

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Chris said, "No." She would let Clive tell him, in his own way, that something was wrong.

They spent most of the remainder of the trip in silence. Chris thought of the strange few hours she had just been through, of those two mismatched people: the vital, helpless man and the woman who nursed him and did not let him forget it, who spied on him.

Wait for love, Mr. Prescott had told her. She had thought, for a moment, that he had been warning her against marrying Clive. But he was a very keen man. He might have seen that there was something between her and Adam; the same kind of blind, superficial attraction that had perhaps first drawn him to his wife. And he had been warning her against herself, knowing how easily she might succumb to such an attraction.

She looked out the window. They had left the highway behind and were moving swiftly through the quiet, almost deserted streets of the downtown business section. Clive was in trouble, she thought. While he had been here at the office, struggling with his problem, she had been in his brother's arms. But she would make it up to him. She would stand by him now, whatever had happened, and she would

spend the rest of her life making him happy.

"Here we are," Adam said.

The shop seemed strange to Chris, like a place she had never seen before. No one was working at the machines. Only a handful of people were gathered in the usually noisy, bustling, crowded room. They sat or stood around a table at one end—Clive, Margaret, Frank Sipprell, and Tony and his girl, Dora.

"Well, you finally got here," Clive said. He came to meet them, his face white. "It took you long enough."

"We came right away," Chris said. She put her hand on his arm, but he did not seem to notice it. He did not look at her. Whatever it was, she thought, it had completely unnerved him.

"We're in an awful jam," he said. "I've been trying to figure some way out of it, but I don't think there is any way."

Adam walked over to the group and sat on the edge of the table. Immediately he seemed to be in charge, Chris thought resentfully, and she moved nearer to Clive.

"What's it all about?" Adam asked.

Sipprell and young Tony both started to speak at once, but Adam stopped them. "You two will have your turns," he said. "I'm talking to my brother now."

Clive sat on a chair, with Chris next to him. "It's the Weaver fur-sale letter," he said. "It's gone out with a price error. One group of coats was to have been offered at $650 each. The letter offers them at $600. When Weaver's sees it, we'll be through. You know what would happen to the good will of all those charge customers if the store had to say, 'Sorry, there's been a mistake—the coats are really $50 more.' Weaver's is too high-class a place to risk it. They'll take the loss instead—fifteen or twenty thousand dollars, maybe—and hold us responsible. And I don't think they'll ever give us another job."

"We can't afford such a loss, the way business is. That account is our bread and butter," Adam said. He looked at Sipprell: "How did it happen?"

The dapper little man spoke softly: "Don't blame me. It was all okay when I checked it through—"

"It's a lie!" Tony, who had been standing in the shadows with Dora, took a step forward and looked at Adam, his young face working. "He never checked anything through—he never even had me pull a proof. He got the copy down here late, and he said it was a big rush order and I should get it out fast."

"Were you on the machine alone?" Adam asked.

"Yes. Pop was sick and I—"

"He wouldn't have been on the machine at all," Sipprell cut in, "if it weren't for Miss French. I knew weeks ago that he was an incompetent young drunkard and I fired him. But she entered a plea for him." He glanced at Chris with his pale eyes. "I can't imagine why, what she would know about him, a boy in the shop. Of course," he added, smiling, "Tony's a good-looking young fellow—"

"That's enough, Sipprell." Adam was on his feet, his voice dangerous, and Sipprell shrank back.

"Yes, after all, Frank," Clive said, "you're going too far."

Adam gave a short laugh. "That's right—speak gently to him, Clive. You might hurt his feelings," he said. He swung around to Sipprell again. "Listen, you," he said grimly. "I want you out of this place in ten minutes, and out for good. Even if the boy made a typographical error, as production manager you're responsible for those letters—you and nobody else. If you'd seen the first letter off the press, the way you should have, you would have caught the error yourself. If you didn't see it, you were inexcusably careless and remiss in your duties. Now get out."

Sipprell did not move. He looked at Clive, and Clive said, "I don't want him fired, Adam. He's been a loyal worker. Anybody can make a mistake."

"This isn't the first mistake he's made, only the worst," Adam said. "But that's just one reason for firing him. I won't have anybody working for me who shifts responsibility for his own mistakes onto other people, who'll harm others to save his own skin."

"He was overwrought," Clive said. "He didn't mean all he said."

Chris stood up, unable to keep quiet any longer. "Clive," she said, "there is such a thing as carrying forbearance too far. If this man stays, I'll have to leave."

Margaret spoke quietly from her place at the table. "Bravo!" she said. "I'll join you."

"Chris—" Clive looked shocked. "I thought I could count on you."

She said, "I thought I could count on you, Clive."

Adam told Tony he could go. "Watch your step, boy," he said. "There's going to be some real supervision around here, from now on. But forget it all tonight. Take your girl out for a good time, and turn up in the morning, ready for a new start." When they had gone he turned to Clive. "Well?" he said.

Clive sat with his head in his hands. "What difference does any of it make, anyway? If we lose the Weaver account we might as well go out of business. Whether Frank goes or stays won't matter."

"We aren't going to lose the Weaver account," Adam said. "I'll take full responsibility. Only, get rid of Sipprell."

Clive did not speak for a moment. Then he said, without looking up, "All right, Frank; you'd better go. What can I do?"

The little man's doughy face was contorted with fury. "Do? You could do plenty, but you won't. The first thing that really goes wrong, you throw me to the wolves. All right," he said; "but that cancels our bargain, doesn't it? I can throw you to the wolves, too."

"What good will that do you?" Clive asked wearily.

"It will give me satisfaction, that's all," Sipprell said. He turned and faced the others: "Clive promised to keep me on, to see that I was always taken care of. In exchange, I was to keep quiet about his wife."

"His wife? Thea?" Adam grabbed him by the collar. "What would scum like you have to do with her?"

"I knew her very well." Sipprell shook himself free. "She was crazy about my brother. She was going with him while she was in school, but he didn't have any money. Then she met you"—he glanced at Adam—"and she fell for you, too. That was the kind she was. She thought if she could marry you and be taken care of, then she'd have a sort of—well, center of operations—"

"Shut up!" Adam advanced on him with clenched fists. "Shut up, Sipprell, or I'll kill you!"

It was Margaret who spoke, from her place at the table, her voice as quiet as before: "Let him finish, Adam. It isn't up to you to defend Thea. Clive was her husband."

"Our little girl!"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY BOB KRAUS

Adam stood where he was for a moment, glaring at Sipprell. Then he dropped his hands and sat down on the edge of the table again.

"After she saw Clive," Sipprell went on, "Thea figured he'd be a better bet. She never cared about him, but she could see he'd be easier to handle than you. And he was. For the first time in his life he got something you wanted, and that was more important to him than anything. He let Thea do as she pleased. All Clive cared about was to keep it from ever coming out; to keep you and everybody else thinking that what you'd lost to him was the most wonderful woman in the world, instead of—what she was."

Sipprell stopped and looked around. "Well," he said, "I'll go now. You'll never save the business after this, anyhow, so why should I care?"

ADAM was the first to speak after Sipprell had gone. His face was drawn.

"Presumably that was all true, or my brother would have denied it," he said quietly. "Our problem now is how to save the Weaver account. I'll call them up in the morning and tell them exactly what happened, and that we'll take full responsibility."

Clive looked up for the first time. "We can't," he said. "They'll want to sell all those coats for $600, and we're in no position to make up the difference."

"We'll send out a letter to the customers," Adam said. "We'll tell them the story, and explain that we may lose our shirts if they hold Weaver's to that price, but that any woman who wants to go down there and claim one of those coats for $600 will get it, because that's the way Weaver's does business." He took out a cigarette and lit it, and Chris saw that his hand was shaking. "That kind of publicity won't do Weaver's any harm, and if we make a good job of the letter, I don't think more than a handful of the customers will insist on taking a coat at the wrong price."

"I don't know," Clive said. "It might work."

"It will work," Margaret said. "It's brilliant, Adam."

Adam said nothing. He sat staring into space. Finally he got up and walked to the door. "I'll go along. I'm a little tired," he said. "Good night."

When he had gone, Clive stood up. "I'll take you home, Chris," he said.

"Thanks, Clive, but I'm not going just yet," Chris said. "I'll leave with Margaret."

She watched him go, walking as if he were exhausted, his wide shoulders bent, and all she felt for him was pity.

"It's funny," she said, without turning around. "I thought he was so fine, so kind and good. I loved him and was going to marry him. Now that I know he is none of these things, only a weak man with a lifelong envy of his brother, I ought to feel as though the world has dropped from under my feet, but I don't."

"Of course not," Margaret said. "Because you weren't really taken in so completely. You weren't in love with him, though for some reason of your own you wanted to think you were. I'm sure you'd never have married him." She laughed a little. "Anyhow, you'd have had to drag him to the altar. He's incapable of making an important decision himself. I was surprised when he married Thea, but now I understand that he had an unusual impetus."

Chris turned around and looked at her. "Everyone seems to know so much more about me than I know myself," she said. "Everyone told me I wasn't in love with Clive—you, Adam, Mr. Prescott, too, I think." She looked across the quiet shop, at the silent, waiting machines. "I suppose I had an idea of the kind of man I wanted to be in love with, and I tried to make Clive fit the idea."

"You can't be in love with a kind of man," Margaret said. "Only with a man. And whatever kind he is, you're stuck with him."

Chris smiled at the beautiful face, softened by the shadows; smiled into the lovely, wise eyes. "Mr. Prescott asked about you," she said. "I told him you love him as much as ever, and it was as though that was all he needed to make him happy."

"Thank you, Chris," Margaret said. She took Chris's hand. "I have so much to thank you for. I wish—"

"He's a remarkable man," Chris broke in, embarrassed. "He can scarcely move, yet he's so full of life and courage and strength—I envy you the love of a man like that."

Margaret looked at her. "Do you really think you need envy me, Chris?"

"You mean—?"

BEFORE Chris could finish, the door opened and Adam stood there. "I was walking around outside," he said. "I saw Clive leave, and I thought you might need—" He caught sight of Margaret, and stopped. "Oh, that's all right, then," he said. "As long as Margaret's here."

"I'm not here." Margaret got up and went to the door, moving so quickly that she was gone before they were aware of her purpose.

Adam moved inside and shut the door. "You just had the ground cut away from under you, too," he said. "I thought you might want someone to—to talk to."

His voice was gentle, not as Clive's had been, but with a strong man's gentleness. He could be ruthless when necessary, as he had been to Sipprell, but he could be kind to someone like Tony. Chris had distrusted him because of her father, but she knew now that all the two men had in common was their magnetism.

"I'm all right," she said. "I was in love with an idea, that's all. You can't mourn an idea for long."

"No," he said. His eyes were on her face, but they were no longer impenetrable. She could read their expression now. It was the look of a man in love.

She took a step toward him. "You were right, Adam. I didn't know anything at all about you," she said, "except in my heart. But now, after tonight, I know."

"Chris—" He held out his hand to her. He smiled. "Come on," he said softly. "I'll drive you home."

THE END ★★

Nice Boys Don't

(*Continued from page* 29)

just like I thought they would. They stared at me.

"How's that, how's that?" Uncle Tony said. He sounded like a parrot.

They were all silent. Papa looked surprised, and Mamma just looked worried. Uncle Tony played with his handle-bar mustache, the way he always does when he's not sure what the score is.

"He is joking," he decided finally.

"In a pig's ear, I am," I said. "I'm getting married, all right, so you better get used to the idea."

"When did all this happen?" Papa asked me.

"Just lately," I said. "I meant to tell you sooner, but it sort of slipped my mind."

That wasn't the real reason I hadn't told them, but I figured the real reason could better wait a while.

"How old are you?" Uncle Tony asked suddenly. He knew darned well how old I was. You can always depend on him to remember a birthday, unless it's his own.

"I'm almost twenty-one," I said. "And I've got a steady job, too."

"What's your hurry?" Papa said. "You got sixty years ahead of you and only twenty behind."

Papa is a born optimist.

"What was *your* hurry?" I tossed back at him. "You weren't even twenty when you married Mamma."

"It could be the boy is right," Uncle Tony said. "What does it matter? Sooner or later he must get himself a wife." He turned to me. "You must try to be patient," he said kindly. "Give us a little time and we will find you a nice, respectable girl."

"Wait just a minute," I said. "Let's get something straight right here and now: Nobody's going to have to find me a girl. I've already got one picked out."

"You have the girl picked out!" He said it as if it was the most ridiculous thing in the world for a guy to pick his own wife. "By what authority? By what authority do you choose a wife without consulting your family?"

"Uncle, look," I said patiently. "You're still living in the Middle Ages. People don't do things that way any more. This is the twentieth century, remember? People pick their own wives now. It happens every day."

"And what about divorce! That don't happen every day, eh?"

"Is she a nice girl, Nick?" Mamma said. She tried not to make the question sound important, but I could see she was upset. I could tell, because she hadn't been saying much, and also because her brow was wrinkled the way it always gets when she's worried.

I went over to her and kissed her. "Don't worry, Ma. She's a wonderful girl. Just like the one Papa was lucky enough to marry." It sounded corny, but I meant it.

"A wonderful girl!" Uncle Tony mimicked. "How can you tell if a girl is wonderful? You've had how many in the last two years—six—eight? To a boy your age a wonderful girl means a pretty face and God knows what else!"

I'd been going with Anna eight months, and I started to get sore. "How do you know what I consider a wonderful girl?"

"Never mind. I know," he said mysteriously. "Remember, I am not twenty-one years."

"Look, all of you," I said; "will you stop worrying? I've been earning a living every since I graduated from high school. If a guy's smart enough to be made head stock clerk, he's smart enough to pick his own wife."

Uncle Tony threw up his hands. "He has a head like a stone!" he cried. He got up from the table and started pacing the floor, like he always does when he's going to make a speech.

"Well," he began, "so you have chosen a girl to be your wife without our permission, without our guidance. The wisdom of age and living—she don't count. And your *poveri parenti*, who have sacrificed their youth for you, they don't count!"

"Sure, sure," I answered. "I stabbed everybody in the back. I'm a traitor."

Uncle Tony pretended not to hear me. "No good can come of it," he continued. "But what is done is done, and we must make the best of it."

He turned to Mamma and Papa for support. Papa sighed and shrugged his shoulders. Mamma began to look worried all over again.

"It is too late to back down now, I suppose?" Uncle Tony said to me.

"You're darned right it is. As far as I'm concerned it was too late the first time I met her."

Uncle Tony ignored the beautiful sentiment. "Well, then," he continued, "there is only one thing to do. We must gather the family together—brothers, sisters, cousins, uncles, aunts—all our people. We must make plans to ask for the hand of their daughter."

I jumped up from the table. "Wait a minute," I said. "Wait a minute. Nobody's going to go asking anybody for anybody's hand. When the time comes I'll do my own asking."

For the second time in five minutes Uncle Tony threw up his hands. He turned to Papa. "You see?" he shouted triumphantly. "You see what comes of buying him books and sending him to school?"

Now Papa spoke. "What's the big fuss? We got to meet the mother and father now or late," he argued.

"Sure," I said; "you'll meet them, all right. But I'll do my own asking. After that you can all meet them."

"Impossible!" Uncle Tony shouted, his mustache shaking furiously. "How will you have the face to show yourself alone to the girl's mamma and papa? What are you, an orphan?"

"At least, an orphan don't have relatives to worry about!"

Just then brother Vince arrived with Nancy and their baby. They were lucky; they got married by themselves in Texas during the war. Every Sunday they have dinner with us, and usually I'm glad to see them. But this time I wished they'd stayed home. I'd forgotten they were coming, or I wouldn't have brought the whole subject up. Vince is the joker of the family, and I was having a tough enough time without him around.

"Well, well! How is everybody?" he asked. He handed the baby to Mamma and then went over to the refrigerator and opened it to see what he could find.

"Everybody's all right," I said, "but you won't find us in the icebox."

"Vince, stop acting like a pig," Nancy said.

"Vincenzo, what do you think of your brother, here?" Uncle Tony said.

"Not much," Vince answered without turning around.

"No, but this is a serious thing," Uncle Tony insisted. "Your brother wants to get married, and to someone we have not even seen!"

Vince turned around with a dish of olives in his hand. "Not our little wolf? Ha! She better have a job."

"I can take care of myself. Maybe I don't pull down carpenter's wages, but I don't have to wait for someone to put up a new building before I can work."

"Let's see, now; how old are you?"

"Let's not start that again," I said. "You know darned well how old I am."

"What's your girl's name?"

"Anna Verdi."

"Oh, her. Not bad-looking," he admitted.

"You can say that again," I said.

"You know her, then?" Papa asked.

"I've seen her. Her brother Gabe used to be in my class in public school."

"Is she a nice girl, at least?" Mamma asked him.

"What do you mean, 'at least'?" I said irritably. "She's a nice girl. Period."

"Verdi? I never heard of them," Uncle Tony muttered. "Are they from our province?"

"What province?" I said, about ready to explode. "They live in the United States, just like we do. That's good enough for me."

"Yeah, she's a nice enough kid, as far as that goes," Vince said. "The mother used to act kinda queer, though, when I was a kid."

For a second nobody said anything. Then everybody looked at me, and I looked at Vince. And it wasn't brotherly love I had in my eyes, either.

"Why don't you keep your big mouth shut once in a while?" I said.

"Did I say something wrong?" he asked innocently.

"Queer?" Papa said.

"That's a lie!" I shouted. "She had a nervous breakdown when her sister died a week after getting off the boat. But she's all right now."

"But, Nick, a nervous breakdown. That's serious, isn't it?" Mamma asked quietly.

"What is this nervous breakdown?" Uncle Tony said.

"*Demente*," Papa translated in a voice of doom.

"*Giusepp' e Maria!*" Uncle Tony prayed, raising his eyes toward heaven. "He is ruining himself."

"I'm telling you she's all right now!" I yelled.

Grandma came into the kitchen from the living-room. She's very old now, and a great-grandmother. She can't see or hear very well any more, so usually she just sits in her rocker all day and doesn't pay any attention to us. But we must have been making so much noise that even she could tell something was wrong.

She stood in the doorway and shaded her eyes with her hand so she could see better. "*Che cosa succede qui?*" she asked.

"Nick wants to get married," Vince explained in Italian.

"Oh, Nick wants to get married. Well, I'm in favor of it. He should have done it ten years ago. I'm not getting any younger, you know."

"No, no," Vince shouted. "Not Uncle Nick, your son. Uncle Nick is already married and has four children, remember? I mean Nick, your grandson. This one," he said, pointing to me.

Grandma looked at me. "Oh, that Nick. Well, God bless him." She turned and went back to her rocker to dream about the past.

"I'm glad we got that straight," Vince said, relieved.

"It's the first thing you got straight since you came in," I said, and walked to the door.

"Why get sore at me?" he complained. "I said she's a nice kid, didn't I? Only, if you'll take my advice—"

"You know what you can do with your advice," I said before slamming the door behind me. I made it sound as if I meant just him, but I meant all of them, and they knew it. . . .

That afternoon I went over to Anna's house, like I'd been doing for almost a year. As usual, she was sitting on the porch steps waiting for me. She had on a white cotton dress, and the sun was hitting her long, dark-brown hair so that it glowed. She had a kinda softness in her eyes could make a guy forget his troubles. It was like being out in the country.

"Hello, Hon," she said, smiling. "Where we going today?"

"We could go to Indian Lake, or take in the movie at the Strand."

"Oh."

I knew she was disappointed. What she wanted to hear was that I was going to take her home to meet the family. I'd been promising to do it for some time, and I wasn't handing her a line, either. But after what happened this morning...

We went inside, and I said hello to everybody. They were friendly, but lately in a kinda polite way. Anna went upstairs to get a hanky, and then we went to the lake.

It was a nice day, with just a few cottony clouds taking it easy in the sky. The water was calm and clear, and under the trees it was cool. The grass felt dry and good. I leaned over and kissed Anna on the nose the way she liked me to, first on one side, then the other. Gave her goose pimples, she said. But when I let my lips over hers, she held her head stiff, like I'd never kissed her before and she wasn't sure if I was leveling or not.

"Baby, look," I said; "I don't know what you're thinking, but you got to trust me."

"Did I say anything?"

"You know what I mean. When the proper time comes I'll take you over to meet the folks. You know that."

"The proper time! You've been telling me that ever since we met. You don't understand what it's like being everywhere and nowhere at the same time."

"Don't be like that, Anna," I said. "I would've taken you home a long time ago, only the family is funny about such things. We have to time it just right."

"What about *my* family?" she said. "They keep asking me what you're waiting for. You think it's easy trying to defend you all the time?"

"Now, let's not bring your family into this," I said irritably, but I guess it must've come out like I was king somebody-or-other.

"What's wrong with my family?" she asked, and I could see her eyes had that just-before-tears look. I tried to take her in my arms, but she drew away.

"Baby, honest, you're too sensitive. I didn't mean anything. I think your folks are swell, no matter what anyone—"

I stopped in the middle of the sentence wanting to kick myself hard. I could've torn my tongue out.

"Let's go home," she said.

"Anna . . ."

"I want to go home, Nick."

On the bus she didn't say much. I tried to get her to be happy, reminding her of things we'd done together, the time she taught me to dance and the time I'd tried to fix Harvey Hannegan's flat tire and a second one went flat. Things we'd laughed at. But I wasn't feeling very gay myself, so we just rode without talking.

When we got to her house we didn't sit on the porch; she said she'd better go in.

"I'll see you Tuesday night, as usual," I said, starting down the porch steps.

"Not Tuesday," she said softly.

I climbed back up the steps and looked at her, but I couldn't see her face too well because it was almost dark. "Why not?"

"Because I'll be busy."

"When won't you be busy?"

"Never."

"Now, look," I said; "you've got to have faith in me."

"Nick, if I ask you something, will you tell me the truth?"

"Sure! Go ahead."

"The real reason I've never met your folks is that they don't want you to marry a girl whose mother—"

"They just don't understand," I said, cutting her off before she could finish.

"Then it's true!"

"Anna, they just don't understand," I repeated, not knowing what else to say. "They think if a person's had a breakdown there's something bad about it, not like the other things a person can get. All I have to do is convince them."

"Convince yourself first," she said, and her tone was different than I'd ever heard it, quiet and grown-up. "It's not fun loving when you're being taken on a joy ride."

Before I could think or move she was

in the house, and we were looking at each other through the screen door. It gave me a crazy feeling, like I was being socked inside.

"Anna . . ."

"Good-by, Nick," she said. I thought she was really going to cry this time, but instead she just turned and ran upstairs, out of sight. . . .

The next day I nearly got fired I made so many mistakes. I just couldn't think straight. All I wanted was for five o'clock to roll around so I could call her. Seemed as though every minute was crawling on its belly, but finally the whistle blew and I rushed out to Wilson's Drugstore.

The call didn't do me any good. When she found out who it was, she wouldn't have anything to do with me. I called her every night that week, but I couldn't get to first base. She was very polite, but she wouldn't say much and refused to see me.

Meanwhile, I wasn't doing very well at home, either. Every night at suppertime they worked on me. Uncle Tony did most of the talking, but it wasn't hard to tell whose side Mamma and Papa were on. They just let him talk for them because they didn't want to say the things he was saying. But I could tell that both of them thought they were things that had to be said. How can you tell people they are wrong when they say nothing? It was all Uncle Tony, and fat chance I had of telling him anything.

In the first place, he would tell me, the proper way to get married was to let a guy's family find a nice girl for him. In the second place, it was up to a guy's family to do the asking. That way, if something went wrong, they could find out about it before it was too late. This part of the sermon didn't interest Mamma and Papa too much, as they're not really as old-fashioned as Uncle Tony is.

But next would come a speech on how important it is to marry into a healthy family. No names mentioned, you understand. Just talk about how a smart man will look at the girl's mother if he wants to know how the girl will turn out as a wife. Uncle Tony didn't know Anna's mother, but it seems that in his wide travels he had met a lot of men who had married girls whose mothers had had a nervous breakdown at one time or another, and the marriages all were failures. Pretty soon the men were sorry they ever got involved, and they all began chasing after other women.

Finally, Uncle Tony would forget that he didn't mean anybody in particular, and he would point his finger at me and shout in Italian that that's what happens when a boy thinks his family is not smart enough to find him a nice— At that point I would get up from the table and leave the house, staying away until they were all in bed.

THAT's the way it was all week, and by the time Sunday morning rolled around I didn't know if I was coming or going. The thing that really made me sore was that every time I tried to answer Uncle Tony and the folks, nothing came out of me. Maybe I was too mad to talk, or maybe after a week of steady pounding on the same tune I was finally starting to believe they might be right. And then I'd remember this was 1951, and no matter how good their arguments were beginning to sound, they were all wet.

I couldn't put my finger on it, but I knew sure as certain that somewhere along the line they were missing the boat. Everything they were saying made sense, and yet when I tried to put it all together, the pieces just didn't fit. It was like believing that two and two don't always make four without being able to explain it.

I don't know how it all would have ended if I hadn't decided to take a walk that Sunday morning. The sun was out and the air smelled fresh from the rain the night before. I was walking along Lake Street, not thinking about anything in particular, when a car came

"Where's the shark?"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY ERNEST MARQUEZ

down the street in my direction. When it got closer I noticed the grill was dented, and I knew the car belonged to Anna's brother, Gabe.

As the car went by I caught a glimpse of her in the back seat, and she saw me and smiled and started to wave. But then, as if she suddenly remembered something, she drew back her hand.

It all happened so fast that less than a half a minute went by from the time I recognized the car to when it was almost out of sight. But for a second I had seen Anna as clear as if she was standing next to me on the sidewalk, and seeing her for just that second made me remember what Uncle Tony and the others had almost made me forget: that no matter what happened or what anybody said, it had to be her, because I loved her and there was nothing I could do about it. The heck with what she said over the phone. I knew from the look on her face that it was still the same with her and that she'd just been waiting for me to figure out the percentages like a man.

So for the first time since the whole thing started I really knew what the score was—why they were wrong and I was right. Maybe two and two make four when you're playing with numbers, but with people it's different.

I ran almost all the way home, and when I got there I just opened the kitchen door and started talking. Vince and Nancy had arrived, and there was Mamma and Papa, and, of course, Uncle Tony.

"Hey, you got it wrong," I said.

For a minute they all stared at me as if I was crazy.

"What's that, what's that?" Uncle Tony said. "Who's all wrong?"

"All of you," I answered. "You can't choose a wife the same way you buy an animal. What do you think my girl is, anyway?"

"My dear nephew, I don't know," Uncle Tony said. "I have never met her."

"Well, whether you like it or not, you're gonna meet her, and you better not try to interfere!"

For a minute he watched me closely, but I must've looked like I really meant business, because instead of giving me an argument, he went into his act.

"*Ma certamente*," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "Whatever you say, my dear nephew. After all, this is a matter between you and your dear parents here, who have worked and sacrificed so much to raise you. I have nothing to do with it."

"Now, don't start that," I said. "All I'm saying is that when it comes to getting married, a guy's got to have something to say about—"

"After all," he went on, pretending not to hear me, "who am I? I am just a boarder here. A stranger with no family of his own, taken in and made welcome by your kind and generous parents."

"Now, cut that out," I protested. "You're changing the subject."

"But I have been a burden long enough," he continued. "The time has come for me to leave. I am only in the way here." He turned to Papa and shook his hand. "Good-by, brother," he said. Then he went over to Mamma and kissed her. "God will remember you," he said, raising his eyes to the ceiling. "Now I must go upstairs to gather up my few miserable belongings."

"Nino, sit down and drink your coffee," Mamma said.

"No, no!" Uncle Tony replied. "There is no time for coffee." And then he turned and trudged out of the kitchen and up the stairs, looking real sad and lonely. I have seen this act so often I know it by heart, but he's so good at it that even after all these years I almost feel sorry for him.

"Now see what you've done," Papa said.

"Don't worry about it," I said. "He won't leave, and you know it."

"That's not the point," Papa said. "The point is that he's your uncle, and you should show him more respect."

"That's right," Mamma echoed. "After all, that's no way to talk to your uncle."

"Go upstairs and tell him you're sorry," Papa said.

"Yeah, and hurry up about it," Vince put in.

Him I gave a dirty look. "Some other time, folks," I said. "Right now I got things on my mind."

I went over to the drugstore and called Anna's number.

"Baby, this is Nick," I said, not even making sure if it was her. "I just want you to know I love you."

There was a pause, and I thought she was going to hang up, but then she said, "I love you, too, Nick."

"I'm coming right over," I said. "Not this afternoon or tonight or next week. Now!" And then before she could answer me I hung up.

She was waiting for me on the porch when I got there, and before I could say a word she began crying, quietly, like it was a secret.

"Hey," I said, "I don't look that bad, do I? Smile for the funny man."

I sat down next to her and took her in my arms and kissed her the way she liked me to. My face got wet from her tears, but it felt wonderful.

"Listen," I told her; "you're coming home with me right now."

She didn't say anything; she just looked at me, and I could see that softness in her eyes again.

"You heard me. Now go inside and tell your folks you're having Sunday dinner at my house. And don't take all day about it, either."

She smiled through her tears, and she tried to say something, but all that came out was "Oh, Nick!" Which was all I cared to hear.

"I'll put some make-up on," she said, getting up to go to the door.

"No, no!" I thought of Uncle Tony. "No powder or lipstick. Just wash your face and start smiling." . . .

When we got there they were almost ready to eat. Nancy was setting the table, and Mamma was mixing the cheese and sauce into the macaroni.

"You better set another place," I said to Nancy. "My girl is having dinner with us."

And then I introduced them to Anna,

and I could see they thought she was just right. Beautiful, but not the kind of beautiful that causes trouble. Mamma and Anna started to shake hands, only somehow they wound up kissing. Vince came up from the cellar with a dish of apples, and I introduced him and he said sure, he remembered Anna, and he cracked one of his corny jokes.

Then Papa came in from the living-room and I introduced him, and he made a little bow and said pleased to meet you. By this time I began to think what a sap I was for not taking her home to meet the folks sooner, it was all so easy. But then I heard Uncle Tony coming downstairs.

He came across the living-room toward the kitchen, and I said to myself, uncle or no uncle, if he made a scene, there was going to be trouble.

"Uncle Tony," I said, "this is Anna, my girl."

He started to frown, but just then Anna stepped toward him. "Hello, Uncle Tony," she said. And before anybody knew what was happening, she kissed him. To this day I still can't figure it out. She didn't kiss Papa, but here she was kissing Uncle Tony, mustache and all. Maybe somehow she saw right away it was mostly Uncle Tony I was worried about, but I can't see how. In all the time I knew her I don't think I mentioned him once.

Anyway, he just stood there a couple of seconds, like he was too surprised to move or say anything. Here it comes, I thought. But next thing I knew he was grinning from ear to ear.

"What a lovely girl," he said. "What a lovely, well-mannered girl!"

I ALMOST laughed out loud. After all that talk about how it's always the young guys who fall for a pretty face, here he was doing the same. It was really funny.

"Excuse me, but *I'm* the father," Papa said, stepping forward. "Don't the father get kissed?"

We all laughed, and Mamma said what girl would want to kiss such an ugly man, but Papa got kissed just the same, and everybody looked happy.

"Welcome, my child," Uncle Tony said. "Welcome to our family."

I was glad to hear he had adopted himself back, but I could tell he was going to make a speech, so I took Anna's hand and led her into the living-room.

"Come and meet Grandma," I said.

Grandma was sitting in her rocker, as usual. When I introduced her, she looked up close into Anna's face. Then she leaned forward and kissed her. She looked around the room, like she was looking for someone.

"Where are the children?" she asked.

"What children?" I said.

"Yours. Where are they?"

"They didn't bring any children," Mamma shouted from the kitchen. "You're thinking of your son, Nick, and his wife, Mary. This is young Nick and his girl, Anna. They're not married yet."

"Oh, they're not married. Then they don't have children?"

Mamma smiled. "No," she said, "not yet."

THE END ★★

It's Fun to Be a Daly

(*Continued from page* 45)

4-piecer. But, bullheaded, he had stuck to the Stamford area to be near his family, and because it was his home town. Stamford was where he was born, bred, and buttered.

Now there wasn't much butter. He began going around to the factories in Stamford to see about a job. He had to do something. His money was running low again.

Every Monday he went to pray. One day, after the fourth Monday of prayer, he was walking down a street in Stamford. He wasn't going anywhere in particular, just wandering, groping.

He heard a knock on a window. He whirled around. It was his friend Jack Furer, in the Furer Music Shop.

"Hey, Frank," Jack called, "did you hear that they're putting Laddin's Terrace on the block next week? . . . Maybe you could pick it up at a bargain."

That was a joke! But it was also a surprise. The place had gone into bankruptcy a year before and had been padlocked ever since. It had been a notorious white elephant.

He and Jack gossiped about it. Frank Daly laughed off the suggestion that he could do anything about the Terrace. He had only a few hundred dollars to his name. Probably at least $60,000 or $70,000 would be needed. But just the same he felt a funny tingling when he thought about it.

When Frank Daly left Jack Furer he started for home, but changed his course and walked out toward the Terrace. It was a mile out, toward Greenwich. He stood and looked at it, and peeked in its windows, maybe for a couple of hours. He looked at the large sunken dance floor, and the empty bandstand above it. He kept seeing things. He saw himself on the stand leading a 10-piece band! Such bands were almost unheard of in Connecticut any more. But it was his great dream.

How could anyone make a go of this place where others had failed? His mind was in a whirl as he thought about this question all that night.

The others had failed, he concluded, because they tried to run it just as another, and bigger, roadhouse. They had been licked by the cost of keeping the place open night and day and maintaining a large corps of waiters and bartenders. They had run the place mainly for the food and bar trade.

As a musician, he took a competitive view toward bar trade. People who depend on bar trade don't like their customers to dance too much. It keeps them from their drinking. Frank Daly's great dream was to have a lovely, clean place where people would come from miles around just to dance to fine music. Thousands of people love to dance, he believed, but don't have a chance to any more—except in noisy, smoky dives that have 3-piece bands and postage-stamp-sized dance floors.

In the terrace he could see his dream coming true. But how?

CAUTIOUSLY at supper the next night he mentioned that the Terrace was going to be auctioned, and gradually unfolded his dream. Dick, then 18, was excited. "Maybe I could play drum in the band!" he exclaimed. Mr. Daly conceded that Dick had become a mighty fine drummer. Charlie, with a quiet grin, said, "I think I'm getting an A in my cooking course at high school. Maybe I could be chef." He saw that his dad looked dubious, so he added, "Heck, anybody with a little training can make sandwiches and French fries!"

Then all the other children began chiming in with suggestions on how they too could help. Mr. and Mrs. Daly began looking at each other with strange intentness. A tremendous idea was bursting upon both of them. She said, "Frank, couldn't we all pitch in and help? That might cut a lot of corners."

Suddenly Frank Daly began seeing his family, not as eight other mouths to feed, but as eight working partners. If they were all in it as a team they could prosper or fail together. It could be no worse than the present, where the other eight suffered quietly at his unemployment.

That night, after the youngsters were in bed, Frank and Stella Daly took up the idea again. They both agreed that if they had their own youngsters there they would have to run it as a clean, wholesome place! That was for sure. Mrs. Daly said, "But isn't that the kind of place Stamford needs? You know how much we've worried because there were so few nice places around where Dick and Charlie and Dot can go on their dates and have fun. And I know a lot of other mothers that are doing a lot of worrying, too!"

Mr. Daly agreed. Gradually that night a picture of a daringly different kind of roadhouse emerged from their thinking. They would throw out the bar. If grownups wanted to drink they could bring their own bottle. They would open the place only on week ends and when they had large special parties scheduled. That would cut down the risk and overhead. They would run it as a family-type place.

So Frank Daly began calling on people of substance who might conceivably have enough faith in him to loan him the money he would need in case his bid was highest. He outlined his dream. Frank Daly might be short on cash, but in his home town he was long on friends and relatives, including Stella's mother, who knew him to be a man of stability and good judgment. They agreed to loan him the necessary financial backing. So, just before the deadline, he put in his bid.

In a matter of hours he learned the sad news. His bid had been second highest. The highest bidder put down a $1,000 binder, and Frank Daly went back to walking the streets.

But only for a day. Stella came looking for him excitedly to tell him the Terrace was theirs, after all. The other man's wife, it seemed, had raised such violent objections to her husband saddling himself with a white elephant that she had persuaded him to forfeit the $1,000!

So it was that the 9 Dalys moved into the Terrace, in 1943, and began overhauling it, and running it "clean"—to try to make a go of it where others had failed. Mr. Daly's biggest thrill was assembling an 11-piece orchestra.

In a matter of months people who loved to dance began flocking in. They came by word of mouth. They couldn't come in cars because of the gas ban, so they came on foot, by bike, buggy, taxi, and tally-ho.

Soon the war, and gas rationing, ended, and the Terrace prospered. Frank Daly began thinking he was in the clear. He decided he would buy a new car and take Stella on the first real vacation of their married life.

As November, 1946, approached he excitedly made plans to give his first son, Dick, a wedding party at the Terrace when Dick married that month.

BEFORE dawn on Monday, October 26, disaster struck. It came in a call from the police. The man said: "Frank, you had better hurry down to the Terrace. It's on fire."

Frank Daly let out a bellow to wake up his family and jumped into the tux pants he had been wearing for an outside job the night before. The Dalys went tearing up over the North Street hill. All of them were praying, some aloud. The sky became more and more brilliant. As they broke over the hill they saw the whole roof of the Terrace a billow of flames. The place was gone!

In five minutes their wonderful life was wiped out. Even the instruments in the band were gone. Frank Daly stood stunned. All he could think about was his party for Dick—gone.

Someone asked him about insurance. There was little comfort there; it wasn't adequate to cover the cost of rebuilding at 1946 prices.

Frank Daly soon began learning how much the Terrace had come to mean to a lot of people. The next Saturday night nearly 100 out-of-towners who hadn't heard about the fire came. They gazed at the charred ruins. Frank Daly saw tears in some feminine eyes. A lot of people in the community, including parents and clergy, came to him and urged him to try to rebuild. They said the Terrace filled an important community need.

The problem, in 1946, was not only money, but materials, still under tight control. Contractors who had sons or daughters came to Daly and offered to hunt around for hard-to-get materials he would need, such as nails, knotty pine paneling, and top-grade maple for the dance floor. Public officials offered

to get the Terrace a high priority by classifying it a "family hardship case." Bankers volunteered loans to finance the rebuilding.

The Dalys conferred, and decided to try to save their Terrace. One day in November the family set to work pulling down the charred ruins. That alone, they figured, would save $4,000. Word went out. Soon dozens of townspeople began arriving to help. One day there were 85 people helping. The ruins came down fast.

When the rebuilding began, 7 of the Dalys worked at caulking the new cinder-block (fireproof) walls. Then they began salvaging the metal bases of the 100-odd tables by scraping and repainting. When there was nothing else to do Frank Daly and his sons Dick and Charlie manned wheelbarrows and slogged in the mud at day-labor jobs.

Within 6 months a beautiful, sparkling, new, enlarged structure, with a gracious new stone and brick façade, emerged.

Mr. Daly placed one small $15 advertisement in the *Stamford Advocate* announcing the date the Terrace would re-open. On the opening night the place was filled as never before with 500 people, all in a gala celebrating mood. During an intermission a local businessman leaped up onto the bandstand, gave an impromptu little speech, and called on all the Dalys to come up and take a bow. The applause was tremendous.

Today the Dalys are financially secure for the first time within Frank Daly's memory. He has paid off all but $5,000 of his once staggering debts. Their Terrace has become one of Stamford's most successful and widely enjoyed enterprises.

The Dalys had skimped so long on the products of American industry designed to make life more pleasant that they have enjoyed their new prosperity to the full. They have 3 television sets (one downstairs, one upstairs, and one in Dick's house), a new oil burner, a home freezer, a new piano, and 5 automobiles. Dorothy has a logical explanation for having 5 cars in one family: "We all like to go different places."

Around Easter Mr. and Mrs. Daly and five of their children hope to move out of their decrepit, 104-year-old house, whose narrow porch is almost flush on busy Summer Street opposite the Dairy Queen ice-cream store. The family has been living there for the past 17 years. Its porch has two mailboxes and two doorbells, reminders of bleaker days when they had to rent out part of the second floor as a separate apartment.

The Dalys are moving to a 60-year-old but spacious and ruggedly built house on Hubbard Avenue, high up on the edge of town. It has a broad lawn (now overgrown with brush), high shade trees, sunny rooms. It has been empty three years.

As Frank Daly sees it, his prayers have been answered. That is why he keeps his appointment at church to offer thanks every Monday afternoon.

On a recent Saturday night my wife and I drove to Stamford to see the Dalys in action at their Terrace. Acres of cars were parked around the Terrace. Uniformed policemen hired by Mr. Daly for their expertness in traffic handling helped us find a space. I saw New York and Massachusetts license plates on a few of the cars.

Inside there were 400 people, most of them couples in their early 20's and most of them happily dancing. Mrs. Daly, a round, pleasant- woman, was first to greet us. She sells the "music charge"

"The trouble with you, lady, is you got no spark"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY IRVING ROIR

tickets ($1.50 a head) and supervises the checkroom. Marie, 18, who has a gorgeous figure, lovely big brown eyes, and a sweet, easy-going disposition, was helping her mother.

Mr. Daly, in white coat and maroon bow tie, hailed us and led us to a linen-covered table. "I'm the greeter when I'm not leading the band," he said. As we sat down, the 11-piece band (with "FD" on its 11 music stands) broke into a throbbing rendition of *Pretty-Eyed Baby*. Dick Daly, 26, was hopping about in his seat behind the drums. "Frannie played sax for us until he went into the Army a few weeks ago," Mr. Daly explained. He added, "There goes Carol to sing."

A winsome 10-year-old in a white fluffy gown walked confidently up to the mike. She was chewing bubble gum. Carefully she tossed the gum into a special box. Then, laughing and waving to acquaintances, she took the mike firmly in her hands and with all the casual ease of a Dinah Shore burst into "Pretty-eyed baby, we can have a lot of fun. . . ." She really sent the dancers, with her full, bouncy voice.

Her dad said proudly, "She's best at the peppy pop tunes. Learns them by playing records over and over. She's never had a lesson." He referred to her as "My Lucky Seventh." When we asked about that he explained: "Carol was our seventh child. All our luck seemed to change for the good after she was born."

Dorothy, the cheery and vivacious 23-year-old, was gaily keeping time to the music as she filled waiters' orders behind the soft-drink and soda counter. "Dot selects all the tunes for the band's library," Mr. Daly stated, "and she fills in on trumpet when we need her. . . . Charlie and Bobby are in the kitchen if you would like to see them," he added.

I went back. Both were in chef's caps, and sweating. They make 20 kinds of sandwiches and 600 pounds of French fries every Saturday night. Charlie, now 25, was by the oven, Bobby, 14, by the dishwasher.

In addition to the Saturday-night dances the Dalys open up their Terrace several times each week for special parties. (Minimum, 150 persons.) They had 60 wedding receptions last year and 21 wedding anniversary parties.

Fairfield University held both its junior and senior proms there. Church officials in Stamford regularly arrange for the teen-agers of the Catholic Youth Organization to have their dances at the Terrace.

After every dance or party Mr. Daly insists that the place be scrubbed from top to bottom. Many of the Dalys shudder when they recall what that insistence means during the week before Christmas. Dick says most of them average less than two hours sleep a night. Thursday night the Globe Slicing Machinery Company had its Christmas party for employees; Friday night there was another company party; Saturday night the regular dance; and Sunday afternoon the daughter of a prominent businessman had a big wedding reception. Between each affair the Dalys were on their knees each day before dawn scrubbing.

"Maybe I'm fussy," Mr. Daly said, "but I like things to be immaculate. When you have a place that is shining clean it has a great psychological effect. If any person has any thought of being noisy or rough, the cleanliness holds him in check."

Mr. Daly reserves for himself the scrubbing of the men's and ladies' restrooms. Dick said, "Dad won't let anyone else touch them!" Mr. Daly says he has tried to hire people to do that job but no one else could make it gleam to suit him.

Mr. and Mrs. Daly are the top bosses at the Terrace, but the children are all profit-sharers. Each youngster is paid a regular fee for the Saturday night —plus cleaning work, and is paid extra for each private party. The fees to each vary, as do some of the startling uses they put their money to. They spend a lot of it in helpfulness—that is, helping out other members of their family and people or projects in their community. Let's take a look:

Charlie the chef: His base pay is $30 a week after taxes, plus room and board. That's for running the kitchen Saturday night and scrubbing up afterward. Room and board is tentatively valued at $25 a week. He is paid extra for each special party. Charlie thinks he is paid "a heck of a lot" for what he does.

The bulk of his money goes into his extraordinary hobby—running a miniature movie theater. He led me around to the outside cellar steps to show it to me. Over the cellar door was a neat printed sign: "Colonial Theater." Inside, a billboard stated: "Now Playing—*Topper's Return*—Starring Joan Blondell, plus selected short subjects." There was a miniature ticket window where tickets could be purchased for "one toy" (the toys are donated to needy children). Nearby was a glass-enclosed candy counter.

"There's a show now running," he said. "We have them every Sunday afternoon and evening. Would you like to peek in?"

I peeked into a darkened theater about 8 by 18 feet. I could see 16 neighborhood small fry hunched in their chairs laughing at a Mexican festival short subject. Charlie's hand-built theater was authentic down to the vase of artificial flowers on the stage. Spotlights shine down on the screen from in front of a valance curtain. The projection booth was walled off.

Charlie led me back to the booth. His young side-kick, Bobby, was tending the 2 RCA sound projectors for him. Within easy reach were the light dimmer, music turntable, and ropes for opening the curtain. Charlie rents his feature films from film libraries in New York. They cost about $6 each, including postage. He has built up his own library of short subjects. The bottom shelf, he said, is Dad's. On it were 21 tins containing 6,300 feet of film Mr. Daly has shot with his home movie camera. "Mostly family stuff," Charlie explained.

Bobby, the assistant chef: For manning the dishwasher, etc., the plump Bobby, 14, receives a $4 allowance each week, plus bonuses for extra parties. That makes him a plutocrat among his 9th-grade friends.

At first his parents thought Bobby might become a priest, but recently have abandoned that hope. "I'm too crazy about food and saving money," he explained. Until three years ago he was skinny. "Suddenly," he says, "I just shot up like a balloon."

Bobby makes a trip every Monday to the Stamford Savings Bank, where he has a bewildering variety of accounts. One dollar of his income every week goes into his vacation fund (he's saving to go to Maine) . . . 50 cents goes each week into his Christmas fund . . . 25 cents goes into each of the Hopalong Cassidy Saving Clubs he has set up for brother Dick's two small children, Ricky and Tommy ("I'm trustee," he explained proudly) . . . and an indefinite sum ("whatever I can stash away") goes each week into his special "Tape Recorder" fund. It now stands at $74.37, with $160 as his goal.

"It will be fun to make recordings of the crazy things we say when we're all together. Anybody in the family will be able to use it," he said, but added cautiously, "if they pay for the tape." He especially wants to make recordings when his brother Frannie comes home on leave from Fort Dix, N.J. (Frannie used to get $30 a week, plus room and board playing sax.)

It was soon apparent that Bobby adores his brother Frannie. Once a month he bakes up a batch of blueberry muffins and sends them to Fort Dix. Bobby would prefer to send his pies, but they don't seem to stand up very well under the trip.

Bobby was inspired to become a pie maker while watching a cooking show for brides on television. He demonstrated for me how he whips up a chocolate pie in 7 minutes. "First I wash my hands," he explained, and did so. I took notes as he began rolling out his crust, but he said, "Don't bother. It's all here on the back of the box." He held up a chocolate-pie-mix box and showed me that material for the crust and filling come in separate sacks. "Only difference is they use water and I use Seven-Up in the crust," Bobby said.

Dick, the drum and vacuum man: Since he's the only married Daly offspring, and so does not live at home, his base pay is $55 a week, after taxes, for playing Saturday night and vacuuming afterward.

As a young family man trying to pay for an old house which he bought 2 blocks away, Dick has no money for frills. He, his wife, Claire, and his three children—Ricky, 4, Tommy, 2, and Catherine, 7 months—live downstairs in the house. His wife's parents (she's the daughter of a Stamford fireman) live upstairs.

Dot, the soda-fountain director, musical librarian, and part-time trumpeter: Her pay, after taxes, is $20, plus room and board, plus bonuses for each extra job. In addition, she makes money working for a local grocery store Fridays and Saturdays.

As any neighbor can tell you, Dot practices with her trumpet and her bass fiddle 4 hours a day (2 hours each). She has paid for music lessons from her own income for 8 years. While she practices she likes to have the radio playing some totally different tune. It helps her concentrate, she says.

Every Monday night Dot joins the longhairs by playing trumpet for the Norwalk Symphony. She does that "for free." And every Thursday night she and some fellow "pop" enthusiasts rehearse their band at the Universalist Church. They get occasional wedding jobs, etc., but mostly, she says, they play "just for kicks."

Marie, 18, the check-room attendant: She gets $8 every night she works, plus room and board. In addition, she earns $26.33 a week working part-time in the office of a local department store.

Marie is the family's romantic and athletic member. An expert swimmer, she thought something of swimming the English Channel until she heard rumors that there are sharks and octopuses there. She also twirled baton for the Stamford High School Band. Marie has been thinking something of saving her money to become the family's first collegian. (Her older brothers and sisters were not able to give higher education much thought because of the urgent need to help the family enterprise become established. Dot has the family's only "higher education"—6 weeks at the Julliard School of Music.)

Carol, 10, the chief vocalist: "The Lucky Seventh" gets $1 a week allowance, plus practically free entry into her Dad's pocket. As Dot put it: "Carol just gets everything she wants, that's all. If she asks for a quarter, Dad gives her a buck."

Mostly she uses her funds to buy dolls for herself and as presents to her friends. She is proud of her new Toni doll, which has enough nylon hair to make 7 pairs of nylon stockings. The directions show 6 different ways to fix the doll's hair, and Carol has tried them all. But her favorite doll is still Jimmy, a huge, battered, 20-inch guy she lugs around with her much of the time. She is so fond of Jim because he is big enough to require standard infant clothes. After almost every payday she goes to the 5 & 10 to shop for new sweaters or socks for him. Recently she splurged and bought him a stroller.

On Saturdays before she sings she takes long naps. Her singing career apparently does not interfere at all with her schooling. I saw 3 of her latest arithmetic papers. All were marked "100."

All the Dalys assemble from their various private enthusiasms at mealtime. Mother, Charlie, and Bobby do most of the cooking, and the girls—Carol, Marie, and Dot—handle the

dishes. The Dalys could probably hire a cook now, but there are so many other things they would rather spend the money on.

Besides, they feel that nobody could cook *pizzas*, *lasagna*, and meatballs like Mother does. She does them with an "old country" authenticity that dozens of other Stamford wives have tried to copy. In the words of Bobby: "People go nuts over Mother's *pizzas*."

The memory of lean days and bare cupboards has made Mrs. Daly into an ardent wholesale shopper. The spare kitchen upstairs, which used to go with the rented apartment, now looks like a store. It is piled to the ceiling with cases of tomatoes, beans, jams, peanut butter, and soups.

Right now Mrs. Daly's great project is planning her kitchen in the big, sunny house they will move to around Easter. To give herself more room she is having the walls torn out that separated the kitchen from the "butler's pantry." She can't conceive of the free-and-easy Dalys ever wanting a butler.

Into her kitchen she is putting everything she has dreamed about for years—automatic dishwasher, tile walls, exhaust fan, a beautiful new range, a new 11-foot refrigerator, and her practically new freezer.

The house, with its beautiful hardwood floors, has the whole family excited—spacious bedrooms, a date-room, a music-practice room, a theater-room in the basement for Charlie, and even a special room for Bobby's trains.

On clear days the Dalys all go to their future home to wash windows, cut the underbrush in the front yard, and scrub walls. Or they just stand around and daydream.

At least once a month Dad, Mother, and the 3 younger Dalys have fun going to "Playland" in nearby Rye, N.Y. There they ride the roller-coasters, roller-skate in the summer, ice-skate in the winter, dance, and go boating. Dad doesn't skate, but enjoys taking movies of others doing it.

Last year Mr. and Mrs. Daly took their first real vacation trip in 27 years of marriage. It was the first they could afford. They went to Quebec and took Bobby and Carol with them, returning by way of Montreal.

After that one sample of vacation exploring, the Dalys have been ardent travel fans. They are talking about new places they would like to see. The Rockies and West Coast are high on this list.

When they look back on all the wonderful things that have happened to their family during the past few years, they say their dreams have more than been fulfilled. Not only have they had great fun working and planning together for successful family life, but in Laddin's Terrace they have the satisfaction of achieving something worth while for their neighbors and their community. With quiet fervor Mr. Daly states: "The Lord has been good to us."

I can only add that, in my opinion, it couldn't happen to a nicer family.

THE END ★★

The Wonder of the Desert

(*Continued from page* 23)

smoke, a smell that now seems to me unforgettably characteristic of the Arizona desert. And many a time afterward, eager and thankful, I was to jump down from that train at Wickenburg, take a deep breath, and know that clean, rich smell again.

We stayed two or three weeks, as long as we dared, and were conquered. My wife rode and I mostly rambled. This was not conventional desert country; it was something better, for while it had the sense of space, the clear light, the antiseptic quality of the ordinary deserts, it had also far more variety, and a peculiar magic of far distances, with ranges of lilac and amethyst mountains hanging in the sky.

We fell in love at once with the smoky-gold atmosphere of early mornings, when the huge pillars of the saguaro cactus seem like fragments of colossal architecture, with the diamond air of full daylight when the rocks glittered with fools' gold and the far mountains were a soft blue, with the evenings when the sky was on fire with sunset and the hills in shadow were deep purple, with the illimitable wide nights of stars, more stars than one had ever seen before.

I will admit here and now that this country, just north of Phoenix, is my favorite desert country, although parts of southern Arizona, New Mexico, and southern California, especially in the Mohave region, are far closer to the conventional idea of what a desert should be. They have their own particular appeals, too. There are the sculptured rocks of southern Arizona, and the strange towering mesas and mysterious caverns of New Mexico. There is the utter silence of some parts of the desert in southern California, especially near the Salton Sea, which we used to pass on our way from Wickenburg to Hollywood. There I would get out of the car, simply to take in for a brief and rather terrifying spell the absolute silence of that region, where not even a bird nor an insect could be heard making the tiniest sound. Such places are not holiday resorts but it does us good to pay them a visit now and again, if only to listen to our heartbeats in their strange silence.

As my wife had been advised to avoid the fogs and damp cold of the English winter, we decided to return to Wickenburg and the Arizona Desert. And for two whole winters we had the family—six children and a nurse—with us there, going out by sea, through the Panama Canal, from England to the Pacific Coast. This bold move, for which I cannot take the responsibility (feminine enthusiasm

carrying the day), was one of the wisest we ever made. I remember how, after calculating the expense, we told each other that we had better take the chance while it was within our grasp, for already in the middle '30's there were threats of war and the world was darkening. Many a time since I have thanked Heaven that we did not retreat from this decision, for we were able to offer our children a treasure of rich experience that was soon to be well beyond the reach of any English family.

And here I will venture to give parents a little advice. If you have the opportunity to take your children traveling, do not hesitate to seize that opportunity. Go while the going is good. You never know what may happen, and the opportunity may never return. The journey you can make this year may be utterly impossible in a few years' time. And do not be deceived by your children's apparent attitude toward this troublesome and expensive business of far travel. They may appear to care little about it, may make you feel that you are wasting time and money.

But afterward you will discover that nearly everything you enjoyed they enjoyed too, and that there were good things you missed which they found for themselves. The experience you offered became part of the enchanting epic of childhood and greatly helped to enrich their dawning manhood and womanhood. Finally, there is nothing like far travel, filled with wonders, for giving a child confidence and removing any sense of inferiority. A boy or girl who has traveled great distances and has seen some of the marvels of this world is at least ready to deal with other children on level terms.

Naturally, I could not pass whole winters in idleness, especially when all the family were running up travel bills, so for weeks at a time we would remain at the ranch near Wickenburg. I would work at a book or a play; my wife, after supervising the older children's lessons, would go riding with them; and the younger children would be playing weird and wonderful games of their own invention.

Some days we would have picnics, and perhaps on a dried river-bed, bright with sand in the middle and shaded with cottonwoods on either side, the cowboys would make a fire, fry steak and potatoes, and brew excellent coffee. I have eaten in some of the most famous restaurants in the world and enjoyed the food less than I did at these picnic lunches.

But then the company was good, too. People who have chosen to live in or near the desert are the kind you can turn into friends. They are rarely neurotic, predatory, or empty-headed types, most of whom prefer the shelter, din, and glitter of the cities. Those vast distances and huge nights of stars and silence frighten away the riffraff. Much of the old pioneer tradition of helpfulness and instant hospitality lingers still in the Southwest. Where people are few, and land and sky seem illimitable, another man is a fellow creature and not a nuisance. I have many friends in New York, a city I used to dislike but have now come to terms with; but I still feel, after many visits, a stranger in the place, whereas in northern Arizona I feel at home.

There are some eccentric old codgers in those parts, but then I like eccentric old codgers, folk who have refused to have their corners rubbed off. Around Wickenburg I used to run into leathery old fellows who came in, to buy tobacco and beans, from remote shacks in the hills, where they had retired, sometimes after a long life in the city, to "drywash" for gold, of which they found just about enough to pay for their tobacco and beans.

Most of these folk who have retired to the desert have stopped competing, either with the other firm or with the Joneses, and the people who have stopped competing make the best company. They may occasionally tell a few tall stories, in the old Mark Twain tradition of the West, but I would rather have my stories tall than little and spiteful. It is, in fact, very difficult to be little and spiteful in the desert.

Every few weeks we would pack some clothes into duffel bags, pile into our station wagon, and go off into the blue. We stayed, as a rule, at motels and camps, and occasionally at Indian trading posts. The places were always clean and reasonably comfortable, and nine times out of ten the food was both cheap and good. In this fashion, often without any definite itinerary, we explored most of the Southwest, only omitting the high-mountain country, which is best visited in summer.

We spent most of our time in Arizona, but now and again crossed the borders into New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Texas, and California, usually with some particular objective in mind. Thus, we would go into California to visit Death Valley, where you may see the highest peak and the lowest level of ground in the United States, and can take a wondering look at Scotty's Castle and those fantastic ghost mining towns, Bullfrog and Rhyolite, which you remember like places seen in a dream.

We went into Utah to make the long trip to Rainbow Bridge, that huge stone arch set in the wildest and most glorious landscape it has ever been my good fortune to see. Readers of science fiction should not worry too much about visiting the back of the moon or Venus; they should make the pack trip from Rainbow Lodge to Rainbow Bridge and give their own planet a chance to fill them with wonder and awe. Incidentally, my children were, in those days before the war, the youngest tourists ever to visit the bridge; and three of them went there twice.

But it is not really necessary to leave northern Arizona, which has enough to keep you gaping and marveling for months on end. I cannot pretend to have been everywhere on this earth, but I have done my share of traveling, from Finland to the South Seas, and so far as my experience goes I can declare without hesi-

tation that northern Arizona is the great wonderland of this globe. For once the travel booklets do not exaggerate. This country is filled with marvels. You can travel for days and days and never stop exclaiming in amazement.

If you want to see the tracks of dinosaurs, millions of years old, there they are. If you want to see the place where the giant meteor came crashing into this earth, there it is. And there is the Painted Desert, and there the Petrified Forest. In many a Western picture in Technicolor you have noticed a strange desert valley which has towering rocks that look like vast ruins of sculpture. Well, that is Monument Valley in northern Arizona.

Go WEST and you will come to Marble Canyon and Vermilion Cliffs. Travel south for a day or so and you might find yourself in Oak Creek Canyon, which I remember, almost as if I dreamt it, as the nearest thing to the happy isles and magic gardens of the legends, the Hesperides, or Avalon with its unfading blossom. Yet this Oak Creek is merely one of 100 beauty spots in Arizona, and now my friends tell me they *know several better places* and challenge me to prove them wrong.

In the middle of it all is, of course, that marvel of marvels, the Grand Canyon. I refuse to describe it, having done so once, after much toil and sweat, in my book, *Midnight on the Desert*. But I will say this about the Grand Canyon: that of all things on this earth it is the one which most exceeds all expectation. It is larger and more magnificent and far more varied than our imagination tells us it will be. Most wonders of the world —the Pyramids, for example—are apt to disappoint the imaginative traveler. But anybody who is disappointed at the Grand Canyon will be disappointed at the Day of Judgment.

It must, however, be given the chance of displaying its full majesty. Flying over it will not do, and it is no use taking a hasty side trip to it and staring at it for a mere hour or two in a sleepy fashion. Try to live with it for at least a few days; observe it in all weathers; brood over its vast, bewildering pageant of light and shade; and if possible descend into its depths, which are sunny, warm, and delightful even in winter, and wander by the blossom down there and loiter by the bright, winking stream.

I do not know which is the more rewarding experience—to stare into those incredible depths, where I have watched thunderstorms darken and flash, or to stroll along the bottom of the Canyon, between those mile-high walls that look like the ruins of empires. What I do know is that I thank my stars I savored both experiences to the full while I still had a chance to do so. Whatever happens from now on, I have had my day; I have wandered for many a mile looking down into the noblest chasm on earth; I have gone down Bright Angel Trail to stay at Phantom Ranch.

Life in America, like life elsewhere, has many faults, but it possesses one very precious virtue. It is forever criticizing and correcting itself, hastily producing the antidote for any poison it might absent-mindedly brew. Now America has some of the noisiest and most exhausting cities in the world, and life in those cities can easily jangle and fray the nerves of

"Roughly, how many glasses of water do you drink a day?"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY CHARLES RODRIGUES

sensitive men and women. But the cure is here, too. It is the magnificent Southwest, the incomparable Desert, where there is glory for the eye, wonder for the mind, and peace for the heart and soul.

And the Desert is not simply a playground for the rich. Once you are there, you can live on any reasonable economic level you prefer; and the man who spends $2 on his room and 75 cents on his dinner has at least as much to see and admire there as the man who is spending $30 a day at a luxury hotel. It is, in fact, the ideal holiday place for folks with modest incomes and a growing family.

And nobody in the Southwest is paying me to recommend it so fervently. If there was to be local payment, I would ask for it, not in dollars but in desert—just a few sunlit acres to take back to England, just enough to give me a place where I could loaf in peace in the afternoons.

THE END ★★

Wild Call

(*Continued from page* 41)

home, Pop," Mr. Hendricks told him.

But that was not the end of it.

At dinner that night, Mr. Hendricks, feeling jovial, announced to everybody that the Queen Iris was unusually lucky, since she carried an extra navigator.

Mr. Ridley could have died. There was a roaring in his ears and he did not know where to look. He realized that the first officer was making only a friendly joke, and yet he could not bear to have all the amused eyes looking at him.

The very young third officer asked politely, "What kind of sextant do you have, sir?" This made it worse, for they all clamored to see his equipment, even the captain, and there was simply no way out. He had to go get it.

They passed the old sextant from officer to officer, and each looked at it carefully. Mr. Melvin, the second officer, took no pains to conceal his contempt. "You must have got that out of some museum, Pop."

The third officer said, "Gosh, it's got the old vernier dial. I never saw one before. How do you read it?" And Mr. Ridley, who knew well that modern sextants had far better micrometer screws, had to explain the old-fashioned scale.

"Which system do you use," the third officer persisted, "214?"

"No, 211," Mr. Ridley replied, choking. Somehow it sounded as if he still struck steel against flint to make a fire.

"And you never been on a ship before?" Mr. Melvin laughed. "I bet you can navigate like I can swallow a sword."

But the first officer said, "I don't know. I bet he's pretty good at it. Aren't you, Pop?"

Mr. Ridley could think of absolutely nothing to say. He would have given all his bonus to be back on Staten Island.

Mr. Melvin jeered, "Let him take a noon sight tomorrow with that thing, and he'll have us in the Fiji Islands."

"I doubt it," said Mr. Hendricks.

There was no stopping them, and that night Mr. Ridley tossed unhappily on his berth. For things had reached a point where Mr. Hendricks had bet Mr. Melvin $30 that Mr. Ridley *could* take a noon sight, and the test would be made tomorrow.

Not that Mr. Ridley had no faith in himself. On Staten Island he could consistently come within a half-mile, sometimes less, of the true position, and that is considered very good indeed. A moving ship, of course, was not as steady a platform as solid land, but Mr. Ridley still felt he could do well enough.

It wasn't that. He hated to have the unpleasant atmosphere that somehow, suddenly, threatened to cloud his voyage. When at last he fell asleep he prayed that tomorrow would be overcast, with no sun to shoot at, and then maybe somehow they would forget about it. . . .

But the day dawned bright and cloudless. The sea was so calm that but for the engine vibration, the ship was as steady as dry land.

Fifteen minutes before noon the first officer came to his cabin, clapped him on the back, and said, "Let's go, Pop. I got thirty bucks riding on you."

With leaden heart, Mr. Ridley collected his gear and mounted the bridge like a man entering the death house. To his horror, he found all the officers there, even the captain. Each had his sextant.

Captain Donovan announced the rules: "All five of us—the four officers and Pop here—will take a sight. The four of us will average our results together, and the average will be considered the true position of the ship. If Pop gets within five miles of that, the thirty bucks goes to Mr. Hendricks. Okay?"

Mr. Ridley nodded dumbly, hearing everything, seeing everything as in a bad dream. Yet the familiar feel of the old sextant in his right hand steadied him, and as the seconds clicked away toward noon he grew calmer.

THEN the five sextants pointed to the sun, standing now at the top of its arching path above the earth. Never had Mr. Ridley moved the index arm so gently, bringing the mirrored sun down to the horizon, swinging the sextant slightly from side to side to make sure he had brought the sun down exactly vertical. He clicked the borrowed stop watch and then, walking quickly to the ship's chronometer, clicked it again.

After that, it was solid figuring, taking numbers from his books, adding and subtracting. Basically it was simple, but this time he could not afford to make any stupid error in arithmetic. The four others had finished long before him, because H.O. 211 is a far more complicated method than the newer H.O. 214.

He heard Mr. Melvin's rasping whisper: "It'll be noon tomorrow before the old geezer gets finished."

For a wild moment Mr. Ridley was tempted to make a deliberate error and lose, so that Mr. Melvin would be appeased. But that would not be fair to Mr. Hendricks. Besides, Mr. Ridley found a new kind of stubborn pride inside him.

At last he smiled faintly, handed his

result to the captain and said, "I—I guess that's the best I can do." There was absolute silence as the captain compared it with the correct answer.

"Well," the captain chuckled at last. "There's still nothing wrong with old 211, it seems, and nothing wrong with you, either, Pop. He's come within 1.2 miles of our average."

"Nice going, Pop!" the first officer exulted. "And get this! Melvin, our own great navigator, was two miles off!"

Mr. Melvin's face was black with anger as he paid over the $30.

"Okay," said the captain, "that's that. Let's get back to running the ship."

MR. RIDLEY would have been happy if that had really been that. It was not. Mr. Melvin was neither a good loser nor subtle. He began calling Mr. Ridley "sir" and "skipper" with exaggerated deference. The "skipper" part stuck.

"Pay no attention to him, Skipper," the first officer said, trying to comfort him. "We're all for you."

But that was not really enough. Mr. Melvin still managed to make things unpleasant, and the bridge was no longer a comfortable place. When Mr. Ridley tried desperately to keep out of the way, perhaps huddling in the farthest wing, Mr. Melvin seemed determined to come to that very spot, growling, "Heads up!"

Once Mr. Ridley asked the quartermaster some question about steering, and the second officer barked, "Don't bother the helmsman!" And when Mr. Ridley happened to be looking at the Sea and Swell Chart, for which Mr. Melvin could not possibly have any need at that time, the second officer had grated, "If you're sure you've finished with that, *sir*, maybe I could borrow it."

One afternoon, passing the captain's quarters, Mr. Ridley heard the second officer's irritated voice saying something about "old geezer" and "gets in my hair." So he was not surprised when, later in the day, Captain Donovan sought him out, with an oddly embarrassed air.

"I think I know what it is, sir," Mr. Ridley said humbly.

"It's foolish," the captain said apologetically, "but it's just one of those things. And I say to you frankly that it's mostly Mr. Melvin's fault. But he is, after all, my second officer, and I have to take him as he is. And I can't have a feud like this on my ship. So . . ."

He had meant to tell Mr. Ridley, as gently as possible, that he was no longer to go on the bridge. And Mr. Ridley knew this, and much as he tried to conceal the pain of it, his heart was in his eyes.

It was too much for the captain. "So," he concluded, changing his sentence, "I hope you can help me out. Don't go up on the bridge any more than you have to. And when you do, don't talk to *anyone*. Especially when Mr. Melvin's there."

Mr. Ridley was so grateful for the reprieve that, paradoxically, he did not visit the bridge at all for two days; although, in his own cabin, he kept up a parallel navigation for the Queen Iris.

But on the third day he drifted back to the bridge. He had to check his watch against the chronometer and to check his calculated positions against the ones neatly penciled on the master chart. He tried to go when Mr. Melvin was off watch, but once the second officer turned up unexpectedly. He said nothing and acted as if Mr. Ridley were not there.

The Queen Iris turned into the Strait of Gibraltar within 30 minutes of the time Mr. Ridley had calculated, and followed the course he had laid for Algiers, arriving there on schedule. Algiers itself was of little interest to Mr. Ridley. He went ashore perfunctorily, bought a silver bracelet for his mother, a rather odorous leather wallet for himself, and stayed aboard ship until she left four days later.

Her course lay now for Leghorn, Italy, via the Strait of Bonifacio, which separates Sardinia from Corsica. Up until now the Queen Iris's navigation had been almost too simple. The Strait of Bonifacio was different. As he pored over his charts and books, Mr. Ridley calculated they would hit the strait at night, and that it promised to be the most interesting navigation of the whole voyage.

The main channel, Bocca Grande, was only three miles wide. It was beset on both sides by unnumbered rocky islets and dangerous reefs. As in all such narrow places between great bodies of water, there are tricky currents, especially after continual winds. The *Sailing Directions* said the strongest current followed northwesterly gales, which create an east-going current of two knots.

Mr. Ridley knew there had been no northwesterly gales lately. In fact, for a good 48 hours, the wind had been strong from exactly the opposite direction. Soon even this wind died away, after they had turned the northwest corner of Sardinia and were heading directly for the strait. The sea calmed down, although a considerable swell remained.

NIGHT fell, and Mr. Ridley grew more excited. When his friend Mr. Hendricks was off watch, he remarked, trying to be casual about it, "Must be pretty tricky, going through in the dark."

"Oh, not so bad, Skipper," the first officer said. "Plenty of lights everywhere, and three miles of good water."

"Suppose you couldn't see the lights?" Mr. Ridley said. "Suppose the visibility got worse?" It was already fairly bad. Occasional rain squalls swept over the sea, and the horizon was indistinct.

"If it really closed in," the first officer said, "we can always circle outside until it clears up. It's been done before." Then he clapped Mr. Ridley on the back. "Don't you worry, Skipper; the old Queen will get you through."

Still Mr. Ridley could not help worrying. Mostly about Lavezzi Rock, the western limit of the channel, surrounded by rocky shoals just under water. The *Sailing Directions* said ominously that the French frigate Semillante was lost there in 1855, with all hands.

Midnight passed, and the Queen Iris

plowed ahead on her course of 085 degrees, straight for the strong light on Razzoli Island, which was the eastern limit of the channel. Just before the island, if all went well, she should turn northeast. Despite the murkiness, Mr. Ridley soon saw the comforting flash of the Razzoli light dead ahead. And it was white. Its red sector covered the danger of Lavezzi Rock. As long as the light showed white to them, the Queen Iris was all right.

Then Mr. Ridley began seeing more lights, for the dangerous strait abounds with them. None of them was very clear, because of the murkiness, but it was a warming feeling to know they were there and on the job.

He calculated they would make the turn to northeast at about 1:30 in the morning, and he was dying to be on the bridge when it happened. But at first he hesitated. For one thing, it would be crowded; all the officers would be there. Secondly, it was Mr. Melvin's watch, which began at midnight.

Yet, about 1:20, Mr. Ridley could no longer stay away from the brains of the ship. Quietly he mounted the ladder to the bridge, nodded to the officers who saw him in the darkness, and went to stand in a corner of the wheelhouse.

Lavezzi Rock was safely past, its light flashing now well off to port. Razzoli Island seemed about the same distance away, dead ahead, and Mr. Ridley decided they must be in the dead center of the channel. Another triumph, he thought, for navigation.

IT WAS exactly 1:34 A.M. when Mr. Melvin spoke to the quartermaster: "Left to course 040."

"Course 040, sir," echoed the helmsman, turning the wheel left. The Queen Iris, swinging slowly, came to her new heading, and the helmsman said, "Steady on course 040, sir."

"Very well," confirmed Mr. Melvin.

That was that. The turn was made. Captain Donovan had watched, but silently, like most skippers leaving the running of the ship to the officer on watch. Now the captain said, "Well, I'll turn in. Call me, Mr. Melvin, if the visibility gets worse."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Mr. Ridley crept into the chartroom and found Mr. Hendricks looking at the fathometer. Mr. Ridley looked too, and almost fainted. It registered a mere 10 fathoms, when there should be at least 30!

Mr. Hendricks saw him staring, grinned, and explained, "Don't worry, Pop. That's just a tide rip. Sometimes they throw this thing off that way. As soon as we get into calmer water, that fake track will go away."

Then he, too, retired, leaving Mr. Ridley and Mr. Melvin alone.

Hendricks was right. The "track" on the moving strip of paper moved to the right, grew stronger and remained at a safe 30 fathoms. Fascinated by the scene on the bridge, and in the false alarm of the fathometer, Mr. Ridley had momentarily forgotten his own navigation. Suddenly he froze.

Had Mr. Melvin brought her around to 040 degrees? He could scarcely believe it, and looked on the chart to make sure. There it was, the penciled new course, clearly marked 040.

But Ridley had calculated 045 degrees!

On the chart, the 040 line looked quite safe. It led securely to the right of the last danger, which bore the somehow ominous name of Perduto Rock. Mr. Ridley knew from the *Sailing Directions* that the rock protruded only one foot above water and would thus be hard to see on a murky night with a fairly calm sea. Mr. Ridley knew immediately where Mr. Melvin had made his error. He had forgotten the strong southeasterly wind that had been blowing for two days.

"You certainly did choose a restful color!"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY REAMER KELLER

True, the wind had stopped now. But for two days it had been pushing the waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea to the northwest. Deflected against the coasts of Sardinia and Corsica, they created a current, or "set," as mariners call it, to the northwest. Even with the wind gone and the sea calmed, this "set" would continue for a few days. And it would push the Queen Iris silently with it, off that neatly penciled line. And toward Perduto Rock!

In laying his own course, Mr. Ridley had allowed for the set, which he knew could not be more than two knots, if that. Thus, to the original course of 040 degrees, he had added five more degrees, to take the Queen Iris a bit farther east, and thus clear the rock.

It was obvious Mr. Melvin had forgotten this.

Mr. Ridley found it hard to believe that a real navigator, especially in such dangerous waters, should have made such an error. He distrusted his own calculations, but when he double-checked them he found no mistake. Quickly Mr. Ridley picked up the dividers, made a rapid calculation of the Queen Iris speed and the distance, and measured on the chart.

If he were right, she would strike Perduto Rock at 2:03 in the morning.

STARING at the chart, Mr. Ridley suddenly noticed a way to make sure, once and for all. If Mr. Melvin were right, the fathometer should show no less than 30 fathoms, deepening soon to much more as they moved out to sea.

But if Mr. Ridley were right, and the Queen Iris was being insidiously pushed northward off that line, she would pass over a depth—within a few minutes—of only about 15 fathoms. After that there would come 30 fathoms again, but not for long. Then the bottom would shoal up, so swiftly that there would be no time to swerve.

Hardly able to breathe, Mr. Ridley watched the fathometer's track: 32 fathoms . . . 36 fathoms . . . 28 fathoms . . . 30 . . . 24 . . . 18 . . .

Sixteen!

Frozen with horror, Mr. Ridley did not know Mr. Melvin had come into the chartroom until he heard his rasping voice: "What's the matter with you?"

Still not daring to speak, for the captain had told him not to, Mr. Ridley pointed mutely to the fathometer tape.

"So what?" the second officer demanded. "It's just another tide rip. Why don't you go to bed?"

But it was not the faint, wavery false track of the tide rips. This was strong and dark, the true track of the bottom.

"See?" Mr. Melvin sneered. The track now showed 30 fathoms again.

And then Mr. Ridley, caring no longer what happened to him, had to speak. For it was only three minutes before two.

"Excuse me," he said desperately, "but you're wrong. Look." He pointed to the chart.

"Here," Mr. Ridley said, trembling, pointing to the 15-fathom bank. "We've just passed over that, and we're back in deep water for a few minutes. But we're heading up toward this rock."

"Nuts!" snorted the second officer.

"You forgot the set!" Mr. Ridley almost screamed. "The northwest set after all that wind from the southeast. It's pushing us off course."

"Shut up!" roared Melvin. But he had been shaken. He stared again at the chart and walked quickly out onto the bridge, to one of the repeater compasses on the port wing.

"The fool!" Mr. Ridley thought. "He's going to take bearings! There isn't time enough for that! By the time he plots them—"

He could barely make out the second officer's figure, crouched over the pelorus sights on the compass, trying to take cross bearings on Razzoli and Lavezzi lights. But Razzoli light was barely visible in the squally haze, and Lavezzi light had disappeared altogether.

The second officer hurried back to the wheelhouse, to the speaking tube that went directly to the captain's quarters. "Sir, the visibility's all gone."

"I'll be right up!" The captain's voice sounded strange and tinny in the tube.

But Mr. Ridley saw that it was exactly two o'clock. He felt a strange, exalted calmness. He walked into the wheelhouse and said firmly, quietly, "There isn't time. Another minute or so, and she'll hit."

The second officer roared, "Get off this bridge!"

It was as if Mr. Ridley never heard. He spoke now, directly to the quartermaster, and there was that in his voice which kings and captains and generals have known: the quality of command.

"Right full rudder," ordered Mr. Ridley.

The helmsman looked nervously at Mr. Melvin. And Mr. Melvin said nothing, biting his lip.

"Right full rudder," repeated Mr. Ridley.

The quartermaster said later that Mr. Melvin had nodded. At any rate, he spun the wheel furiously to the right.

And at that moment the lookout cried, "Object awash, sir, dead ahead!"

But already the Queen Iris was swinging, slowly at first, then with gathering momentum, into safe water.

"What's going on?" The captain had just appeared.

There was no need to explain. They stood silently on the port wing of the bridge, watching the waves break around Perduto Rock. Horrifyingly near, and yet passing now in safety. . . .

It cost Captain Donovan a great deal to write the incident into the official log. It was not only ruinous to the second officer, it reflected seriously on the captain himself, for trusting too much to his navigator.

Yet, not merely because he was obliged to, but because he was an honorable man, Captain Donovan wrote it down. And even if somehow you ran across it in the file of logbooks in the Queen Lines' offices in Brooklyn, it is all in such terse, technical language that you probably wouldn't understand it.

But the Queen Lines understood. Which is why they refunded Mr. Ridley's passage money. As well they might, for he saved them several million dollars, not to speak of lives.

They did even more: After a private talk with Captain Donovan, they made Mr. Ridley an unheard-of thing—an "Honorary Captain" of the Queen Lines, with the right to sail free with them whenever and wherever he pleases.

They let Captain Donovan keep the Queen Iris, after a severe reprimand. And Mr. Melvin was beached for four months. As for Mr. Ridley, he'll never be beached. He is going to take another trip just as soon as he can get another leave of absence from Babson & Sons, Est. 1875. Maybe he'll go to South America on the Queen Helen, or to the Far East on the Queen Dido. Meanwhile, he has his travel folders and his charts. And he is thinking seriously of investing in H.O. 214, that newer, faster system for finding a ship's position. Maybe even a new sextant.

THE END ★★

Do You Know You Have Ears?

(*Continued from page* 47)

become less acute after mid-life. In the average person the hearing loss is mainly centered on high-frequency sounds, the low tones remaining clear. For most people this is no great problem.

Deafness is something else again. Six million Americans have a hearing loss severe enough to be a social and business handicap.

When deafness strikes a child it often spells major tragedy, isolating the child in a silent, friendless world. Helen Keller states that given her choice of being blind or deaf—she is both—she would prefer to be blind; that a soundless world is lonelier than a darkened world.

At times, we might think a silent world would be inviting. It isn't. If you doubt this, look at the strained, anxious look on the face of a deaf person. Or watch a child, deaf from birth, struggling to learn to speak—as I have at the Institute for Logopedics in Wichita, Kans., and at the New York League for the Hard of Hearing. There is a basic human urge to communicate with others.

The problem facing most of us is this: Assuming that we have good hearing now, how can we *keep* it good? Even more important, what care should we give the ears of our children to help them escape deafness in later life?

Fortunately, most of the ear troubles that lead to deafness announce themselves clearly. A sense of congestion often indicates middle-ear infection. So does a ringing sound, or a buzzing. Any of these symptoms indicate an immediate visit to the ear specialist.

If these things have happened in the

past, and we have permitted them to go unattended, a progressive deafness may be under way. How recognize it? The adult, of course, has few problems here. He is aware of having to strain to hear low-pitched conversation, and of having difficulty at the movies and the theater. If he has any doubts he can go to an "audiology" clinic, and have his hearing tested. Most universities and large hospitals have such clinics.

With a child, things aren't so easy, yet there are signs a parent can watch for.

Inability of a small child to form words properly is often a sign of deafness. He can't hear others speak, and can only guess what words should sound like. Inattention is another sign; so are poor school work, a tendency to shyness, or a desire to be alone. Asking questions to be repeated is sometimes a symptom, but parents must exercise judgment here. Children apparently have some built-in protective mechanism that asks you to repeat such questions as "Isn't it time to go to bed?" or "Is homework completed?" A better way to detect true deafness is to ask in a whisper whether the child wants some candy.

FOURTEEN states are doing an excellent job toward *preventing* deafness. Each year these states check the ears of all school children with an audiometer. This machine, developed by Western Electric, contains a phonograph to which are connected as many as 40 headphone sets. Wearing headphones, children write on paper the words or numbers spoken by a voice on the phonograph record. The voice gradually diminishes, and the point at which the sound disappears marks the limits of the child's hearing. Audiometer studies indicate that about 5 per cent of all school children are handicapped by poor hearing. In some cases, front seats, near the teacher, help to overcome the handicap. In others, hearing aids are needed.

When a child is found to have incipient deafness, or diminished hearing, parents are notified. Prompt attention to early ear troubles will often ward off deafness in later life.

Let's look at some facts about ear care. We may consider the hairs that grow in the external ear and the wax that it secretes unsightly, but both serve useful purposes. Their main function is to trap insects, dust, and other objects that might injure the eardrum. If a bug does get in your ear, don't try and dig it out. Hold a flashlight to the ear and, chances are, the light will attract the bug. If it doesn't, it can usually be washed out with a syringe, although some cases may call for prompt medical help.

The first rule of ear care, according to the medical authorities I checked with, is to *let this ear entrance alone*. Don't pick it with match sticks, paper clips, or knitting needles. They can injure the skin that lines the passage and set up infection; and they can puncture the eardrum. The doctors gave me some pat advice here: Don't put anything in the ear smaller than the elbow. Any excess wax that cannot be removed with a washcloth is probably serving a useful purpose where it is.

The next rule is to watch out for middle-ear infections. They can cause acute pain, severe illness, and deafness. You have noticed the ear stuffiness produced when a plane descends too rapidly, or when an elevator drops too fast. This is because of pressure in the middle ear. The Eustachian tube, which connects the middle ear to nasal passages, is supposed to keep middle-ear pressure equalized with outside pressure. Normally, the tube is closed. But it opens when we swallow, yawn, or sneeze. A head cold can seal off the tube with mucus, hence the stuffiness that often goes with colds. If the tube is sealed off long enough, a partial vacuum develops in the middle ear. This vacuum sucks fluid out of blood vessels. If there is enough of this fluid, it can rupture eardrums and lead to runny ears.

A cold can lead to serious middle-ear infections. It works this way: We blow noses too hard, and bacteria are forced through the Eustachian tubes into the middle-ear area. Advice—blow gently.

At one time such infections were very serious. Often, bacteria would invade the spongy bone near the middle ear, to cause mastoiditis, a bone infection which called for drastic surgery, in which the bone was scraped clean. Today, this operation is rarely performed. If trouble is serious, the well-trained physician will puncture the drum and drain off infection. Then he will use penicillin or a similar drug to kill off any bacteria left behind.

INFECTED tonsils and ulcerated teeth also can cause ear troubles. So can childhood diseases—measles, chicken pox, mumps, whooping cough. It is wise always to have ears examined after any of these sicknesses. Swollen adenoids are a far commoner source of misery, for they often block the nasal entrance to the Eustachian tube, trapping infection in the middle ear.

Some doctors today are using radium applicators to shrink adenoids to normal proportions, instead of removing them. The applicators are placed up the nose for a few minutes, and the treatment is repeated a number of times. Be wary! Nasal tissues are extremely sensitive, and radium can cause bad, non-healing burns. Best advice: Go to a competent surgeon and, if he so recommends, let him do a thorough job of removing adenoids, not a hasty scraping job.

Swimming is another frequent cause of middle-ear infections. Polluted water may carry bacteria into the middle ear, via the nose, or may cause infections of the outer ear or the drum. Ear plugs offer some protection, and the swimmer should try to keep as much water out of mouth and nose as possible.

When ear difficulties of any kind arise, most doctors advise a visit to *an ear specialist*. Don't try to treat them at home. Many people rely on drops and hot-water bottles, but doctors frown on this. Such measures may give temporary relief, but they may also mask serious conditions requiring medical treatment.

How these various infections can lead to deafness is explained by the anatomy of the ear. It is an intricate and fascinating piece of machinery. The least interesting part of the ear is the external protuberance. It almost never causes trouble, except to boxers or wrestlers who have one of them injured occasionally.

From the outer ear an inch-long canal twists into the head, ending at the eardrum. There are a number of ways in which the drum can be injured. Sound

"Where's the nutmeg?"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY CHARLES E. SHARMAN

from a big cannon, can shatter it. Pus from a middle-ear infection can create enough pressure to break it. In nearly all cases the drum heals rapidly, but in rare instances it remains open. Draft boards, incidentally, are reluctant to accept men with perforated eardrums, fearing combat might aggravate the condition and keep the man on the pension list the rest of his life.

Next comes the middle ear—a Rube Goldbergian arrangement of bones, the tiniest bones in the body. Levered together, these small bones—"hammer," "anvil," and "stirrup"—*mechanically* transmit sounds across the middle ear. They pick up vibrations at the eardrum and deliver them to the membrane of the inner ear.

The inner ear is far more complex than the other two segments. Sound vibrations transmitted across the middle ear by the hammer-anvil-stirrup combination of bones agitate the fluid that fills the inner ear. The inner ear contains 24,000 microscopic nerve endings, each tuned to certain sound frequencies. Thus, one bundle of nerves will pick up middle C. This sound sets them vibrating. The motion creates a tiny electric current which is transmitted to the brain by the auditory nerve. The brain recognizes this minute shot of electricity as middle C. Thus, we hear *with* the ears, but *in* the brain.

Almost anything that goes wrong along this pathway can lead to deafness. Disease can injure the nerve or the tiny bones in the middle ear. Or a bony overgrowth can form to close the oval window to the inner ear, effectively shutting out sound vibrations.

Strangely enough, a person may hear certain sound frequencies reasonably well, not hear others. That accounts for the stories about the boss who can't hear when you ask for a raise, but hears the slightest rustle of silk going down the hallway. Or the one a friend told me about a company treasurer who never heard a request for money, but would whirl around and OK a budget reduction although it was suggested in a whisper.

Deafness can take any number of curious twists. Another friend reports the case of a hearing-aid wearer who is entirely dependent on the device in the office, but hears perfectly in trains and automobiles!

You have heard stories about people being cured of deafness by power diving in planes and by making delayed parachute drops. They aren't true. A fairly new operation, however, is turning in some remarkable results in restoring hearing to ears that may have been deafened for years.

This is the "fenestration" operation, in which a new "window" is made in the inner ear. It was perfected by a remarkable surgeon, Dr. Julius Lempert, of New York.

A fenestration is performed when a bony overgrowth forms to keep sound vibrations from reaching the inner ear. Bone grows over the oval window that separates middle and inner ear chambers. The operation, which calls for enormous skill and delicacy of touch, by-passes this blocked area. It takes one to two hours to perform, and there are now scores of surgeons around the country qualified and trained to perform it.

Many people, of course, have types of deafness not aided by such an operation—those with nerve deafness, for example. And many people do not care to submit to surgery. The hearing aid is the best solution for these people.

For centuries, various kinds of horns and ear trumpets were used to amplify sound. Then, in 1900, the carbon-filament hearing aid came along, based on the same principles used in telephone transmitters and receivers. By modern standards, it was a clumsy and awkward device, requiring headphones and an equipment case nearly as large as a shoe box.

In the mid-30's, the vacuum-tube aid was developed. In essence, this is a miniature public-address system. Sound is picked up by a microphone, amplified by tiny vacuum tubes, and passed along to a button-sized speaker. An air-conduction-type speaker is plugged into the ear. A bone-conductor type is held behind the ear on the mastoid bone, with adhesive or a head clamp. This type sets up vibrations in the bone which are conducted to the inner ear. A physician should be consulted about the particular kind of deafness involved, and the type you should buy.

The greatest tragedy connected with hearing aids is this: Although they work extraordinarily well, several million people who need them will not wear them, for reasons of vanity. They somehow consider deafness shameful and try to hide it—as silly as a blind man trying to hide his blindness. Hearing-aid makers have encouraged this attitude to some extent by suggesting that their devices are "invisible," that it isn't necessary to wear a button in the ear, and so on.

They might take a tip from spectacle makers, who for years tried and failed to popularize glasses as nearly invisible as possible—rimless spectacles. Most women preferred near blindness to wearing them. Then the manufacturers reversed their field and started *accentuating* glasses with radical upswing frames, rhinestone frames, heavy tortoise frames, and such. Customers flocked in, particularly women.

Hearing-aid makers might follow this lead, say with a rhinestone ear button which announces frankly that the wearer is hard of hearing.

Hearing aids cost from $75 to $200, although all contain essentially the same elements. Which is the best? Trying to find an answer to this, I talked to representatives of the American Hearing Society and other impartial experts. The sum of their advice is this: One aid may be better for one person, another for a second person. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company advises: "There is no *best* hearing aid; a person must find

the one best suited to his particular needs."

Once the need for a hearing aid is established the next step is to try out several makes. The American Hearing Society has 125 chapters throughout the country and many of them have stocks of hearing aids available for free trial. Many hospitals have hearing clinics offering the same service. To find the facility of this type nearest you, write the American Hearing Society, 817 Fourteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

In buying a hearing aid, it is also wise to buy an established nationally advertised brand. Beware of the fly-by-night makers or dealers. To illustrate, one unscrupulous manufacturer had two models —one cheap, one expensive. Potential buyers naturally gravitated toward the cheaper model. Salesmen would permit them to try it for a few days, with the privilege of trading it in on the more expensive model if they didn't like it. After a few days' trial most customers did trade it in—for a good reason. Two resistors were built into the cheap model to *make* it a poor device and guide customers to the more expensive ones. By removing one resistor and shorting the other, the cheap device was quite as good as the more expensive one.

Hearing devices require frequent servicing, just as do many other pieces of electronic equipment. This is one more argument for buying an established brand. Fly-by-nights offer poor servicing and may be out of business by the time repairs are wanted. The American Medical Association's Council on Physical Medicine keeps a sharp eye on hearing devices, and approves those that pass its rigid testing.

Almost all wearers of hearing aids also need lip-reading training. Some distorted voice sounds are clearly "visible" if you will study the lips of the speaker. Also, many throaty sounds not formed by the lips are brought out clearly by hearing aids. In sum, the two work together to provide a much better range of hearing than either alone gives.

Lip readers, incidentally, mourned the passing of silent movies. They could follow comments of actors which had nothing to do with the script. With no sound tract to bother her, a heroine might speak out quite frankly during a tender love scene. While most of the audience thought she was murmuring to her Romeo about love, lip readers knew better. Chances are she was saying something like: "Listen, jughead; get that mop of greasy hair out of my face or I'll slap those phony teeth all over the set."

The ear story, I found, adds up to this: Most of us don't even know we have ears —until something goes wrong. When something does go wrong it is wise to act promptly. It is better to pay the fee of an ear doctor, or the price of a reputable hearing aid, than to go through life in a dreary world of silence.

THE END ★★

My Husband Is a Bum

(*Continued from page* 37)

he ever find me?" I wondered sadly.

I was only 17 and a senior in high school. One afternoon after school I walked with some of the girls to the bus stop. A car nearby honked its horn, and we all looked up as the driver waved. I recognized Pee Wee immediately.

"I took a chance on meeting you coming out of class. I thought you might like me to drive you home," he said.

The next few months were wonderful. We dated regularly. Pee Wee didn't like to dance much, but when he did, his natural poise and litheness helped make us one of the most graceful couples on the floor. We golfed and played tennis. I watched him play basketball and attended services at the Covenant Presbyterian Church with him.

An aunt of mine had been graduated from Duke University and it had been decided, when I was a child, that I would go there, too. But after I met Pee Wee it didn't matter to me whether I passed the entrance exams. North Carolina was too far away, so, to be near Pee Wee, I entered Bryant Stratton College in Louisville. Meanwhile, Pee Wee had proved he was too good a player to be left in Louisville, and when the Brooklyn Dodgers bought him in 1940 I was crestfallen.

Our weekly phone calls thereafter never seemed satisfying or long enough. Marriage was certainly on both our minds, but neither of us spoke of it. However, in 1942 I decided to spend my vacation at Daytona Beach, Fla., where the Dodgers were in spring training.

By this time a close relationship had developed between Pee Wee and his Dodger team-mate, Pete Reiser. Patricia Hunt, Pete's girl, arranged to come to Daytona Beach, too. Pat knew as little about baseball as I did. So we were just a couple of bewildered young girls watching infield and batting practice, but more interested in the nightly strolls along the beach in bright moonlight.

It was an atmosphere for romance. We talked of a family wedding back home after the season; but the day before Palm Sunday, Pete and Pat told us they planned to marry the next day and asked us to stand up for them. I looked at Pee Wee, he looked at me, and it seemed as though we nodded together.

With Dr. Edris of the First Presbyterian Church officiating, we stood up for the Reisers on Palm Sunday. And the very next day Pat was my attendant and Pete was Pee Wee's best man as Dr. Edris pronounced me Mrs. Reese.

Less than a month later I sat in a Brooklyn, N. Y., hotel, confused, alone, and completely unprepared to be a baseball wife. I had never been farther north than Cincinnati, Ohio. I couldn't cook. I couldn't sew. I didn't know where to shop, and I was frightened at the thought of riding the subways. I was as sorry for myself as any girl could be.

As I sat brooding, the phone rang. It was Helen Fitzsimmons, the wife of the veteran pitcher, Freddie Fitzsimmons. She had a sublet apartment not too far from the Dodgers' home park, Ebbets Field. Many of the players lived nearby with their families.

"Why don't you pack a bag, Dotty, and come stay with me for this first road trip," she suggested. "The other girls come over often. You'll get to know them better."

I was so grateful. When Pee Wee returned home we managed to sublet an apartment in the same building. Helen talked to me about ballplayers and their wives. She told me how, in a baseball sense, the players age quickly and that it was wise to budget for house and personal needs and bank the rest or put a portion into some form of annuity.

In fact, Helen was practically a mother-confessor. "Dorothy," she counseled, "although you are married to Pee Wee you must remember that he does not belong to you entirely. Baseball is your competitor, and you will find that as long as your husband is playing ball he will just about eat and sleep the game. Team standings and batting averages will be foremost in his mind, and there will be times when he won't be giving you the attention you'd like.

"Baseball is an exciting experience but it's also a business," she warned. "Learn something about the game so that you can talk with Pee Wee and understand his problems, but don't pretend you've become an expert at it."

In the happy years since Pee Wee and I were married, my husband has not only become the captain of the Brooklyn Dodgers, but I also have become a veteran baseball wife. Our life—Pee Wee's, our 8-year-old daughter Barbara's, and mine—has been run by a baseball schedule, as Helen Fitzsimmons had warned. Night games, double-headers, road trips, spring training, batting averages, the standings of the clubs, and, happy days, the World Series, regulate my cleaning, shopping, cooking, where we live, when and how Barbara will receive her schooling.

My husband is only 33 and I'm proud that he is one of the most respected men in baseball. Even though he is considered one of the game's best shortstops, he is still learning things about his job, and so am I about mine. He has had many a curve pitched to him while at bat, and we both have had to handle many a curve as man and wife, just as every family has to do.

I had to understand that bobby-soxers and other female Pee Wee Reese Club members who write him letters and call our house incessantly to speak to him are not love-struck girls trying to steal my husband from me. I had to cope with the possibility that our little girl, seeing others making a fuss over her daddy, would begin to feel she was a celebrity and rated special attention.

Pee Wee and I decided it was best for her to be with us during the full year

even though it means she attends school part of the year in one city, part in another and, in addition, is tutored by me.

And, above all, I had to understand that baseball is my husband's business, and our success or failure in meeting the adjustments as they came along would be directly reflected in what he did on the field and the pay check he brought home.

It seemed so hard at first, but it has all worked out. Barbara is growing up normally and naturally, an unaffected child who idolizes her father. Pee Wee lives a life of intensity and excitement on the field, but when he comes home he's like any other husband and father. He's one of those players who is usually able to leave the game behind him in the locker-room when he takes off his uniform.

My part in the family triangle revolves around the three households we maintain. During the playing season, our home is a rented apartment in Brooklyn. In the winter months, we live in an unpretentious colonial house in Louisville. Spring training presents the problem of finding suitable living accommodations in Florida. While this third home involves added expense, it's a vacation for Barbara and myself.

The biggest worry in moving from place to place is Barbara, now that she is of school age. Last spring, for instance, her understanding principal at Shawnee Elementary School, Louisville, laid out a lesson plan, gave me books, and showed me how to give her a two-hour instruction period daily so there would be no loss of grade in our switching from one city to another.

Fortunately, in Brooklyn a private school run by Catholic Sisters is near our home, and they accepted her. Later they reported that rather than seeming slow in class, Barbara was well advanced in her work.

As soon as schoolmates learned who Barbara's daddy was, they began to favor her. They would do such things as save swings for her during recess.

The Sisters reported this to me and suggested it would be well to speak to Barbara about it. They, meanwhile, asked Barbara's classmates to treat her just like any other child. For this, I'm most grateful, because I don't want my daughter receiving any special favors.

She and her father get along fine and I'm grateful that he never allows a poor day at the ball park to dim his cheerfulness around Barbara or me. He ordinarily doesn't like to eat immediately upon arriving home after a day game, so he and Barbara generally sit on the couch. Pee Wee reads to her or watches the end of the Giant game on television as she cuddles in his arm. She misses him when he's on a road trip. But these periodic absences give me an opportunity to experiment with recipes so that I can later surprise Pee Wee. He's neither a heavy nor a finicky eater, but he does enjoy food and is somewhat suspicious of new dishes. Steak, chops, or chicken served with a salad and a peanut-butter dressing of my own making are the ordinary dishes that would keep Pee Wee contented.

When the Dodgers are home and day games are scheduled I iron and do other housework, with the radio or television on. In this way I'm able to know approximately what time to start cooking a roast or other food that takes time. It didn't take me long to realize that anything can—and usually does—happen in Brooklyn to upset the best of plans.

I recall putting a roast in the oven on one occasion after two Dodgers were out in the ninth inning. In less time than it takes to tell it, the Dodgers scored twice, to send the game into extra innings. So I quickly yanked the roast out. After two or three more innings the Dodgers got two men on base with no one out. Ah, thought I, this will wind it up, so back into the oven went the roast. But the tide turned, no one scored, and the game went on and on.

When Pee Wee finally came through the door there was that elfin grin as he remarked, "Honey, I guess the dinner is well done."

I laughed at and with him. I've learned how to do it. It's a good many years back to the day I tried to make some biscuits early in my life as a baseball wife. My husband tried one and I could see he was having trouble sinking his teeth into it. I shouted at him, "Don't you dare say a word. I don't say anything to you when you make an error."

I don't say anything, either, about the way night games mess up the entire routine of the day. I know my husband doesn't have a hand in scheduling them. All day I can't do anything, because he's underfoot, reading the papers or watching the Giants or Yankees on television. Dinner then is at 4. I eat with Pee Wee, but I must fix a separate and later dinner for Barbara. After the game Pee Wee comes home and eats something again. Then he can't go to sleep immediately, so we don't get to bed until quite late. Which means he doesn't awaken until 9:30 and he doesn't have his breakfast until 10.

You women whose husbands work at regular jobs, leave the house at the same hour each morning, arrive home at the same hour each night, and eat at a specified dinner hour, must wonder how we baseball wives do it. There are compensations, not the least of which is the look on my husband's face, the pride in the way he walks and talks when we win the pennant. There is nothing like it in all the world—although I still hate to think of what happened last fall, and the year before.

Some of the players' wives are real baseball fans, some just rooters for the men they married. I am not really a baseball fan, or even a Dodger fan. I am a Pee Wee Reese fan, but I know that my husband's life revolves around the game he plays, and his team and mine must do the same.

If I ever doubted it once, I didn't after a horrible experience in the late summer of 1949. The Dodgers were in the heat of the pennant race that finally brought them into the World Series. Pee Wee was away on a Western trip, when Barbara

fell ill. It had happened many times before, but not quite like this. Any mother who has gone through it must appreciate how I felt when the doctor told me the dread news. Barbara had contracted polio.

My immediate reaction was to call my husband and ask him to come home at once. I reached for the phone many times, but didn't put in the call, because I asked myself, "What good purpose would it serve asking Pee Wee to share the anguished hours?"

There was nothing he could do but pray, as I was praying, that our little girl would be spared. Dr. Morris Steiner, a wonderful man to whom I shall be eternally grateful, must have known the torment I was going through. He had taken care of Barbara from the time she was an infant. He was not only her pediatrician, but our friend and a Dodger fan.

"You can tell Pee Wee about this, if you wish," he said, "but I don't know what he can do to help. If he's told about it now and stays with the team, which I doubt he'll do, he'll be no good for his job. By the time he comes home, if he's not told anything about this now, I believe we can have the child safely out of harm's way."

EVERY night I spoke to Pee Wee over the long-distance phone during that trip, but I didn't tell him about Barbara. I said she was feeling ill, but nothing much to worry about. Not until my husband came off the plane at La Guardia Airport, almost two weeks later, and was seated in the car beside me did I tell him about it. I also was able to tell him then that Dr. Steiner had been right. Today Barbara shows not the slightest effect of the dread disease.

I don't believe I will ever suffer through a harder time in my life than I did in those days as Barbara lay ill. But there have been other days, less extreme, of course, when I wished sincerely that my husband earned his living in a less demanding way. There are so many days when a wife wants comforting, a kindly word after a frustrating day at home, or a compliment on a new frock. She knows, however, if she is a baseball wife, that the score of the day's game, the hits or the errors, will be more important than how pretty she looks or how disturbed she is.

It wasn't until 1947 that the Dodgers made the World Series for the first time in my life with Pee Wee. My husband had been in the World Series once before, in 1941, but I had no idea how he would react to his second.

My birthday falls on October 1, so for my first Series I really went to town on clothes to fit the occasion. For the first two games I could have been dressed in burlap for all my husband noticed. You see, we lost both games. I could almost feel the orchid withering on my coat as Pee Wee took my arm and dejectedly led me through the consoling crowd that lined the alleyway leading from the Dodgers' dressing-room. We won the third game, and when my husband came toward me there was a sparkle in his eye and a firm bounce to his step. He stopped a foot or so away from me, cocked his head just a trifle, and looked me over.

"Mighty pretty outfit," he said. "When did you get it?"

Many players and their wives have not been as fortunate as we have been. Pee Wee's entire major-league career has been with the Dodgers, and they have been in some close pennant races. These are trying times both for the players and for the wives, and I'll never forget the tension of the 1950 race.

The Dodgers played the Phillies in Brooklyn on the final day of the season, and victory would have given them a tie for the pennant, with the top share in the World Series money if they had won the play-off. Each player in the World Series gets $4,000 or more, so it isn't very hard to imagine how excited and interested in victory I was on such an occasion. Series money to a ballplayer is like a whopping Christmas bonus to the average businessman.

In that crucial game the suspense was unbearable until the very end. With the score tied 1 to 1, the game went into extra innings, and as I sat in the stands watching, biting my nails, I could tell Pee Wee was as tense as I was. I could feel his heart sink, as mine did, when Dick Sisler of the Phillies blasted a home run with two men on base that won the game in the tenth. That night we were both pretty depressed—but next day we were smiling again and thinking about next year. Over the years, we have become accustomed to these ups and downs of baseball life.

With the season concluded, we lost little time in packing to depart for our permanent home in Louisville. Incidentally, it's a moderate-priced house I bought without Pee Wee ever having seen it. He was recovering from an operation when I first saw it. When I told him about it he said, "Honey, if you like it and think it's for us, then close the deal."

SOME of our non-baseball friends tell me I spoil my husband. But only during the season. He spoils me in the off-season. In the wintertime his day begins at 7:15, when he breakfasts with Barbara. After breakfast he drives Barbara to school, picking up two or three other kids on our street in what he calls his kiddie bus service.

Since we bought the house Pee Wee has become pretty handy at doing things around it. Maybe this is because he has learned it becomes expensive if you call in a carpenter, electrician, or plumber every time something needs to be done.

Pee Wee and I have papered our own walls, painted the woodwork, and tiled the kitchen. He also made a lovely cornice for Barbara's room.

He has sort of worked out a regular off-season schedule. Every Monday night he attends a "bullpen" meeting of Louisville people connected with professional baseball in one way or other. Last year he was club president. Tuesday night there is basketball practice for the church team Pee Wee coaches for boys between the ages of 11 and 17. On Wednesday night the teams play their league games. Last year there also was a regular Saturday-night television commitment, but I've convinced him he should give this up, because Saturday night is *our* night.

It's always so much fun going out with my husband. He is invariably pleasant and friendly. He is also neat and well dressed. He is a meticulous dresser and never appears uncomfortable in his clothes. In the morning around the house he'll wear levis or corduroys, or during the baseball season a polo shirt and a pair of slacks. But in the evening his trousers are pressed just right and the Windsor knot in his solid-color knit tie is always in place.

When he was selected in 1950 as one of the 10 best-dressed men in America I was so pleased, and a little vain about it, too. Pee Wee has his own ideas about clothes, but many of his preferences have come from my tastes. I buy or supervise the purchase of much of his wardrobe.

He has 11 suits, but the ones he favors are a dark blue, a gray flannel, a tan flannel, a tan sharkskin, and a brown worsted. He has several sports jackets, mostly in hound's-tooth check, and he achieves the effect of having so complete a wardrobe by a sensible blending of jackets and slacks.

WHILE strict, sometimes a trifle more than he should be, with Barbara, Pee Wee always explains to her why she is being punished. In the off-season they have so much fun together. He rolls around the floor or on the grass with her. He can sit for hours playing dolls or making believe he is a little boy and she is his baby-sitter. Or while I'm doing the dishes he helps her with her homework, teaches her songs, and tells her stories.

We live modestly and as normally as we can. Our car is about our only touch of swank. We belong to the Audubon Country Club, but it's no evening clothes or big parties for us. Except for an occasional dance at the club, having friends in for bridge, and going to their houses, we'll sit at home and read, go for a drive, or play golf. Next year we hope to buy Barbara a junior set of clubs so she can play with us. Pee Wee is really good. He's broken 70.

This business of moving from one place to another always seems to distress other women. Believe me, it bothered me too when I had to do it the first few years, but fortunately, with Pee Wee playing for Brooklyn all this time, we have been able to make suitable arrangements well in advance and have worked out a system that keeps the disruption to a minimum.

That's not the case as far as many another baseball wife is concerned, and I sympathize with each of them. But being realistic about things and recognizing that a baseball player's "earning" years are short, Pee Wee and I—thanks to the good counsel of Helen Fitzsimmons and others—have planned well for the future. It's an unusual occupation my husband pursues but it has its compensations, as well as its moments of despair and glory.

I married a Dodger "bum," but it's been a most enjoyable life and one, I'm sure, that still holds great rewards. And take it from me, we're bound to win that pennant this year! You just wait and see. . . .

THE END ★★

Angels in Your Living Room

(*Continued from page* 33)

ones out into a jar before the other fish could eat them.

Once more my friend displayed deplorable lack of knowledge about what is, in my opinion, the most fascinating subject in the world. "That fish is giving birth to babies!" he exclaimed. "I thought fish were supposed to lay eggs!"

So it turned out that not only 5-year-old Peter, but also his 32-year-old father were learning the facts of life. I explained that about half the fish commonly kept in home aquariums are "live bearers" that hatch their eggs inside the female's body, while the other half scatter the eggs in the water, lay them in hollows dug in the bottom, glue them onto leaves, or float them in nests of bubbles on the surface.

I told Peter and his pop about one fascinating little fish I've seen from Brazil which jumps out of the water and lays its eggs on dry land to outsmart other fish that might eat them. Until the eggs hatch 3 days later, the male fish splashes water on them with its tail to keep them moist.

If this fish sounds too smart to be true, as it did to my doubtful friend, you can put it to the test in a tank by providing a sloping piece of slate or roughened glass for the fish to jump out on. This peculiar specimen goes by the fancy Latin name of *Copeina Arnoldi*. They're fairly rare, but large aquarium stores carry them occasionally at about $2 a pair.

However, for giving a youngster a clear picture of the basic facts about reproduction, there's nothing so good as a common aquarium fish like the platy, mollie, or guppy, which can be bought in almost any pet store for from 40 cents to $1.50 a pair. By the time Peter had watched 20 wriggling young ones pop out of the swollen belly of my golden platy, he was thoroughly convinced that babies come from their mothers' bodies.

When the show was over Peter's father shook my hand as if I'd just become a parent, myself. "Thanks a million for the lesson," he said. "I used to think all you fish fanciers were crazy, but now I'm beginning to think there might be something to it."

As a fish fancier myself, I can only say that if I'm crazy, at least I have plenty of company. C. W. Coates, Curator of the New York Zoological Society Aquarium, made a national survey in 1937 which indicated that there were then 10,000,000 Americans who kept fish. As a result of the tremendous growth of the hobby since World War II, Mr. Coates considers it a safe bet that the number of enthusiasts has at least doubled today.

This is probably a moderate estimate if we include every living-room goldfish bowl. Something like 50,000,000 goldfish are being sold yearly, mostly of the common 10-cent variety. Oddly enough, a single fish-farm—Stanley H. Byram's Grassyfork Fisheries, near Martinsville, Ind.—raises three fourths of the country's entire goldfish crop.

Most of these fish, however, don't live long enough to contribute much to the number of permanent home aquariums. They lead short, sad lives, usually crowded in too-small bowls. A leading fish collector and authority in the field, William T. Innes, of Philadelphia, Pa., tells of a woman who wrote to him for advice about her goldfish. She explained that she had 8 of them in a cute little globe, fed them 3 good meals a day, and changed the water often. "The fish are always at the top of the water with their mouths in the air," she said. "This makes a little sound. Do you think they are trying to speak to me?"

According to Mr. Innes, that's exactly what the fish were doing. They were crying for help, because they were suffocating for lack of oxygen. When fish are too crowded they can't be healthy, no matter how often the water is changed. One fish dealer I know won't sell more than one medium-sized goldfish in the average, small-sized bowl. Actually, the goldfish that lives outdoors in a back-yard lily pond eating mosquito larvae is much luckier.

In most homes I've visited, a pair of 10-cent goldfish last about as long as Junior looks at them and Mother feels like changing their water—which usually isn't very long. On the other hand, a pet-shop dealer told me recently about a customer who brought two goldfish into the store, explained that the family was going on vacation, and offered to pay $1 a week board for the fish.

Instead of a month, 3 months went by, and the dealer was about to put the fish in the tank with the rest of his stock and forget about them. Just then the owner walked in and explained that both he and his wife had been in the hospital after a serious auto accident. "Where are the fish and how much do I owe you?" he asked.

The storekeeper figured out that the board bill came to $12. "I hate to take your money for a couple of fish that originally cost a quarter," he said. "How about taking home a couple of fancier ones instead?"

The answer was no. "The wife and kids would never forgive me," the customer said. "They love these two. They wouldn't look at any of your fancy breeds."

There are millions of serious fish enthusiasts, on the other hand, who wouldn't look at a goldfish, considering them much too dull and uninteresting. Personally, I agree. Ordinary goldfish are so alike in color, shape, and habits that I wouldn't give them tank room. A serious fish fancier, in my book, must at least have advanced beyond the goldfish to the guppy, the second most

popular fish in America. No two male guppies are exactly alike in their dots and dashes of brilliant color, and a tankful of these tiny fish has more movement than a whirling pinwheel.

But why stop at guppies? Why not try a couple of neon tetras? Here, in my opinion, is one of the most beautiful living things in existence, even though it's no more than an inch and a quarter long and you can buy a pair for a little more than $1. Tiny as the fish is, many hobbyists consider it the king of the aquarium. No bird has prettier plumage than this Amazon River pigmy, with its transparent fins, its splash of scarlet on the lower part of the body, and a brilliant blue-green line from eye to tail which glows as if the fish's backbone were charged with electric current. If neon signs were half as pretty I'd be out in Times Square right now, instead of at home watching my aquarium.

No one who hadn't seen an angel fish would ever believe that such a creature could exist. Who would dream of designing a fish with a perfectly round body, flat and shiny as a silver dollar, then giving it fins topside and bottom which make it higher than it is long? Add a pair of enormous, stringlike, drooping ventral fins, graceful and dignified as a Chinese philosopher's chin-whiskers, dark vertical stripes, and a bright-red eye, and you've got a fish which every collector wants at least two of in his tank. The only trouble is that in spite of its name and the shy, peaceful disposition of the young specimens, the angel grows too big for the smaller home aquarium. Several I've known have turned into tank bullies, nudging small fish away from their food and throwing dirty looks at me, their owner. Today I keep one angel in my 10-gallon community tank, but if I see it make one threatening move toward another fish—back it goes to the dealer.

KEEPING things lively enough in my tank at the moment are my pair of zebra danios. They're bright, flashy fellows an inch and a half long, and among the hardiest of tropical fish. I'd like to have more of them, because a bunch of zebras at courtin' time can really make the water boil. On the other hand, they can also drive the rest of the fish crazy, so I'm getting along with two.

And one is enough when it comes to the beautiful veiltail betta, the fiercest two inches of fish in captivity. The betta, bred today in matchless colors of deep red, green, lavender, and blue, with flowing fins as graceful as ostrich-feather fans, is the famous Siamese fighting fish. They're matched in Bangkok like fighting cocks by Siamese gentlemen of sporting blood. Two male bettas in the same tank will tear each other's fins to ribbons, but they won't ordinarily attack fish of other species.

My red betta is a fearless character, true to his Siamese ancestry. Putting a finger in the tank, which will drive the other fish quickly to cover, only makes him come up and nibble. If I put him alone in a tank with a female betta, he goes into a graceful water-ballet to win her favor, then in a few minutes, just to make sure she knows who's boss, he beats her up. After that, the mating embrace takes place.

Fish, however, can be as individual as people, and things don't always work out as they should. One of the most experienced tropical-fish fanciers I know, a young Brooklyn collector, breeder, and retailer named Earl Schneider, told me recently about a male betta that courted his lady in the usual way and gave her a few nips and bruises as expected. What happened next, however, wasn't in the rule-book. The drab female turned on the splendid, peacock-plumed show-off and butted and charged him until he was cowering under a plant. The henpecked Siamese never tried to mate that particular female again.

Down in the bottom of my tank are two fish I'm especially fond of. One is a 2-inch-long leopard catfish, a slightly bug-eyed, mustached Andy Gump personality that is so ugly he's pretty. He's very useful, too, as a living vacuum cleaner which methodically works over the bottom of the tank picking up uneaten food dropped by the others.

The catfish's only friend—besides me—is a pinkish-white, 2½-inch-long example of one of nature's oddities—a blind cave fish. My fish's ancestors spent countless generations trapped in certain caves in Mexico, learned how to survive in total darkness, and gradually lost their sight. Today these fish have only rudimentary eyes, completely grown over and invisible.

You needn't feel sorry for Sightless Joe, however. He's got a sixth sense that keeps him from bumping into obstacles, and he can find food on the bottom that other fish miss. I've seen evidence, too, that the others respect his handicap. Tank bullies never pick on him.

My tank population at the moment is completed by 2 clams which filter the water and help keep it clean, and a so-called "mystery snail," which also scavenges on the bottom and helps keep down the growth of algae.

No aquarium is altogether furnished, of course, without aquatic plants growing in the sand on the bottom. These can be as varied and interesting as an outdoor garden, and every gardener likes to make his own selection. All of mine are common, cheap, and attractive—a dozen corkscrew vallisneria, 2 giant sagittaria, a bunch of anacharis (fancy name for ditch moss), a spray of hornwort, and a banana plant.

Altogether, I spent less than $40 to start my fish collection, yet it has given me as much fun as a $300 television set. I find my neon tetras prettier than Faye Emerson, and, frankly, the catfish is a lot funnier than Milton Berle.

ANYONE who thinks this makes me eccentric should pay a visit to a really serious fish enthusiast, like Dr. Leon F. Whitney, of Orange, Conn. Dr. Whitney is a veterinarian who runs one of the biggest animal clinics in the country. He has devoted his life to the study of dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, mice, raccoons, and skunks. Yet when I visited him recently we spent hours talking, not about 4-footed or 2-winged critters, but about guppies.

Dr. Whitney started raising tropical fish years ago, but never became really enthusiastic about them until he got rid of all the fancy species and concentrated on guppies. Starting with one tankful, he has 80 tanks today in a steam-heated "fish room" built into his new home. The equipment in this room cost somewhere between $500 and $600. It keeps several thousand multicolored, peacock-tailed little beauties luxuriously housed and happily producing immense families.

The doctor has found enough in the personality of the guppy to write a book about, and plans to publish it soon. His main interest is in breeding new and improved strains of guppies by careful selection of mating pairs. He now has pure white albinos with pink eyes, golden guppies, black-tailed guppies, red-tailed guppies, and many others.

Here's All You Need to Start a Home Aquarium

BELOW is an interesting basic collection of tropical fish, and the equipment you need to start a home aquarium. If there is no aquarium store in your community, you can order what you want from out of town. Prices of fish vary with the locality and the quality of the individual specimen. Aquarium supplies vary among different dealers and in different parts of the country. A smaller aquarium can be set up for half the cost shown, but this one will hold a growing fish population and enough water to keep them healthy, with proper care:

2 red platies	$1.25
2 neon tetras	1.50
2 zebra danios	.50
2 black mollies	1.50
2 Trinidad guppies	.50
1 angel	.50
2 kissing gourami	2.00
1 leopard catfish	1.00
1 blind cave fish	.75
2 clams	.50
3 cornucopia snails	.25
10-gallon tank, stainless-steel frame	7.75
Stainless-steel reflector, bulbs	7.25
Thermostat and heater	5.50
Net	.25
Chlorine remover	.25
Box of food	.35
Tonic for disease prevention	.25
Selection of plants	1.65
	$33.50

There are a few additional items, such as gravel, sand, rocks, and ornaments, which may be either purchased or collected at no cost.

Dr. Whitney explains the fascination of fish-collecting this way: "With an aquarium you can watch living things carry on their whole life cycle before your eyes. It's a little world a few feet square which you can care for and keep on a bookshelf."

I was riding behind a taxi driver the other day who turned out to be a fish fan, but for different reasons. "Watchin' them fish swim around kills me," he said. "When I get home nights I'm so jumpy from the traffic I can't sit still. Then I go over and feed the fish—I got mostly bloodfins and medakas. I relax. They're better than sleepin' pills."

The parents of a 2-year-old child whom I know discovered recently that fish are excellent baby-pacifiers. Their offspring had been refusing to fall asleep without kicking up a fuss, so I suggested buying a small aquarium built into the base of a lamp, which could be used as a night light. Now the youngster stares at the fish for a few minutes, gets drowsy, and pops off without a peep.

Fish can also be stimulators. My own neighborhood aquarium dealer introduced me to an elderly woman who became partially paralyzed not long ago and decided she wasn't interested in living. Her son set up a tank at her bedside, and the fish eventually succeeded in getting her out of bed. Today I see her scooting down to the store every so often in her wheel chair with a small covered pail in which she brings home live fish.

So it seems that tropical fish enthusiasts can be found between the ages of 2 and 72, and in every part of the country. In the 48 states there are 140 local aquarium societies, some with hundreds of members, which meet regularly to swap fish stories—and also to swap fish. Nearly one fourth of these clubs have sprung up in the past year.

A typical club activity, carried out by the Oregon Aquarium Society, was to set up fish tanks for patients at the Barnes Veterans' Hospital at Vancouver, Wash. This program was begun shortly after the war and is still in operation. Incredible though it may seem, doctors have reported that occasionally a discharged GI is unhappy about leaving the hospital until he's sure another patient will take good care of his fish. Many other hospitals now have similar projects.

Two of the leading fish fanciers in the Oregon club are Tom and Marie Dodd, of Portland, who became famous in fish circles a couple of years back for successfully breeding a pair of South American discus fish. These two rare and temperamental specimens cost the Dodds $100. They're among the most beautiful of aquarium fish, and look like 6-inch-diameter pancakes, with brilliant multicolored markings. However, they have seldom been persuaded to propagate in captivity.

After living a life of luxury in a 60-gallon tank in the Dodd fish room for a year, these two specimens suddenly decided to co-operate. During the following 3 months their historic wedding produced 600 young discuses.

Mr. and Mrs. Dodd share their enthusiasm for fish equally, contrary to the often-expressed theory that aquarium-keeping is primarily a male hobby. Mrs. Dodd even encouraged her husband to take over a downstairs closet that adjoined their dining room, chop a hole through the wall, and place a fish tank in the closet behind this opening. He then mounted a picture frame in front of the opening and illuminated the aquarium. The result is a living, breathing submarine masterpiece, which appears to be hanging on the dining-room wall.

The business of selling tropical fish has grown with the number of hobbyists. Whereas almost all "exotics"—as some enthusiasts prefer to call them—used to be imported from South and Central America, Africa, Asia, Australia, and the East Indies, the vast majority of the fish sold today are raised in this country. Breeding is carried on in open ponds on fish farms in Florida and California, and in tanks in heated buildings, similar to greenhouses, in colder regions.

Before World War II, tropicals could be readily found only in the bigger cities, where fish tanks were tucked away as departments in large pet shops. Today more than 3,000 shops sell fish, and a large proportion of these are aquarium stores selling nothing but fish.

The biggest and one of the oldest-established tropical retailers in the country is the Aquarium Stock Company in New York City. The store did so well, with both its local and mail-order trade, that the owner, Leonard Barkitz, decided shortly after the war to move to California and retire. He found such an increased demand for tropical fish on the West Coast, however, that the lure was irresistible. Today he has a second streamlined fish emporium in Los Angeles, designed by a Hollywood decorator. The two branches ship fish to all parts of the world, and together sell nearly $1,000,000 worth of fish and aquarium supplies annually.

Another enterprise was started by an amateur fish enthusiast named Irving Straus, a Navy veteran who had a problem which occasionally afflicts all hobbyists. His collection outgrew his house. Being a young man of considerable wealth, Irving solved the dilemma by opening the Westchester Aquarium in White Plains, N.Y., and going into business. His current retail sales are probably the second largest in the country. His 200 tanks contain 500 to 600 varieties of fish, including such spectacular novelties as transparent glass catfish, Amazon River leaf fish, Philippine climbing perch, Egyptian mouth-breeders, electric eels, bloodthirsty piranhas, and East Indian archer fish, which can bring down insects by spitting a drop of water into the air.

Extensive as this collection is, there are private hobbyists who can rival it in their homes. Leon Baernstein, a Balti-

more, Md., auto dealer, for example, has in his cellar 300 specimens, representing 100 different species of fish. He spends his spare time playing nursemaid to them, and his vacations traveling in search of more and rarer ones.

Then there are collectors who prefer to specialize, such as television comedienne Imogene Coca. She is interested only in sea horses, which are unusual and fascinating, but must be kept in a special salt-water tank.

Finally, I have a friend who has carried specialization in fish-collecting about as far as it can go. In fact, he can hardly be called a "collector," although he's had an aquarium beside his favorite armchair for years.

This tank is inhabited by a single large fish named Jack Dempsey, a dark-green, striped member of the cichlid family, from South America. My friend's fish is nearly 8 inches long, and has lived alone with him in solitary splendor for 6 years. Whenever the master of the house serves steak or roast beef, Dempsey gets the first portion, raw. He also receives live guppies as a special treat.

Personally, I consider this fish ugly and bad-tempered, and I finally asked my friend why he kept him.

"I'll tell you why," he said. "It's because I'm lazy. I used to own a bulldog, and every morning and every night I had to take him for a long walk. Dempsey, here, looks just like the bulldog, but he's never barked, never bit anybody, and never has to go out."

Which goes to show that there are all kinds of reasons why people keep fish.

THE END ★★

Why Not Marry the Boy Next Door?

(*Continued from page* 31)

conducted a nationwide survey, not of statistics but of the girls themselves—typical American girls who have recently tasted the success of becoming brides. I sent interviewers into 33 U.S. towns and cities ranging in size from Randolph, Wis. (pop. 1,146) to New York (pop. over 7,800,000). Five of the interviewers concentrated on recently married girls in large cities like Atlanta, Ga. (pop. 327,000); five others went into such small cities as Great Falls, Mont. (pop. 39,000); and the other five concentrated on communities like Barre, Vt. (pop. 11,000). I also consulted Dr. John Cuber, Ohio State University sociologist who has been keeping a sharp eye on America's mating patterns.

Here are the conclusions:

—Two thirds of the girls we interviewed eventually married local boys, even though 70 per cent of them had tried their chances in strange towns before coming home to marry.

—Girls who marry home-town boys, on the whole, like their marriages better than do girls who move away and marry in strange towns.

—Three quarters of the wives believe that any girl who goes to a strange city today is likely to have a hard time romantically.

—Nine tenths of the wives first met their future husbands in situations which marriage experts recommend as ideal for matchmaking: that is, through friends, relatives, schools, churches, places of work, clubs, resorts, or small parties.

—A third of the wives admit they deliberately set out to meet their man.

—The ideal-sized community for building a promising courtship is the middle-sized town with a population between 15,000 and 100,000.

Even among the girls who were past the peak of their age eligibility when they married, the great majority found their man in their own home town. Of the girls who were over 24 when they married, for example, 70 per cent married home-town boys! (The average U. S. girl today marries at 21.)

The preference for the home-town boy seems to be so firmly rooted that even when the girls went to faraway places they tended to gravitate to boys who were from back home. We were told that West Virginia girls, when they go to New York to make careers, end up in most cases by marrying fellows in New York who are natives of West Virginia. They seem to seek each other out.

Dora Quesnel, of Bathgate, N. Dak., went to the West Coast to become an airline hostess, but grew lonesome for a home-town face. She looked up a dentist in Taft, Calif., who was also from Bathgate. Though she had barely known him back home, they're now married.

Let's listen to the girls tell where and how they first won the serious notice of their future husbands. By doing it we can see how they made use of the "social machinery" available in their home towns. Such machinery—church socials, informal dances, evenings at the movies—is of course also available in the big city, but much more difficult for a stranger to get in on. Most of the successful encounters fell into one of five situations:

1. Twenty-nine per cent of the wives state that they first met their husbands-to-be by getting friends or relatives to act as Cupids or go-betweens in bringing them together. The wife of John McHugo, of Barre, Vt., tells how she arranged to meet her husband for the first time: "I managed the introduction through his cousin."

ANOTHER Barre wife first met her husband in a diner. Let's just see what took place. She recalls: "He had just been discharged from the Navy. He was with a fellow and I was with a girl-friend. The fellow and my girl-friend knew each other. My girl-friend introduced us. The boys took us to a movie, and then took us home."

2. Twenty-six per cent of the girls first met their future husbands while relaxing or enjoying themselves in a home-town social group brought together by some common interest. That is, they met at a club, at a party in some home, at sports, or while on vacation. Such circumstances, in fact, seem to be the very best breeding ground for serious romances when they can be managed.

Our interviewer in Santa Monica, Calif., had the astonishing experience of finding 3 different girls who had met their future husbands in exactly the same spot on the Ocean Front beach. That spot, she reported in case any of you girls are interested, is "right in front of the place where the fellows play volley ball. It seems to be a fine spot for snaring husbands!"

One of the girls we interviewed met her husband-to-be at a club for amateur astronomers. Another girl—in Keosauqua, Iowa—met her man when her skating club had a skating party to which the girls were supposed to bring men.

Mrs. Richard Oppenheimer, wife of a New York accountant, says she met her husband-to-be while returning a tennis ball he had knocked into her court. He fell down trying to get it. Today she likes to say, "He fell for me the first time he saw me."

SOMETIMES spills have been contrived to win the notice of a future mate. A girl in Los Angeles confides that while skiing in a Sierras resort she managed to take an awful spill near the feet of the handsome stranger who was to become her husband. To this day he does not suspect that the spill was engineered, and she asked us not to print her name!

Another girl, this time in New England, spotted an attractive-looking man in a grocery store. He paid no attention to her until she deliberately tripped over a bag of onions. They are now Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ennis.

A girl in Monongahela, Pa., was invited to a dance where she noticed one clumsy fellow having trouble with his feet while trying to dance. An expert dancer herself, she easily got introduced—and offered to stick with him till he got the knack of it. The poor fellow was so grateful he found himself asking her to be his bride within six weeks.

3. Seventeen per cent of the wives we interviewed recall that they first met their future husbands in college or high-school classrooms. Our educational system appears to be a very important agency for bringing boys and girls together in an atmosphere where close friendships can develop.

A Denver wife, Mrs. Robert T. Gates Jr., was attending a class at Catholic University when she noticed a man who intrigued her. "I spied him first," she recalls. "I thought he was the one for me." It wasn't long before she managed to start a conversation with him after class. That led to sodas, and to dates.

4. Twelve per cent of our wives first met their husbands-to-be at the place where they worked. Mrs. Helen Walker, of Detroit, Mich., was a stenographer in a firm where her husband-to-be was a draftsman. She recalls how she developed an acquaintanceship with him so-

cially: "I was a Yankee fan and found out he was a Boston fan. I suggested a bet and the loser was to take the other out. I lost, and had to take him out. But, win or lose, I know I won!"

5. Seven per cent of the couples we talked with first met at some church function.

A Brooklyn wife who was a church organist had reached the age of 27 still unmarried and was becoming concerned about her chances. She told us how she first won the admiring interest of her husband. She deliberately scheduled her practice at the same evening and hour each week when a young men's group held meetings in the church. One of them has since become her husband.

Churches traditionally are a fine place for serious romance to get started, probably because people enter church in a serious, thoughtful, looking-to-the-future mood. As a Bend, Ore., wife put it: "You can meet more nice men by being active in church work than by trying to meet them in public places."

Home-town romances in general seem to lead to happier marriages than those involving comparative strangers in faraway places.

Why? Mrs. Vernon Miller, of Madison, Wis., offered one explanation: "Boys at home are more like you; they have the same ideas and the same background." Joyce Pflieger, wife of a Livonia, Mich., accountant, offered another explanation when she said: "It gives you a feeling of confidence to marry someone where you are."

The wife of a Pocatello, Idaho, soldier put it this way: "A person's life is like a tree. It has roots at home. To take a tree and put it in a strange place is bad."

Most of the wives we talked to felt that it is riskier than is generally realized for a girl to pull up stakes and move off to a strange city, even though men may seem to be more plentiful there. They pointed out that the mere presence of oodles of men, in itself, is no help. There are lots of men in a movie house, but what good does it do a lonesome girl sitting in the same theater!

As auburn-haired Mrs. Eleanor Hitchens, of Philadelphia, Pa., explained: "If you go some place where you don't know anybody, you still have to find a way to meet the men."

A young Denver, Colo., wife with a nice smile, Mrs. Arlene Kline, told us frankly: "I wouldn't know how to go about meeting nice men in a strange city. Most other nice girls don't, either."

ANOTHER problem, apparently, is that in strange places a girl has little chance to learn the background and character of men she meets. She learns only what he chooses to let her learn. Many men are not "on the level," to repeat a phrase several girls used.

The wives we interviewed felt that a community can be both too big and too small for ideal romantic conditions, other things being equal. In the large city, according to an Oregon wife who had lived in several big West Coast cities, "You don't even know the people next door. People aren't friendly at all. They are aloof."

A New England housewife pointed out another difficulty she had noticed in cities where she had lived or visited: "If a fellow and a girl in a big city have a little tiff, they aren't apt to run into each other where they can make up, and go on from there."

A small town (under 5,000) also has shortcomings as an incubator of romance, according to quite a number of the wives. Three girls in one Midwest town complained that boys with talent and promise usually do not remain for long in a small town these days.

A second objection to small towns which may or may not be valid is that boys and girls get to know each other *too* well. One girl in the Northwest explained: "The boys have seen the girls grow through the awkward stage, and get into the habit of not paying any attention to them. The girls go away, and new fellows see them for what they are."

ON THE question of the ideal-sized town, Dr. Cuber of Ohio State arrived independently at the same conclusion that the girls reached. In somewhat more scholarly terms he informed us: "The conditions for most favorable courtship are found in small cities and large towns —that is, the medium-sized places. The extremes are difficult, because in the small towns there are insufficient choices, and in the larger cities there is so much anonymity that one does not get to know the potential eligibles."

If a girl is well up in her twenties without any prospects of marriage, and the local situation looks hopeless, it may well be that she should move on—not to a huge city, but to a medium-sized place a bit larger than the town she was brought up in. If she can either get a member of her family to go with her, to provide a home background, or move in with some friends who are already established, so much the better.

It can be done. Mrs. Thomas Withorn, of Atlanta, Ga., told us: "I know several girls who came from small towns to Atlanta to work, and met their husbands here."

A wife who went to a Denver secretarial job from her home town in Salina, Kans., told us she deliberately set out to make friends fast. She got herself a room at the YWCA ("the fastest way to meet boys is through other girls"). She signed up for night courses at Denver University ("there were 8 girls and 20 boys in the class"). She became active in a Methodist church, which had a big young people's program. And she looked up every person from Salina whom her friends and relatives back home could refer her to. By the end of 6 months she felt like a native of Denver. She had several boyfriends, including a young engineer who later became her husband.

Perhaps this is the best way to sum up the advice the young wives gave us:

Stay in your own home town if you can. The odds there are better than you'll probably ever find anywhere else. But if you feel you must move, then make the new place into another *home town* to you just as fast as you possibly can!

THE END ★★

Every government employee must fill out this civil service form as a basis for personal loyalty check by the FBI

STANDARD FORM 84
Promulgated August 4, 1947, by Civil Service Commission

REQUEST FOR REPORT ON LOYALTY DATA

THIS FORM TO BE USED FOR INCUMBENT EMPLOYEES AND EXCEPTED EMPLOYEES WHERE INVESTIGATION IS CONDUCTED BY AGENCY (Part VI—Executive Order 9835)

To: The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington 25, D. C.

The following information is furnished for identification purposes on the person named below. Kindly furnish a report on any derogatory loyalty information contained in your files. (The fingerprints of this person are attached.)

1. FULL NAME (Initials and abridgements of full name are not acceptable)	(Surname)	(Given name)	(Middle or other names)

2. ALIASES AND NICKNAMES	3. DATE OF THIS REQUEST

4. SPECIAL NUMBERS KNOWN TO REQUESTING AGENCY (FBI number or FBI file number, passport number, Army or Navy serial number, seaman's certificate of identification, alien registration number, Social Security number, etc. Specify which)

5. PLACE OF BIRTH	6. DATE OF BIRTH	7. TITLE OF POSITION, OCCUPATION OR PROFESSION

8. SEX	9. MARITAL STATUS	10. IF MARRIED, GIVE SPOUSE'S FULL NAME, AND DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH
☐ MALE ☐ FEMALE	☐ SINGLE ☐ MARRIED	

11. ORGANIZATIONS WITH WHICH AFFILIATED OTHER THAN RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS OR THOSE WHICH SHOW RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS

12. DATES AND PLACES OF RESIDENCE FOR THE LAST 10 YEARS

Date	*Street*	*City*	*State*

WHAT A

13. DATES, NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF EMPLOYERS FOR THE LAST 10 YEARS

Date	*Employer*	*Address*

14. THIS AGENCY HAS LOYALTY INFORMATION REPORT(S) FURNISHED BY THE AGENCIES INDICATED BELOW:

AGENCY WHICH MADE THE LOYALTY REPORT	DATE OF REPORT	REMARKS

15. THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR RETURN REPORT TO AGENCY WHERE NO DEROGATORY INFORMATION IS DEVELOPED	16. NAME AND ADDRESS OF REQUESTING AGENCY

SEE REVERSE FOR REPORT ON CASES WHERE DEROGATORY INFORMATION WAS DEVELOPED ☆ U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1947-781803

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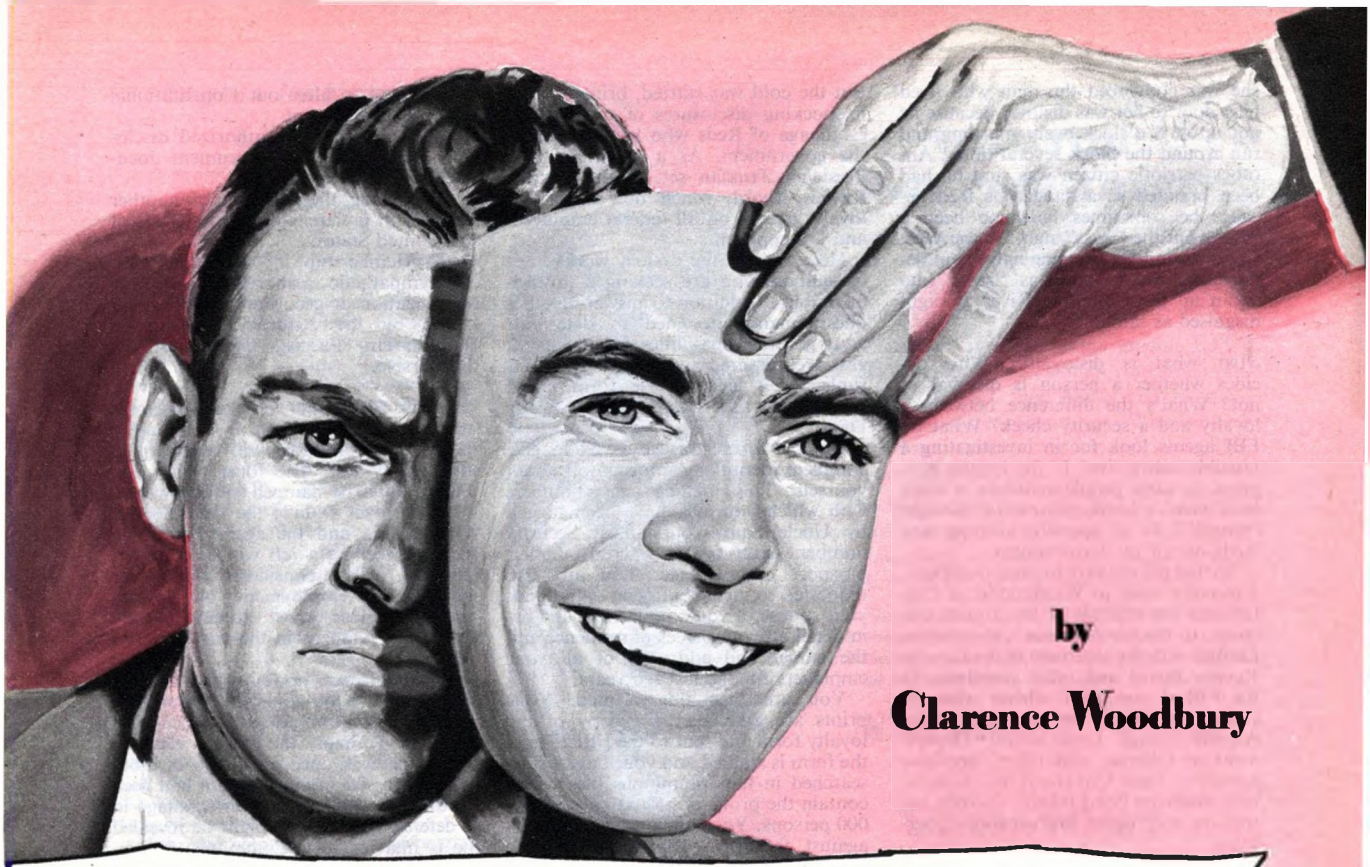


by

Clarence Woodbury

Loyalty Test REALLY IS

It's nothing most of us need fear. Of 3,200,000 Americans whose loyalty has been checked, only a fraction of one per cent were found unfit. Then why all the checks? Because it took only three disloyal persons to give Russia the atom-bomb secret

A SHORT time ago a young man who applied for a job in the U. S. Department of Commerce was observed biting his nails nervously. A civil service examiner asked him why the jitters.

"It's the loyalty test," the youth said. "When I was in college I attended several meetings of a student organization which has since been found to be subversive. I own an album of Paul Robeson's phonograph records, a book by Howard Fast, and I subscribe to a liberal weekly. By the time the FBI digs up all that dirt on me, I know I won't have a chance of getting a government job."

This young man had some highly erroneous ideas about what constitutes a federal loyalty test. None of the things he was worried about would have had any bearing on his eligibility for government employment. But he was no more confused about his loyalty than are millions of other Americans.

As a nation, we have become loyalty-dizzy and security-daffy. There is no question about the patriotism and fealty of the overwhelming majority of citizens. The lives of well over 99 per cent of us are irreproachable so far as loyalty is concerned. But ever since Fascism and Communism became world menaces it has been necessary for the Government to investigate the Americanism of certain categories of federal employees, to prevent a tiny minority of traitors from doing grave harm to our country. For four years, now, Uncle Sam has been screening *all* of his civilian jobholders and job-applicants, to weed out possible subversives or "poor security risks." Approximately 10,000 job-seekers are being run through the loyalty mill every week. All told, millions of us have had or are having our loyalty checked. Yet comparatively few people know what these checks are, how they're made, or what they mean.

Not long ago a woman reported to the FBI that

she was convinced the man who lived next door to her was disloyal because he got up at 6 o'clock every morning and ran around the block several times. Another patriotic citizen was sure he had been branded as a dangerous Red because he sometimes failed to heed a "Keep Off the Grass" sign. On the West Coast during the war one naïve soul defined disloyal persons as "spies who swam up the Columbia River at night disguised as salmon."

JUST what is disloyalty? Who decides whether a person is disloyal or not? What's the difference between a loyalty and a security check? What do FBI agents look for in investigating a possible subversive? Is the loyalty program, as some people maintain, a witch hunt which is leading us toward "thought control"? Is it actually keeping any Reds out of the Government?

To find the answers to these questions, I recently went to Washington to confer with top officials of the loyalty machine. In the Civil Service Commission, I talked with the chairman of the Loyalty Review Board and other members. In the FBI, I consulted officers who are supervising loyalty investigations. In the Atomic Energy Commission, Department of Defense, and other "sensitive agencies," I was told about special measures which are being taken to screen out traitors and other untrustworthy persons.

Out of all this investigation I have arrived at what I believe to be a reasonably clear understanding of the loyalty program. I am going to put on my mortarboard hat and offer it here in the interests of general enlightenment.

It was the undercover shenanigans of the Nazis and Communists in the 1930's which first made Uncle Sam loyalty-conscious. In 1939, the Hatch Act was passed, one section of which forbade any federal employee to hold membership in any organization which advocated the overthrow of the Government. Under this law, and subsequent war-service regulations, the lives of millions of civilian workers and candidates for military commissions were investigated.

When peace came, it was hoped all this snooping could be dispensed with. But the cold war started, bringing with it shocking disclosures of treason and espionage of Reds who had penetrated the government. As a result, in 1947 President Truman set up the Loyalty Review Board, which now supervises loyalty checks on all federal employees and job-applicants.

Here is how the system works: Let us suppose you are seeking a government job. In addition to answering other questionnaires designed to determine your general capabilities for the work, you are required to fill out, in quadruplicate, a civil service form called a "Request for Report on Loyalty Data."

On this form you are asked to give complete identifying information about yourself. This includes any numbers with which you may have been tagged by Uncle Sam—your Social Security number, Army or Navy serial number, passport number, etc. You are also requested to give identifying data about your spouse, if you are married, and list in detail all your places of residence and the names and addresses of all your employers for the last ten years.

You are then fingerprinted. Your prints are attached to a copy of the loyalty form and sent to the FBI. There, the form is studied and your fingerprints searched in the voluminous files which contain the prints of more than 68,000,000 persons. Your name is also checked against the lists of the Civil Service Commission and, if the need arises, the G-men may look you up in the records of the House Un-American Activities Committee, the Army or Navy intelligence services, or the files of local law-enforcement agencies.

IN MAKING this routine paper investigation, the FBI agents are mainly interested, I found, in discovering whether a person is or has been guilty of one or more of six offenses which constitute the "standards" for disloyalty. Stripped of most of their legal phraseology, these offenses are:

(1) Sabotage or espionage, or knowingly associating with spies or saboteurs.

(2) Treason or sedition or advocacy thereof.

(3) Advocacy of revolution or force or violence to alter our Constitutional form of government.

(4) Intentional, unauthorized disclosure of confidential government documents or information.

(5) Serving the interests of another country in preference to the interests of the United States.

(6) Membership in, affiliation with, or sympathetic association with any organization or group of persons designated by the Attorney General as Totalitarian, Fascist, Communist, or Subversive.

IF THE FBI paper checkup discloses nothing against you on any of these 6 points, you probably will readily pass the loyalty test. The form which you filled out will be stamped with the words, "No Disloyal Data"; the Civil Service Commission and the agency in which you are seeking a job will be notified; and you will be considered eligible for government employment on loyalty grounds. Since most Americans are loyal, this happens in the vast majority of cases.

In some cases, however, the FBI examination of a job-applicant's record discloses substantial grounds for further inquiry. Perhaps the paper checkup shows he was once an active member of a subversive organization or had been arrested in connection with sabotage in a defense plant. Or it might be revealed he is married to a Communist or employed by one. In such an event the G-men make a "field investigation" of the case.

Officials of the FBI naturally are reluctant to disclose details of methods they employ in these investigations other than to say they stick closely to the allegations indicated. It is common knowledge, however, that they customarily contact a number of people who know or have known the person being investigated and question his friends about his character, utterances, points-of-view, and standing among his associates. But malicious gossip is not given serious consideration.

In other instances investigators watch the mail of suspects. Under our laws, mail cannot be opened by law-enforcement officers, but the FBI often obtains

WHY IS IT?

By Roy L. Fox

That mothers-in-law, after years of this . . .

. . . and this . . .

. . . and this—are always thought of . . .

. . . like this

from the Post Office Department a record of letters received by a person under suspicion.

Regardless of the methods they use, once the G-men finish investigating a case, they deliver their evidence to the Loyalty Review Board, and that agency carries the ball from there on. An agency or Regional Loyalty Board studies the FBI report and, if derogatory evidence is uncovered, the agency or Regional Loyalty Board sends the person concerned a list of pertinent questions and directs him to answer them under oath within a reasonable period.

If he refuses to answer this list of questions, which is called an "Interrogatory" or a "Letter of Charges," or his answers are not satisfactory, he is summoned to a private hearing before the board. He is told he may bring a lawyer with him, if he desires, and witnesses to substantiate his statements. After the hearing, the board decides whether or not he is eligible for government employment.

AN EMPLOYEE who is found ineligible on grounds of disloyalty still has two appeals. One can be made to the government agency for which he works and the other to a panel of the national Loyalty Review Board, which is comprised of 25 distinguished citizens scattered throughout the nation.

Hiram Bingham, former Republican Senator from Connecticut who is Chairman of the Loyalty Review Board, told me the yardstick by which his body determines disloyalty is the same one which the FBI uses in making its investigations—the 6 standards I have already listed. If a person is found to be knowingly guilty of one or more of those 6 offenses, it is generally decided that there is "reasonable doubt" about his loyalty and consequently he is considered ineligible for federal employment.

That is what happened in the case of John Stewart Service, State Department career diplomat, who was recently discharged from his government job. Mr. Service first became involved in loyalty difficulties in 1945, when it was disclosed by the FBI that on three occasions he had given confidential government documents to Philip Jaffe, at that time editor and publisher of *Amerasia*, a small but influential magazine on Far Eastern affairs.

Service was arrested, charged with theft of government documents, but cleared by a grand jury and reinstated in his State Department job. Subsequently, he was investigated 6 times by the State Department's own loyalty unit and once by a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee. Both groups criticized him for "indiscretion" in the *Amerasia* case, but upheld his loyalty.

Recently, however, the Loyalty Review Board reversed these findings. While the Board made it plain that it did not accuse Service of disloyalty, it ruled that "a reasonable doubt exists as to his loyalty—based on intentional and unauthorized disclosure of government documents." Consequently, the State Department had no choice but to dismiss him.

In all cases, Mr. Bingham told me, the Regional Loyalty Boards and the Loyalty Review Board endeavor to temper their rulings with common sense.

For example, if you happened to belong to a Communist Front youth organization when you were in college several years ago, but have shown no subversive tendencies since that time, it won't cause you to be considered disloyal. Many youngsters are so immature when they go to college, experts say, that they don't know what they are getting into. Consequently, youthful radicalism is not held against federal job applicants.

It is *informed* subversives who are currently disloyal, Mr. Bingham said, whom the Board rules against.

To see how such decisions are arrived at, let's look at the cases of two job-applicants, whom I'll call Smith and Jones.

Smith is a man of meager education but a good carpenter. The FBI paper checkup disclosed he was once a member of a Communist labor organization. Smith was drawn into this group, a field investigation showed, by a glib Red organizer who convinced him Communism would benefit his racial group. But Smith was disillusioned on that score, withdrew from the Red organization, and for several years prior to seeking a government job had given indications of wanting to be a good American.

How would you have ruled in that case?

After weighing all the facts a Regional Board decided Smith had never been a really informed subversive and it took a chance on his current loyalty. He now has a steady job driving nails for Uncle Sam.

The case of Jones was similar yet quite different. Jones, who sought a job in a government shipyard, was not so simple-minded as Smith. He too was a mechanic, but the FBI learned that for years he had spent more time agitating for Red causes and organizing Red strikes than he had working at his trade. He had been a lieutenant of a notorious Communist labor leader and, a few weeks before applying for a government job, had spoken at a Communist Front rally.

He protested vehemently, though, that he had renounced Stalinism.

What would you have done about Jones?

What a Regional Board did was to find he definitely had been an informed subversive in the past and that there was "reasonable doubt" about his present loyalty. He didn't get a job in the shipyard.

FORMER aggressive leadership in a Red organization is not always a bar to government employment, however. Not long ago a girl who was once a delegate to a national convention of the American Youth Congress, a Front organization, received a loyalty hearing. Since the FBI produced no evidence against her of recent subversive activities, she was cleared by the Board.

Kinship, past friendship, or close

association with Communists is not necessarily a black mark, either.

In one case which I was told about, a man who holds an important executive job in the Government appealed to the FBI to make a thorough field investigation of his loyalty, because he thought the fact that he had a Communist brother would bring him under suspicion and embarrass his agency. A complete investigation, extending back to his college days, showed that this man had a splendid civilian and military record and had repeatedly tried to change his brother's views. There was no question of his being branded disloyal.

MUCH of the public confusion about loyalty tests stems from the fact that it is only one of a number of security programs used by the Government to check up on the trustworthiness of personnel. In several agencies which are especially vulnerable to espionage or sabotage, among them the Atomic Energy Commission, the Armed Forces, and the State Department, employees are rigorously screened not only for loyalty but to make sure they are not "poor security risks."

You can be a completely loyal citizen, I found, and still be considered a poor security risk. For example, you may talk too much at parties, with or without benefit of alcohol. You may be careless in handling confidential documents. You might have close relatives in a totalitarian country and, consequently, be prevailed upon to reveal government secrets or commit sabotage if your kinsfolk were threatened with torture.

For these reasons, the sensitive government agencies investigate job-applicants more thoroughly than the other bureaus. The Atomic Energy Commission, for example, insists on knowing if you habitually use alcohol or drugs to excess, if you have ever been committed to an insane asylum, if you are a homosexual, if you were ever a conscientious objector, if you have relatives back of the Iron Curtain, if you have ever demonstrated any tendencies toward unreliability, and a host of other things which the general loyalty test is not especially concerned with.

FBI agents conduct these security-risk investigations for the Atomic Energy Commission—even the workmen who dig postholes at AEC plants are put through the mill—but most of the sensitive agencies employ their own Sherlocks. G-2 agents check up on Army personnel, the Office of Naval Intelligence screens people who work for the Navy, and so on.

I was informed that in the ultra-hush-hush Central Intelligence Agency, which handles American intelligence operations outside the United States, the investigators spend a great deal of time investigating one another.

These highly confidential agencies are very close-mouthed about the results of their security activities, but I was able to obtain an appraisal of the effectiveness of the general loyalty program.

Since 1947, about 3,200,000 men and women have had their loyalty checked by the FBI. Of these, 565 at this writing are being rechecked under the "reasonable doubt" provisions of the program. The 3,200,000 include all of the 2,500,000 civilians presently employed by the Government and 700,000 others who have left the federal service since 1947. Of the total examined, about 16,000 persons have been given field examinations and their cases sent to Loyalty Boards. Of these, only 517 were adjudged ineligible for federal employment, but another 1,500 left their jobs before their cases could be adjudicated. In other words, approximately 2,000 possibly disloyal persons have been screened out of the Government in the last 4 years.

That may seem a comparatively small number, but I was told not to underestimate the potential peril they would represent if they were still in the Government or had gotten jobs there. It took only three disloyal persons to steal the secret of the atom bomb and give it to Russia. The menace represented by spies and saboteurs cannot be judged by their number.

One of the people caught in the loyalty screen just a few months ago was a man who had wormed his way into a job in a large ordnance depot in Pennsylvania. The FBI checkup revealed he had a long record of arson and sabotage. Had he not been removed from his job that one man might have caused damage which would have cost the Government, and taxpayers, millions of dollars.

IN ANOTHER case loyalty screening turned up a woman member of the Communist Party who had been on the federal payroll for several years. During 1945 and 1946, the investigation showed, she had been in a position where she interviewed hundreds of veterans returning home from war service. She had told the servicemen that they didn't know what they had been fighting for, that they were returning to no bed of roses, and that they would be in for a rude awakening if they expected good jobs and good pay.

This rabid Red, who might have done nobody knows how much harm if she had been permitted to stay with the Government, was highly incensed when asked to appear before a Loyalty Board and, like the Communist press and Red Front organizations, raged at the loyalty program as unconstitutional. Some honest liberals, who bear no taint of Stalinism, have also charged it infringes on individual rights.

Other grounds on which the loyalty tests are often attacked are that they damage worker morale and tend to keep people of independent mind out of the Government.

I was unable to find any evidence during my survey that either of these charges has any basis in fact. I asked dozens of federal workers in big jobs and small what they thought of the loyalty checkup. Without exception, they said they either approved of it or didn't mind a bit.

One thing is certain: The elaborate screen set up by the Government is barring some of the disloyal persons. Only one third as many job-applicants require FBI field investigations today, I learned, as was the case in 1947. Since the screen has been established, the Reds apparently are not attempting to penetrate the Government to the extent they formerly did.

In this respect, Chairman Bingham of the Loyalty Review Board told me he thinks loyalty tests have a praiseworthy "prophylactic" effect, like vaccine against smallpox. "Vaccination is always something of a nuisance," he said, "but in these dangerous times we can't avoid it. It's better to get vaccinated than to come down with the disease of Communism."

That would seem to be a very sensible view. And the kind of vaccination which Mr. Bingham referred to is quite painless. So far as I could learn, no honest American has anything to fear from a loyalty test.

THE END ★★

We Stole a Ride to Freedom

(*Continued from page* 27)

impel us and our two families to take these risks. That is what we want to tell you here.

Both of us are fairly typical family men. We took no more interest in "politics," while we still could, than the average American does today. Our lives were largely wrapped up in our families and in our jobs with the railroad.

We had been, in a quiet way, proud of our short-lived Czechoslovak Republic, which was openly modeled after that of the United States. It brought us freedom and a high standard of living. Our two great presidents under the republic, Thomas Masaryk and Eduard Benes, had both lived in America. Masaryk even married an American girl.

But, being in the heart of Europe, we were subjected to terrible pressures. In 1938, under the shameful "Munich Agreement," the West abandoned us to Hitler. Russia seemed to be our only friend. For 7 long years our country was exploited to feed the Nazi war machine.

THEN came the tens of thousands of Russians who liberated most of our country and then withdrew. There was widespread admiration then of Russia as our friend and ally. Our local Czech Communist Party grew greatly in strength by talking of world betterment and promising greatly improved working and living conditions. We understand that even your own newspapers in the U.S.A. fell into the habit of referring to the Czech Communists as "different," and as being relatively independent of the Kremlin.

As they do everywhere, the Communists made a particularly strong bid to win the backing of railroad workers, and by their promises largely succeeded.

While we two never became members of the Communist Party, we did have a feeling, back in 1945, of friendly admiration for Russia. And we certainly took an open-minded view toward what Communism apparently had to offer—just as many people do in the United States today.

But as we began to realize what they really had in mind for us, we became suspicious. Soon after they seized power in 1948 our worst suspicions were confirmed. Every month, as typical Czechs, we were treated to new indignities, humiliations, and sickening threats to our family life. Our feelings of disgust hardened to loathing, and finally mounted to such reckless fury that we were willing to risk our own and our families' lives in a desperate dash to regain our freedom. Already our non-co-operative attitude had stamped us as "reactionaries" and "enemies of the people." Both of us were under increasingly close watch.

Like most Czechs today, we thought of little except how we could escape and take our families with us. But our thoughts always came up against the bloodhounds and the lookout towers in the 3-mile strip of the Iron Curtain.

It was Jaroslav who was first struck with the idea of using a train. This was something that had never been tried. We agreed that the only feasible point to make such a dash across the strip was on the almost forgotten spur line from the Czech town of Asch a mile from the border to the West German town of Selb. Asch was 18 miles from our Cheb, a local run.

The Communists had taken precautions against an outside enemy using this rusty spur line for an invasion of our country. At a junction point in Asch they had twisted inward a few inches the end of a rail facing Germany, enough to derail a train. But we concluded that if we hit that spot coming the other way from Cheb at 60 miles an hour, the force of our engine wheels would spread the rail line back into line.

We elected to make the plunge with the regular scheduled passenger train that runs every afternoon from Prague through Cheb to Asch.

Because each of us had his own distinctive part to play in the escape of our families, we shall take turns in telling you about our experiences. Jaroslav will tell you first, in his own words, what we had to do in our dash for freedom.

Jaroslav: I no longer had the Cheb–Asch run. In order to get it for one trip I had to persuade the regular engineer to swap runs with me. When I was finally able to arrange this without arousing suspicion we had only two days to get ready.

On Tuesday morning, September 11, my wife sent word to the school that our children were ill. Meanwhile, Mrs. Truksa and baby Paul journeyed to Pilsen to board the train there. We had our families and the family of a friend, Dr. Jaroslav Svec, board the train at different stations and sit separately, so as not to arouse the suspicions of the conductor, Alois Bohn, a paunchy, ardent Communist. Happily, he did not recognize either of our wives, nor notice that Karel's pocket bulged with a pistol.

Our wives did not know what the escape plan was. All they knew was that they were supposed to board the train. If we all were caught, their ignorance of the details might save their lives and get them only a 12-year sentence in the concentration camp.

By the time we reached the next-to-last stop we had 108 persons aboard. The strangers included several high-school students, a policeman, and, unknown to us at the time, a secret police agent who had got on the train by chance.

At the next-to-last stop, Franzensbad, both Karel and I got off the train and pretended to stretch our legs. I ducked between the tender and baggage car to disconnect the air-brake line. Then we both hopped into the engine cab. As I started the train Karel pulled out his gun and ordered the fireman, Josef Kalabza, a Communist, to lie face-down on the floor.

When our train approached the Asch station I pulled the throttle back as far as I could. We hit the fateful junction point going 60 miles an hour. We felt a jolt, but that was all. Conductor Bohn, thinking the throttle had stuck, raced to pull the emergency brake. But nothing happened, because we had disconnected the line. My wife tells me he was frantic.

Our train weaved past the station and down through the freight yards. In a few seconds we were heading out through the last half-mile of fields toward the border blockhouse. We could see the guards come running. To our profound relief we saw that they had not enough warning to erect a roadblock.

We blew the whistle as we roared across the border. A stone fell from our hearts. We were free men. . . .

At Selb, American soldiers greeted us cordially and impounded our train. Alois, the conductor, ran up and began sputtering abuse at us. We laughed in his face. Most of the strangers on the train were faced with a terrible decision. Practically all of them had families back in Czechoslovakia. Still, 22 of them chose to remain with us. The rest were shipped back.

Through the help of the International Rescue Committee, the U. S. State Department, and the Lionel Corporation we were in America, with new careers and homes and promises of eventual citizenship, within 10 weeks of our escape.

We're often asked here in America if there was any one thing that drove us to risk escaping from Communism. Looking back, we find that there were many factors, each of them important in the final decision to match our wits against the border guards. Here, in the free atmosphere of America, we have tried to recall them and set them down:

1. *We were sick of being pushed around, spied upon, and watched.* In the days of

THE LONG AUGUST NIGHT WAS HOT—but not as hot as the bitter fighting that raged about Agok, Korea, in the Naktong River area. Sergeant Kouma, serving as tank commander, was covering the withdrawal of infantry units from the front. Discovering that his tank was the only obstacle in the path of an enemy breakthrough, Sergeant Kouma waged a furious

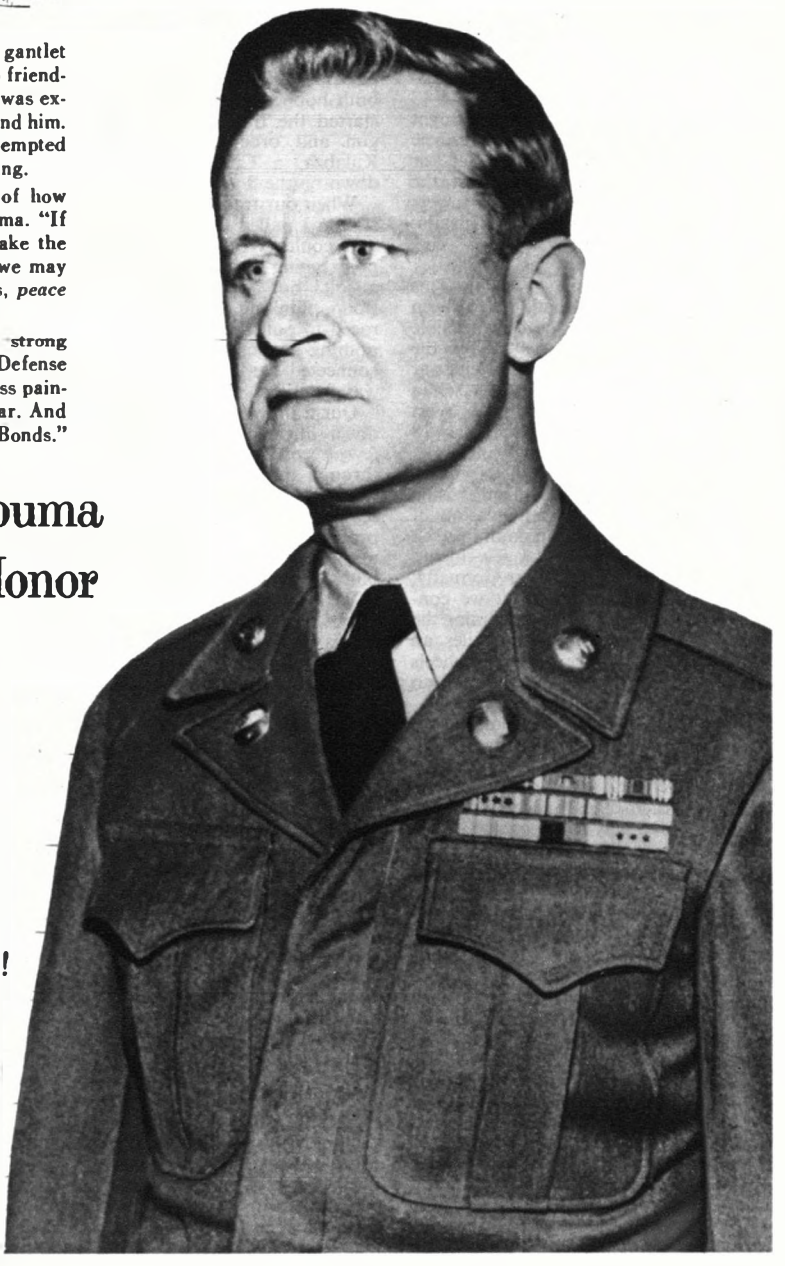
nine-hour battle, running an eight-mile gantlet through enemy lines. He finally withdrew to friendly lines, but not until after his ammunition was exhausted and he had left 250 enemy dead behind him. Even then, although wounded twice, he attempted to resupply his tank and return to the fighting.

"A withdrawing action is not my idea of how Americans should fight," says Ernest Kouma. "If we must fight, let's be strong enough to take the offensive. In fact, *if we're strong enough*, we may not have to fight at all. Because, nowadays, *peace is for the strong.*

"So let's build our strength—to keep a strong America at peace. You can help by buying Defense Bonds—as many as you can afford. It's far less painful to build for peace than to destroy in war. And *peace* is what you're building when you buy Bonds."

M/Sgt. Ernest R. Kouma

Medal of Honor



Remember that when you're buying bonds for national defense, you're also building a personal reserve of cash savings. Remember, too, that if you don't save regularly, you generally don't save at all. So sign up today in the Payroll Savings Plan where you work, or the Bond-A-Month Plan where you bank. For your country's security, and your own, buy United States Defense Bonds now!

Peace is for the strong... Buy U. S. Defense Bonds now!

the Republic, Cheb had a police force of 18. By 1951, under the Communists, that police force had reached 3,000, not counting border guards. And not counting the thousands of informers. In such an atmosphere, even if your actions are completely innocent, you start feeling suffocated, and long to be left to yourself. . . .

KAREL: I knew that at least two of the men assigned to my dispatching staff were informers. At home it was just as bad. In the apartment next door to mine was a policeman. And directly under me lived a deputy chief of the local party.

My wife and I had been forced to move into this apartment without being consulted. Until 1950 we had had a nice apartment a mile or so away. We had our own garden planted and were looking forward to harvesting its food. One day we were notified we were being moved immediately to make room for an army officer who wanted our apartment.

We protested that we would lose our garden and that the new place to which I was being moved was a 20 minutes' longer walk from my job. The housing officials shrugged indifferently. Under Communism, we found, there are no such things as leases.

Even more infuriating was the way they treated my mother. She lived alone on the main square in the town of Rakovnik. The Communists began holding their parades in that square. They liked to decorate all the windows with Communist trappings. Mother refused to allow her window to be decorated. Soon after her refusal she was evicted and sent to live in a strange village.

THE Communists not only evict you without grounds, but arrest you without grounds. There is no *habeas corpus* guaranteeing you a quick hearing such as you have here in America. Two years ago I was arrested and held for questioning and beating. I was in prison for 5 months without ever coming to trial. The Reds had a hunch I might be helping people get to the border. (They were right—I had been, in a few cases.) After 5 months, when they could not turn up even a scrap of evidence against me, they let me go, mainly because they needed me badly as a dispatcher. But first they made me sign a statement saying I had been well treated.

The pressure to induce my wife and myself to become Communists continued unabated. The party official who lived downstairs began calling on Mrs. Truksa when I was at work. The man tried to persuade her to sign an application for Communist Party membership, and to persuade me to do the same. He reminded her that she was still young and that life for her could be much better if she joined, and much worse if she did not. She told him she had a little baby and didn't care about politics.

2. *The Communists made us ashamed to call ourselves railroad men.* We both have been railroad men all our adult lives. Our fathers were both railroad men before us. All our lives we were taught to be proud of our Czech railroads. And they were once something to be proud of. Our gleaming trains set records for safety and split-second performance. Our stations were clean and beautiful.

All this began changing when the Communists "invited" 3 Russian railroad efficiency experts to apply Soviet "speed-up" methods to our railroads. Things were never the same after Comrades Katajev, Blazenov, and Korabelnikova arrived.

Before these comrades came we painted our stations every year and washed and cleaned our trains after every trip. As of today, our stations are caked with grime inside and out. Train windows are so dirty you can't see through them. Whole cars are being discarded because they have become hopelessly infested with bedbugs.

REGULAR repairs are no longer made, and most of the trains run far behind schedule. In the days of the Republic it was unusual to have even 2 or 3 accidents a year.

Now there are railroad accidents almost every day. During the one month before we left, 12 Czech railroad men were killed in accidents. . . .

JAROSLAV: As any schoolboy knows, a train engineer needs a fine watch, accurate to the second. After my old watch was smashed in an accident, I tried in vain for 16 months to get a new one.

I managed to obtain a special permit authorizing me to buy a watch, but there were just no watches available in Cheb. Finally I was told to go to a district office. There I was placed 621st on a list, under a good many Party officials. As months passed I began dreading the day the watch would become available. The price of a good watch had shot up, under Communist rule, from 500 crowns ($10) to 16,000 crowns ($320), which was 2 full months' salary.

The watch never came. Meanwhile, I was piloting Czech trains every day, without any watch to guide me. When I arrived at a station I would get out of my cab and look at the clock inside the station to see what time it was! . . .

3. *Instead of a "workers' paradise," we found our working conditions getting worse and worse.* When they were seeking power, the Communists made many glowing promises to us railroad workers. In 4 years of rule they never kept a single one of those promises.

Our railroad engineers found their shifts becoming longer and longer. Before we finally fled they were working, on many shifts, 27 hours at a stretch, and had to take pills to keep awake at the throttle. In our Cheb station the work "shifts" in many cases ran from noon one day until 6 A.M. the following morning—18 hours. The work week was 72 hours.

During the war the Nazis exploited us with 72-hour weeks, too. But at least under the Nazis we were not called upon—after we had put in 72 hours—to spend our free time away from our families working in the "Voluntary Brigades." The Communists asked us to join these brigades to repair railroad track, harvest crops, etc. At this we

AMERICAN FAMILY PROBLEMS

THE OPEN DOOR

FOR years, psychologists have been urging us to give our small fry a larger voice in family affairs—especially those which concern them directly, such as the family budget, rules of personal conduct, meals and diet, where to go for family vacations, and the like. In general, our readers agree such a system has merits. But sometimes it needs a little adjustment.

"As our daughter entered high school and became progressively more clothes-conscious," writes Mrs. M.V.G., of Tulsa, Okla., "frequent crises arose because of her sudden requests for a new jacket for the hay-ride, new loafers because everybody else had them, or a new dress for a dance.

"The idea of explaining the entire family budget to the children did not work in this case, because there were items on it which appeared far less important to our teen-aged daughter than did her own immediate needs.

"We finally found the answer by turning over to her her entire share of the family clothing allowance. She administers this fund completely on her own. She keeps accounts and already is carrying over a balance from one month to the next because she's saving for a sweater-set. She tells me she has already learned:

"To take account of future social activities and decide what purchases are important; to 'shop around' for bargains; to consider durability in such items as hosiery and underthings; to appreciate it when I can make something for her at home for less than half of the retail price. An unexpected bonus of this new plan is that clothing items, which she used to disdain as presents, now head her want lists when birthdays and holidays come around." . . .

FROM Knoxville, Tenn., comes a unique solution of a problem connected with family meals.

"My mother's main culinary problem," writes a young reader, "was how to please all of us at the same time. Almost invariably, one of us, while stuffing himself with salmon patties, would ask why we didn't have hamburger; or, while gobbling squash, would yip for butter beans.

"So Mamma came up with this idea: She has set aside each Saturday night as 'Favorite Dish Night.' Every child in turn plans a Saturday-night meal. If he insists on jelly bread as an appetizer, apple pie for a main course, tapioca pudding for dessert, and pink lemonade to drink, Mamma fixes it just that way. We have contrived lots of odd meals, but plenty of good ones. Mamma even got ideas that have helped her plan the week's other 20 meals—and we have learned to enjoy the regular ones even more.

"One night, at my suggestion, our whole dinner consisted of banana pudding. You have no idea how delicious our tomato juice, spaghetti with meatballs, and canned pineapple tasted the next night!"

THIS strikes us as one of the most ingenious solutions for the problem of finicky eaters that we've yet heard. This situation usually solves itself when youngsters go away from home—whether to school or college, into the armed forces, or for that first job.

Any one of these circumstances makes Mother's home cooking taste unbelievably good in retrospect. But making it taste wonderful while the youngsters are still at home to enjoy it—that's a real accomplishment. —THE EDITORS

The Open Door invites you to submit your problems—either those you have solved yourself or those for which you seek guidance. We will pay $25 for every letter we publish. Write not more than 500 words. No letters returned. Address: The Open Door, The American Magazine, 640 Fifth Ave., New York 19, N.Y.

both balked, and got our names regularly listed on the blackboard at the station among those "undermining the morale of the people."

Gradually we became well known to the authorities as "reactionaries." By not joining the "voluntary" brigades we were deprived of rations of such things as raincoats and sole leather.

The Communist officials in 4 years raised our wages by 33 per cent, while letting the cost of bread rise by more than 400 per cent. Our wages when we left were 8,000 crowns a month ($160).

But what probably rankled most was that they surrounded us with guards to prevent "sabotage." Under the Republic we had had one night guard at our station in Cheb. He carried a stick. When the Communists came into power he was replaced by 40 gun-carrying guards. In addition, we soon found ourselves, at our station, with a militia of 85 made up of railroad workers among us regarded as reliable Party members. They were given one day off each week, with pay, to hold conspicuous maneuvers and shoot at targets with live ammunition.

Officially 85 per cent of the railway workers at Cheb were Communists. But the great majority by 1951 were just using Party membership as protective coloration to ease the daily strain of life for their families and save them from charges of sabotage if they became involved in rail wrecks. No more than 10 to 12 per cent could be regarded as reliable "thinking" Communists.

4. *We couldn't feed and clothe our families under Communism.* Under the Republic our country had become famous in Europe for our high standard of living. We all had food-storage places in our cellars, fine suits and dresses, and excellent shoes at low prices.

Today you have to stand in line even for bread. The Communists have reduced the meat ration 33 per cent. And every Czech struggles with the new and embarrassing problem of keeping leather on his feet.

LAST summer Mrs. Truksa set out to buy a new pair of shoes. Her old pair was worn down beyond further repair. The new ones cost her 3,000 crowns ($60). When we fled it had been more than 2 years since she had had a new dress. A few months before we left she had, in desperation, pieced together a suit out of a cast-off suit of Karel's.

In the name of "efficiency" the Communists closed down two thirds of the stores in Cheb and allowed the remaining third to handle all the selling. This kept the clerks busier because, that way, customers were always waiting in line. Standing in line is how our wives spent most of their mornings. And it is how we spent much of our time too. . . .

JAROSLAV: I waited for several months for a chance to buy a new winter overcoat, which I needed badly. One day I received a tip that they would be available on a certain morning. I went to the store at dawn, in freezing weather. By the time the store opened, 300 people were in line. Being fourth in line, I was able to buy one of the 20 coats that were put on sale. The coat, of poor material, cost me 2 weeks' salary.

It took me longer to get a 100-watt electric bulb. I watched for 2 years to get that. The standard bulbs the Reds provided were 15 and 25 watts, not enough to read by. My wife and I tried to buy bed sheets but were told they were available only to newlyweds. . . .

5. *We got sick of standing in line for permits.* Under Communist rule, we found, you need a special permit to change your job. You need a special permit to move. You need a special permit to replace a broken dish, or almost any consumer goods. The permits are distributed by the central labor union, and Communists are given preference. . . .

JAROSLAV: I wanted some nails to build a picket fence for my uncle. I applied several times but was never able to get them. Later I applied for per-

mission to buy myself long underwear. Because I was not a Communist, I was told by the bureaucrat that I would have to get along with short underwear! . . .

6. *We resented the Reds' attempts to make childlike robots of us.* In the days of the Republic we, like you in America, could criticize anything we wanted to, and we often did. When the Communists came into power we were told the "truth" about our life under the Republic. We were told that we had been monstrously exploited and had lived in squalor. Now, under the inspired leadership of Stalin and Klement Gottwald (president and the top Communist in Czechoslovakia), we were told that everything had turned gloriously for the better.

Like most Czechs, we felt that such talk was an insult to our intelligence. But suddenly it became a crime to express any views except the "truth." A cloud of anxiety began hanging over every conversation. Chatting with neighbors was no longer fun.

7. *We became disgusted with the dullness of life under Communism.* The old fun and sparkle and carefree activities that made us a happy people were gone.

When freedom is gone there is no imagination. Nothing unexpected ever happens. You pick up a paper, and you know beforehand what you are going to see. If you go to a meeting or listen to a radio, you know what you're going to hear. Or if you apply for a vacation, you know where you are going to go!

We both stopped reading the local newspaper, *Border Man*, at least 2 years ago. It contained only dreary announcements about voluntary brigades and production goals. With one exception we also stopped reading magazines. . . .

KAREL: I continued to read one magazine, *Fishing News*, because I love to fish. I would skip the first few pages, which contained Communist propaganda relating to fishing, and usually managed to find in the back a few pages that helped me daydream about the fun I used to have with rod and reel in the old days. . . .

THE big local movie house, OKO, which we used to find so much fun, began showing only Red message pictures. Even the Communists stopped going. The theater has a capacity of 650. Last summer the theater showed an "epic" film about Lenin; 36 persons saw the afternoon show, and 13 the evening show.

Since Cheb was 9 miles from the border you needed a special permit to enter or leave the city. If we wanted to have our friends in Prague visit us, the man had to get a certificate from his place of work authorizing the trip. Then, in getting his permit, he had to state whom he was going to see and why. As you might imagine, our old out-of-town friends gradually stopped visiting us.

Even vacations became so regimented by the Communists that they weren't fun any more. The Central Council of Unions decided when our vacation would come. Workers who had gone all out for the greater glory of the Czech Five-Year Plan got the choice summer months. The rest of us had to be content with spring or fall months.

8. *We were frightened by what the Communists were trying to do to our children.* As adults we could be disdainful of the Reds' constant efforts to indoctrinate us. But when they began their pound-pound-pound campaign to mold and distort the minds of our children, we were deeply alarmed.

It is a terrible thing when your government is deliberately trying to undermine and destroy your own family. And that is what the Communists were trying to do to us. They wanted our children to obey them rather than their parents. . . .

JAROSLAV: Both my children had come into school age. My wife and I received our first real fright when Jaroslava came home from school humming children's songs loaded with propaganda.

When we began hearing these songs we knew we could put off no longer the painful and delicate task of explaining politics to our daughter. We had to try to explain to her in child terms why we had become convinced that Communism is a wicked thing. And we had to implore her, as strongly as we could, not to reveal in any way at school or among playmates that her parents were anti-Red.

SHE joined the masquerade. From then on, when she was called upon to sing in school, she pretended she couldn't carry a tune.

But still the hammering on her mind to mold her into an obedient Communist continued. Every schoolroom she entered contained 2 portraits—Stalin's and Gottwald's.

The hammering begins in kindergarten, which is why we kept George out of kindergarten. Kindergarten children in Cheb were told that until Stalin came all children had to work in horrible factories from the age of 6 on!

By third grade Jaroslava found her class divided up into "political circles." Each circle held "discussions" about Marx, Engels, Stalin, etc. Then in the fourth grade the formal "political education" classes begin.

Jaroslava had been in these classes only 2 weeks when we made our escape. That is not entirely a coincidence. Great pressure was also being put on her to join the Communist youth group, "The Pioneers." A main function of the Pioneers is to build up such group loyalty that children will inform on their own parents.

We felt the Communist screws tightening on our daughter. This impelled us to muster our courage to make the dash for freedom. . . .

You can imagine how overjoyed we are to be here in America, living among new friends in the friendly town of Scotch Plains, N. J., and trying to integrate ourselves into the wonderful American way of life.

Our families rejoice in their new freedom. Jaroslava and George have already started attending the local public school. No longer are we questioned by secret police if we come home late. No longer do we shut the windows tight and stuff pillows by the door when we want to listen to the radio. No longer do our

wives stand in line for meager rations—2 eggs a month per person, one ounce of skimmed milk a day, 8 ounces of meat a week. Today in Scotch Plains our wives shop at an incredible place called a "super-market," where a bewildering variety of fine foods is displayed wherever you look.

No one in America comes around to tell us that we're in a "workers' paradise"—but we know we are. Our real wages at the model-train manufacturing plant where we now work are more than double what they were in Cheb. We get pensions, health insurance, hospitalization, low-cost lunches in a fine cafeteria. We work 40 hours a week instead of 72. If we have to work on holidays, we get paid double. (In Communist Czechoslovakia, we "gave the holiday to Stalin" by working for nothing.

In America we have traveled across 14 states, telling about our experiences. Not once have we been stopped by border guards, or asked to identify ourselves.

When we were in Detroit, Mich., our hosts suggested we take a sight-seeing trip over into Canada. This startled us, because Canada is an entirely different country. But we saw no guards even on this border; just customs officers.

In America we have found a life rich in what seem to us luxuries—good food, fine clothes, refrigerators, washing machines. But these luxuries were not what we were seeking when we broke out of Communist Europe. We attempted the escape so that we could live again as free men. The thing we risked our lives for was to give our children a chance to live and be educated in a free, democratic atmosphere.

We don't want to presume to give you advice. One thing, however, has worried us in our talks with neighbors and as we have appeared before groups in many of your great cities. As we said earlier, you Americans seem to us to take your wonderful free way of life too much for granted. You assume that because you have had freedom for 175 years you always will have it. You think of Communism as something Russian and far away. You don't realize how lucky you are that you have escaped the insidious plague of Communism.

We keep remembering that we once took freedom for granted, ourselves. But we do not do so any more. We have learned that it is something which must be protected zealously in this modern world. We had to learn the hard way how Communism creeps over a country, and what it does to a country that once slips under its grip.

We hope and pray you will guard your freedom well in America. The millions of decent people who are still locked up behind the Iron Curtain, unable to escape, look to America as the one great protector of a free way of life for the whole world.

If you'd like a suggestion on how best to deal with your Communists here in America, we suggest you ship them all to Czechoslovakia for at least a month's stay. That snake-pit treatment, we are convinced, would convert at least 90 per cent of them into ardent and loyal Americans.

THE END ★★

The Man Who Broke the Tax Scandal

(*Continued from page* 19)

fact, is exactly what he was and wishes he had time to be now.

At this writing, however, he has caused the firing, suspension, or resignation of 10 per cent of all the Collectors of Internal Revenue in the United States (there are 64 in all) and launched an investigation into the Treasury and Justice Departments which has resulted in the resignation of two high officials from each and has rocked the country from coast to coast! There is no telling how many top-ranking government officers may come a cropper before Senator Williams is done with them.

His formula for his unusual achievement is unique in a body of legislators not given, by and large, to modesty.

"Anyone can do what I have done," he says, "if he is willing to put in the time and energy and patience."

Three years ago, when Senator Williams arose in Congress one spring afternoon to announce that he was going to rout out skulduggery in the nation's tax-collecting agency, no one paid much attention. A newspaperman dubbed him "Whispering Willie."

All that has changed now. When he gets up to speak in Congress, senators cup their ears and the press shushes anyone who makes it hard to hear. For "Honest John" Williams has acquired the reputation of being a deadly sharpshooter in Washington.

One of the reasons for the sudden public interest in the Senator's tax-fraud revelations is the fact that he is dealing in a commodity that interests all of us—our money. This year we'll fork out about $61,000,000,000 worth of taxes. Tax-collecting has become the nation's biggest industry, and most of us agree with the Senator that, painful though it is, it should at least be honest and aboveboard. His one-man crusade has already saved us millions of dollars by compelling a more efficient collection of revenue and by largely ending alliances between political bosses and members of the Internal Revenue staff.

Moreover, the Senator says he has only just begun. The climax is still months away.

Senator Williams wishes it weren't so far away. Being a small-town boy at heart, he'd like to get back to the simple life. His favorite pastime, for example, is gunning for ducks. Lately, the man Washington now calls "The Delaware David" has been so busy bagging tax collectors he hasn't had time for other game.

THE Senator is no lawyer. In fact, his formal education never went beyond high school. He has no spectacular wealth; he owns a few poultry farms and a well-managed feed business in Millsboro, Del., a town boasting a population of 470. He has no gift for oratory and no special intellectual attributes. He isn't even very good at calling people by their first names—a practice considered as essential to a politician as a ballot box. And when he decided to run for the office of U.S. Senator on the Republican ticket, he didn't know the name of the Republican National Committee chairman or the head of the party in the State of Delaware.

Despite these handicaps (or because of them), he got elected to the U.S. Senate on his first try.

His fame has grown in spite of the fact that he has been extremely shy about publicizing himself. The only biography I've ever seen is a scant 7 lines in the Congressional Directory. His reticence, in fact, seemed so paradoxical for a politician that I decided recently to go to his home in Delaware during a recess in Congress and see what the man behind the headlines really looks like. It is characteristic of the Senator that, although I ended up spending several days there and was with him almost constantly, he never was able to remember either my first or my last name.

Millsboro is 100 miles south of Wilmington on the Delmarva Peninsula in the heart of a great chicken-farming area. The country is flat and wooded, and the towns are prosperous and clean, with rows of plane trees and neat, white frame houses. Millsboro is inaccessible to travelers except by automobile, since the railroad serving it carries no passenger train and only one freight a day. The main street boasts a single traffic light. The Senator's home is a compact white house, much like the rest, except that it has a porte-cochere and a concrete tennis court on which tufts of grass are growing here and there. There has been little time for tennis since he went to Washington in 1947.

When I arrived it was 9 o'clock in the morning and the Senator was not at home. He was in his office at the Millsboro Feed Company. The latter is a single-story frame building opposite the freight station. On one side is a small storeroom with bags of feed; on the other are two rooms, one of which is Senator Williams' office. The latter, not much bigger than an apartment-house bathroom, is furnished with two varnished oak desks, three wooden chairs, an oil stove, a safe, and lots of calendars.

The Senator is as accessible as a public-information booth. "Come right in," he said when I stuck my head in the door, although he had no idea who I was. At the moment he was going over the day's mail with his secretary, Eleanor Lenhart. When he found out I wanted to ask him about the tax investigations he put the mail aside immediately to talk with me.

He was dressed in a dark-gray business suit and a modest red tie. His 6-foot frame is spare and athletic-looking. His

dark hair is thinning and has streaks of gray in it. Otherwise, he might look younger than his 47 years. His gray eyes are set wide apart and his nose is large and straight, making him handsome in a rugged, casual way.

As he talked, he doodled with a pad and pencil, mostly figures. The wrists that came out of his cuffs looked whip-strong, probably from the farm work he had done as a boy. He and his 10 brothers and sisters were raised on a farm.

Without preliminaries he plunged into tax talk, his consuming interest. I asked him if he thought there was any ground for worry that too many tax-fraud discoveries might undermine the entire tax structure of the country, or that the public would lose confidence in its revenue collectors and stop paying taxes. Such a theory had been advanced recently by a high Administration official.

"That is silly," he said. "People are more likely to be willing to pay taxes when they are sure the other fellow is paying his also and is not getting preferential treatment. Morale is much higher in Delaware now, for example, since the situation has been cleaned up here than it was before the scandal broke. You can't restore confidence by just covering up."

He talked earnestly and simply, and was good-humored about interruptions. A customer came in for a bag of mash, and the Senator helped put it in the car. The telephone rang several times. Someone asked to speak to "John," one of the employees (not the Senator). "One John's as good as another," he said, with a grin. "Won't I do?"

When I had a chance, I asked, "Why have you never asked for an appropriation to carry on your work? You'd probably get it."

"Why spend money," he replied, "when we're getting results without it?"

"Well, how about a committee—to help lighten the burden?"

"I have one," he said, pointing to Miss Lenhart, busy typing at her desk. "She's the committee." Miss Lenhart smiled.

IT WAS a novel approach for a politician. I began to see why this man, singlehanded, without premeditation, without making wild charges, without smearing, and without irresponsible ranting, had been quietly able to drop blockbusters on the political life of Washington. He was that most lethal of opponents—an honest crusader without personal ambition.

While speaking with me he had set aside his pencil and doodling pad and begun to fashion a little paper hat out of a piece of scrap paper. When he had finished, Miss Lenhart broke in. She had been waiting patiently with a large sheaf of letters and telegrams that needed attention, but the limit of her indulgence, I felt, had about been reached. I explained that I would like to spend a few days with the Senator. Before his "committee" could object, I said I didn't want to interrupt his schedule. I would just tag along wherever he went, observing, making notes, and asking questions when he was not busy.

"It's pretty unexciting," he warned.

"I'll take a chance," I said.

For the next few days, that is what happened. I learned a good deal about the Senator. We visited his farms, talked with his tenants, whom he calls "partners" and who are, in fact, just that, rode through the surrounding country in his green sedan, lunched with traveling feed salesmen, strolled through the town, and spent some time with his family. Mr. Williams has a charming, pretty, brunette wife, a married daughter, and two beautiful granddaughters, aged 6 and 3. I also queried many of those who knew him, Democrats and Republicans alike.

ONE of the things that interested me most was the way in which this small-town businessman had got to be a senator. Until I talked with him I felt that there must be some big mystery about it. But the "mystery" evaporated quickly under his matter-of-fact explanation.

"Like most small businessmen," he said, "I was tired of the way things were being run in Washington. I decided to do something about it."

Geography favored him. He knew that in 1946 the Republicans were due to pick a candidate from his end of the state to run against the incumbent, Senator Tunnell, a Democrat and New Dealer. "I wasn't popular enough to be asked to run, and so I just announced my candidacy," he said. That was in May, 1946. The Republican Convention was scheduled to be held in August, and so he spent the next few months working. He traveled up and down the state, talking, arguing, explaining. He spoke to any who would listen to him—women's clubs, Rotarians, Kiwanis, church groups, and just plain citizens. Instead of making 45-minute speeches, he made 5-minute ones, cut to the bone but full of horse sense. "It was the hardest work I've ever done in my life," he admitted.

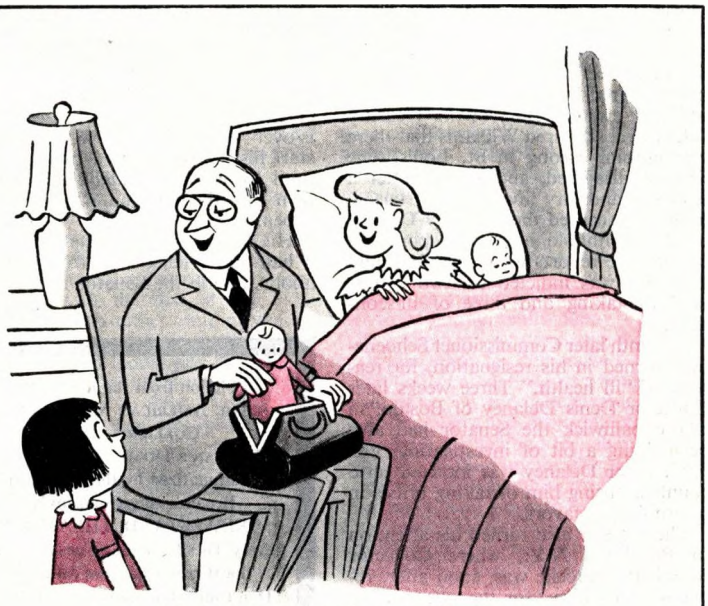
No one gave him a chance. "Who's Williams? And where's Millsboro?" wrote a big-time newspaper pundit. That remark was an error. The pride of the area was hit, and people were more determined to work for him than ever. Business people began to listen. And church people. And finally even some Democrats. By the time the nominating convention was ready to open, an informal poll revealed the surprising fact that Williams was far and away the strongest candidate. In fact, his position was so strong that other candidates decided to withdraw, and he was elected unanimously on the first ballot. In November, he was swept into office by a 12,000 majority—a comfortable one, but not a record, for Delaware.

And then an extraordinary thing happened.

At about the time that he went to Washington, his income-tax return was questioned. It turned out that the Delaware tax collector had picked on the wrong man. Williams looked into the situation, found out that his tax-payment check had been "kited"—applied to another account from which money had been taken. The shortage in his own account had not been made up by incoming cash tax payments in time to prevent his getting a notice of an unpaid income tax. In all, about 500 accounts had been tampered with.

As a result of Williams' investigation the Delaware tax cashier was convicted of embezzlement and the collector in the district was allowed to retire on a pension. Because of the Administration's unco-operative attitude toward his disclosures, the Senator became annoyed, and then suspicious.

"I didn't hold it against the Govern-



"I also brought one for you, Ellen"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY JOHN NORMENT

ment because there was an embezzler in office," he said. "That could happen to anyone. But what bothered me was the manner in which they resisted my exposure of the case. As though the public didn't have a right to know."

The Senator learned later that the Bureau in Washington had known about the situation in Wilmington for several months but had not done anything about it. He also learned that the embezzler was on the payroll several months after the office knew what he was doing.

Such circumstances inspired in the freshman Senator a desire to know more about the Bureau and its workings. When a man from Delaware came into his office one day with a story about unsavory conditions existing in a New York Internal Revenue office, he decided to go to work on that district. Senator Williams quietly did as much investigating as he could and then got to the point where he felt he had to ask the co-operation of Commissioner George J. Schoeneman, recently retired head of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, in permitting him to see the auditor's report on the New York office. Williams' request was refused.

It was not until after the 1950 elections, when seniority put Williams on the important Senate Finance Committee, that he was able to demand and get the auditor's report on New York's Third District office. As a result of studying that report the Senator, last February, introduced on the floor of Congress a resolution calling for the removal of James W. Johnson, New York's Collector. In August, Johnson resigned.

Although the tip-off on the New York office had come from a nongovernment person, Williams by now had become a hero to honest Internal Revenue employees everywhere and he began to get help from inside the Bureau. One employee, for example, provided the Senator with photostats of secret Treasury reports on misdoings in the St. Louis office of Collector James Finnegan. After being cleared by a grand jury Finnegan resigned, and Secretary of the Treasury John Snyder assured Williams that there was nothing wrong in St. Louis. The Senator disagreed, and a week after a second grand jury investigation started, he baldly accused the Treasury Department of withholding secret reports. In the end the reports were produced, and Finnegan was indicted on two counts of bribe-taking and three of misconduct.

A month later Commissioner Schoeneman turned in his resignation, for reasons of "ill health." Three weeks later Collector Denis Delaney of Boston, in whose bailiwick the Senator had also been doing a bit of investigating, was fired. Later Delaney was indicted on 6 counts accusing him of taking bribes in return for tax favors.

The Senator also turned his attention to Brooklyn, N.Y., where Collector Joseph P. Marcelle was, soon after, requested to resign "for the good of the service," and to San Francisco, where James J. Smyth, the local collector, was dismissed, and ultimately indicted on a charge of "conspiracy with intent to defraud the U.S."

The Senator worked quietly and unobtrusively. He had no idea, at the time he started, he said, of the magnitude of corruption he was destined to uncover. More recently, of course, the spotlight of his work has focused inevitably on Washington, on the "higher-ups."

"I figured," he said, "that these things couldn't happen without co-operation at the upper levels. Six important district offices couldn't be in the shape they were in without gross negligence or corruption, or both, in Washington."

The score continues to get more impressive all the time. Since Williams started his investigation more than 60 Bureau officials have been severed from their jobs. One of the two Assistant Commissioners of Internal Revenue, a top Washington official, has resigned because of "ill health"; Assistant Attorney General Theron Lamar Caudle, head of the Justice Department's tax division, has been fired by President Truman for activity "incompatible" with his public duty; Charles Oliphant, chief counsel of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, has resigned, protesting against "scurrilous charges" by witnesses in the investigation.

Two Washington committees, one in the House and one in the Senate, have begun their own investigations, and by the time this appears there will undoubtedly be a lot more headlines. Senator Williams told me there were many more cases and districts to investigate and that the end was nowhere in sight. Some observers are predicting that the scandal will reach as high as the Cabinet, but Williams is not commenting on this. He makes charges only when he has the evidence to prove it, and then he acts swiftly.

All these results have not been accomplished, of course, without immense labor. Most of Williams' friends describe him as a "plugger." In Washington, he is at his desk by 8:30 A.M. Congressional business generally takes most of the day, and it is not until the afternoon session is over—usually 5 or 6 P.M.—that he can start his tax work. As a rule, he works until 10 or 11 each night, doing all his own investigating and paying his own expenses.

His Washington office staff of less than a half-dozen persons is so enthusiastic about the job the Senator is doing that they work almost as hard and as late as he does, checking documents, adding figures, sending for reports, and running down tips of one kind or another. A certain secrecy, naturally, surrounds this phase of Williams' work. He does not want to disclose in detail the methods which have produced such startling results, lest sources of information dry up. Most of his leads now come from the vast, honest majority of government workers within the Bureau who resent the shenanigans of the dishonest few.

Tax-fraud work has been so demanding that, during the last session of Congress, the Senator dined with his wife exactly 12 nights. "I kept count," she said to me once, with a wry smile. They have had no vacation since he went to Washington five years ago. They both love to travel, moreover, and have toured most of the United States and made one trip to Europe.

Mrs. Williams, who is a year younger than the Senator, was enthusiastic originally about his going to Washington, but now she is not so sure. Six years in the Capital, she feels, is long enough. Twelve years, which is what it will be if he is re-elected, will be "an awful lot of time to be away from Millsboro," she says.

Like all proud wives, she is torn on the one hand by the importance of his work, and on the other by a desire to lead the kind of life they used to. Both love Millsboro and never want to live anywhere else. "This is where our friends are," is the way they put it. Neither one dances, and neither has any interest in the social side of Washington. They don't smoke or drink, and attend only about six cocktail parties a year—parties they must attend for duty reasons.

Both are Methodists and regular churchgoers. The Senator made a speech recently in Wilmington deploring the fact that the United States delegation to the United Nations found it no longer necessary to open or close U. N. meetings with a prayer. And the Senator doesn't like the fact that he is no longer able to teach Sunday school. He particularly likes young people, and every youngster in the town calls him "Uncle John." When the Senator was elected to Congress (carrying traditionally Democratic Millsboro by 2 to 1), the teenagers staged a victory parade, using scooters, bicycles, and ponies.

In fact, John Williams still has a lot of the boy in him. He loves Wild West stories and movies, and reads the comic strips assiduously. "You can't hope to solve the world situation without reading the comics," he said facetiously.

"Or playing tennis?" I asked.

"Or playing tennis," he agreed.

The Senator likes good-natured practical jokes. Once an old friend, who announced he wanted to give Mr. and Mrs. Williams a watermelon party, ostentatiously bought the largest and most expensive melon in town. He set it on his back porch to wait till evening. Williams stole the melon, cut a hole in it, scooped out the center, and filled it full of old newspapers. Then he plugged the hole and put the melon back on the porch. When the cutting took place before the

assembled guests, the host's face was redder than the watermelon had been.

John Williams' philosophy of government is a simple one.

"I think of it," he explained, "as a big corporation. The President is the executive officer, and the members of Congress are the directors. All of the citizens are stockholders. The stockholders and directors have a right to know what is going on at all times, and it is ridiculous for the President or any executive officer to take the position that the directors or stockholders have no right to certain books and files, or that the executive has the right to cover up anything. And naturally the whole thing should be run on a businesslike basis. Although you may have to borrow money from time to time, you cannot go on indefinitely living on borrowed money. No business can. No government can."

The Senator's thoughts on subjects ranging from politics to funny papers had to come out piecemeal whenever he could find time between his chores to discuss such things. Sometimes it was between telephone calls when we were in his office, sometimes in the cheerful, cretonne-bright living-room, where Mrs. Williams was busy pasting clippings about her husband into a scrapbook, sometimes in the local drugstore, where we were having a dish of ice cream. It was, for example, while we were walking over one of the Senator's farms, surrounded by 2,000 turkeys, that he expressed himself about the responsibilities for corruption in government.

"Most of the blame lies with the voters themselves," he asserted. "If the people don't like what is going on, they can always change it—at the polls. On the last election, one half of the entire electorate stayed home. If people are sufficiently interested, the right men will turn up. They should forget party affiliations and vote for the best man, taking part in the primaries as well as on Election Day. Business people, especially, should take more interest in politics. They complain a lot, but when it gets right down to it, half of them don't even vote."

ALTHOUGH the Senator is a Republican and has aimed most of his fire at the Democratic Administration, which he thinks has been in power too long for the country's good, he never hesitates to speak out against either a Democrat or a Republican if he thinks he is wrong.

A lot of people thought he had cooked his political goose last September when he criticized Guy Gabrielson for allegedly accepting fees from an RFC borrower while serving as chairman of the Republican National Committee—a practice which William Boyle, who held a similar position in the Democratic National Committee, had been accused of.

But, surprisingly enough, instead of finishing Williams off in the party, his outspoken remarks established his sincerity beyond the shadow of a doubt with both Democrats and Republicans. Newspapers commented in favorable editorials from coast to coast.

"It was like Senator Williams of Delaware," said one big daily, "to rise in the Senate and read his own party a lecture on political morality. Mr. Williams is a staunch Republican, but, in his book of life, improper practices are improper no matter who engages in them!"

"Williams," said another, "displays a rare quality of modesty, integrity, and impartiality that is like a breath of fresh air on the Washington scene."

In the immediate and pressing matter of cleaning up the tax-collecting agency —the most sensitive Bureau in the Government—Williams thinks that the suggestion of putting the Bureau of Internal Revenue under civil service is a step in the right direction.

"I do not think, however," he added, "that blanketing all the present collectors under a cloak of civil-service protection is a good idea until they have been investigated and have taken an examination. And I also think that they should be forbidden to have outside businesses which conflict with their loyalties as tax collectors."

The best check on Bureau honesty, he says, would be a regular audit by some outside agency such as the General Accounting Office. In the past, the Bureau has made its own audits and investigations, and many of the reports of abuses, according to the Senator, have been pigeonholed and forgotten.

As for himself, Williams has no grandiose political plans. He will run this year for the Senate because the job he has started is unfinished and he likes to finish what he starts. But he does not take seriously suggestions that he run for an office like vice-president. He sincerely wants to get back to Millsboro, to his duck-shooting, to his brothers and sisters (all of whom live in the neighborhood), to his Sunday-school classes, to his feed business, to his tennis court, and, most important of all, to having dinner every night with his wife, Elsie, whom he married when he was 19 and whom he would still rather spend an evening with than anybody in the world.

THE END★★

Let Me Love You

(*Continued from page* 34)

Janet was young. In a special sense, she had outlived an enemy. And yet it seemed wrong that even a bitter old woman should have died and that her funeral should take place on a brilliant day in spring, while sparrows chirped in the warm sunlight on city streets, and buds were unfolding in the park a few short blocks from St. Timothy's.

She thought desperately, "But I needn't go. What possible reason could there be for me to attend last rites for Lucretia Hutchinson?"

She glanced up at Steve's strong, reassuring face. He was still busy, he hadn't sensed her uneasiness.

A few moments later they said good-by in the station, setting their time for meeting at five-thirty. His smile rose slowly and warmly. "See you, darling. Have a good day."

Her appointment at the hairdresser's was for nine. Lucretia Hutchinson's funeral was at eleven. "Of course I'm not going," Janet promised herself under the drier. She closed her eyes.

She could not feel triumph, for she believed herself above all the old bitterness; nor could she mourn, for Lucretia had dealt her many hurts in her defenseless youth.

Janet held her hands tightly together in her lap. "With her passing, so much else passes, too," she thought. The snobbery and pride of an outmoded social era; the unconscious cruelties of a woman who had represented it.

"It wasn't me," Janet told herself. "She didn't even know me."

She remembered suddenly that the ballroom which had witnessed both her success and her humiliation was being torn down with the rest of the old-fashioned hotel. Another building would soon rise in its place.

And little Janet Dougherty, the frightened fawn of an eighteen-year-old, had long since ceased to exist. At twenty-nine, Janet knew her own beauty and how to underscore it.

SHE had told Steve soon after she met him that she had been married before. "You might say it was entirely by accident that I found myself at a debutante party being introduced to Gary Hutchinson," she had remarked dryly. "I was out of my own territory."

Nevertheless, the moment was fixed in time: the young Janet, drifting across the ballroom floor with a tall young man, all innocent that this was the son of Lucretia, the implacable enemy she had not yet met. Gary Hutchinson, the golden boy, blue-eyed and laughing.

Suddenly, looking up into his face, Janet realized why her mother had struggled so desperately to keep her in the private girls' school they couldn't afford. It was for this moment when—through a classmate who was fond enough of her to see that her name got on the list for her party—she was to meet Gary. . . . The knowledge struck with a little blow against her heart. This was all her mother had wanted—just for her to be happy, really happy!

Her mother was dead and there was no money left for the nurse's training Janet had wanted. She was a receptionist in an office, instead. The avenues of her mother's plans had been different from her own, but they had led, she reflected joyously, to the same bright plaza.

She fell in love with Gary Hutchinson that night, and he with her before the Christmas holidays were over. She admitted to herself in moments of complete honesty that it was possible Gary might not have been so urgent except for the powerful circumstance that it was the Christmas of 1941. War had, perhaps, strengthened Gary's love, as it

strengthened all the quick youthful passions of their generation. Rather than lose Janet before they had known love or each other, Gary took her to his mother and announced that he intended to marry her.

Years later Janet could tremble and grow cold at the memory of Lucretia Hutchinson's contempt.

She could whisper, "It wasn't personal, she didn't even know me—just that I worked and had no money, and Gary was young and she had other plans for him after the war."

Still, the terrible forlornness of being glanced at and instantly rejected, the sick uncertainty of being young and wondering if anything was really wrong with her, swept over her in afterthought.

They were married a month before Gary left for overseas, but Lucretia refused to attend the wedding.

"She'll change," Gary assured Janet uneasily. "Mother's a woman of strong prejudices, but she'll come around."

Prejudice. Janet felt that that was another thing which had died with Lucretia Hutchinson. The unreasoning prejudice of the snob.

One of the things she loved most about Steve was his tolerance, his generous judgment of his fellow man. Steve was never impressed by how much money people had, but he was quick to acknowledge achievement.

Janet made a conscious effort to turn her mind toward tonight. She and Steve hadn't been going out much. She had felt that he missed it a little.

"The trouble with marrying a top-flight model," he had teased her once, "is that she's been everywhere, seen everything, and only wants to settle down as far away from night clubs and photographers as possible; whereas I'm just a country boy beginning to do well enough to afford to see the sights. Don't forget we're young, Janet. We mustn't get stodgy."

"We won't be stodgy tonight," she promised herself. "We'll dance and have fun—and I'll tell Steve how terribly much I love him, as if I haven't hundreds of times before!"

She had told him so much—and so little.

She had told him about Gary Hutchinson, who had been her husband for a month. She had said, "It was kid stuff, of course. It wasn't like—us."

But she had never told him about her son.

She had never told anyone, not even Dolly, her best friend, who had led her out of despair. . . .

MONSIEUR JACQUES came to take the pins out of her hair. When he was through with her and she had paid her bill, she walked outside into the spring day, to start her search for a dress.

But she turned away from Fifth Avenue and toward St. Timothy's. She was late. The service was almost over. She bowed her head in silent respect, but with an empty heart.

Then, as the choir filed out singing, a slow tide of relief surged through her, and she knew why she had come; why she had been drawn here almost against her will. "I am here for Gary and for our son," she thought. They had no other representative.

Afterward, she walked across town, shaking the shadows of Lucretia Hutchinson's world from her consciousness. Her lunch date in a hotel garden was with Dolly. They hadn't seen each other for months.

"Oh, darling," Dolly murmured as they kissed, "if only you didn't keep yourself so *buried* out there."

"You could come out, you know," said Janet gently.

"I, who don't own a pair of flat-heeled shoes and am positively allergic to fresh air!" Dolly nodded to the headwaiter and they were given a table near the miniature waterfall. "But country life seems to agree with you. Tell me about it."

JANET smiled, knowing Dolly was being polite; she didn't really want the details.

What they shared together was their common memories of two girls on their way. They had started at the same time and had been equally successful. But Janet gave up modeling when she married Steve, and Dolly had gone on. She was probably the best-known model in New York.

"I'll have the chef's salad," she announced with a grimace, "as usual. Of course you're going to gorge, you skinny thing. Go on. I'm used to it."

"If I hadn't been skinny," said Janet, smiling, "I wouldn't have signed up for the model's course and we wouldn't have met. And then you couldn't have changed my life."

"Which needed changing, heaven knows! I admit I didn't have much hope for you when I took my first look."

"I didn't have any hope for myself, remember? Pounds underweight, too tired to hold my head up, and I'd been turned down for nurse's training. Imagine, with every magazine and newspaper in the country screaming for more nurses, I couldn't even qualify as a student. That hurt, Dolly."

"Well, you had perfectly beautiful hollows in your face, and you turned out to be one of the most photogenic models in the business. Everything happened the way I said it would, didn't it, chicken?"

Janet nodded gratefully. When she had met Dolly she had been like a person moving cautiously along the charred beams of a burnt-out house, waiting to be hurtled down any moment into destruction. Dolly had led her back into life.

Dolly's smooth, heart-shaped face went bland and expressionless as she said suddenly, "One of the reasons I wanted to see you today is to tell you I'm planning to get married."

"Oh, Dolly, how wonderful!" said Janet eagerly. "It's Phil?" She knew Dolly had been in love with Phil on and off for a long time, but she had hesitated to throw away a spectacular career for marriage to a rolling stone. Phil had tried a procession of jobs since the war but hadn't quite fitted any of them.

Dolly's smoke-blue eyes were guarded. "No," she said slowly, "Phil's no good for me. I decided that three months ago and I haven't seen him since. I'm marrying Adam Wilder."

"Adam Wilder!" Janet repeated incredulously. He was the middle-aged president of a large department store.

"I know what you're thinking, but I've thought further," said Dolly in a queer, dry voice. "I'll be thirty this summer—I won't stay tops much longer. In a few years— Look, Janet; I'm only being honest with myself. Adam Wilder is twenty-five years older than I am, but he has the things I want."

The little curtains shifted from her eyes.

"Sure, I was in love with Phil," she whispered. "Once. But can you see me settled in a mortgaged ranch house with a bunch of kids? I'm not the type."

"Oh, Dolly," murmured Janet unhappily. "Suppose you find later that you are?"

Dolly reached for a cigarette. "You don't know me any more, Janet. You're too remote out there in your little retreat. I'm used to good living. I like clothes with labels—my own, not just the modeled stuff. I like lunch in places like this without bothering to count up the check." Her beautiful face was set and strained. "I can't go on getting them for myself indefinitely. The competition's tough."

Janet conceded where she couldn't approve. Yes, she promised Dolly, she would come to the wedding. She walked part way with Dolly to her next photographer's appointment and kissed her good-by, feeling sad and let down.

Worship of money hadn't passed with Lucretia Hutchinson. It was quite alive, right there in Dolly's heart. . . .

JANET started shopping for her dress with a fierce thoroughness. She wanted to look beautiful for Steve, who had given her everything worth having.

She realized that a woman across the dress department was staring at her. Then, abruptly, she recognized Celia Ballantine. It was at Celia's party that she had first met Gary.

"Angel, it's really you!" caroled Celia. "I wasn't sure at first. What's become of you? I used to see you on magazine covers, but I haven't for years now. Are you married? Have you any children?"

"Married," said Janet gaily. "Lawyer named Stephen Ward, and we live in Connecticut. No children." Her heart gave a painful lurch. *My son, my son.*

Celia's package was ready, then. "We must get together. Don and I are in Greenwich, you know. Look us up." She looked blithely confident, the assured young society matron.

Though Celia moved in a different world, a world Janet had rejected and never wished to revisit, she was aware of a little rush of affection for Celia herself. "Do you remember school," she thought, "and how we battled with that dreadful teacher in geometry class?"

"By the way," Celia said, "it just kills me, but I'm not sending my two little girls to Miss Drew's. It's gone terribly downhill since our day. I hear they're taking in practically anybody!"

Smiling faintly because once Janet Dougherty had been nobody and Celia

Ballantine had been her friend, Janet murmured something in good-by.

How childish of her to have imagined that snobbery had vanished from the earth with the passing of Lucretia Hutchinson.

She found the dress she wanted and arranged for her old one to be sent home. Now for a hat and some black gloves. . . . Within a half-hour she was a finished product: a young woman about to dine on a rooftop.

The long day was over, and a little flame of excitement rose inside her. Impossible, yet wonderful, to believe that she and Steve had been married four years today. . . .

He was waiting for her as she emerged from the elevator.

He was a tall, strongly built man with high cheekbones and a firm chin. Little crinkly lines radiated from his gray eyes and he was already tanned from his week ends working around the place.

She thought, "You look exactly what you are—serious and kind and aware; the husband every woman wants in her secret heart."

He took her arm and led her through the cocktail lounge to a table overlooking the New York skyline.

Their drinks came and she waited for his toast. Last year it had been, "To our perfect marriage."

This year he looked directly into her eyes and said, "Happy fourth anniversary, Janet—and may we know each other better by our fifth!"

Know each other . . . She thought sharply, "But we do! We're married, we have a home we both love, we have hundreds of common interests." Her fingers tightened on the stem of her glass. "I don't see how we could know each other any better, Steve," she said.

"Don't you?"

She felt her face was being scrutinized, and the color rose in it.

"Janet," he said quietly, "tell me about the funeral. I know you must have gone."

She was startled, almost frightened. She remembered how absorbed he had been in his notes that morning on the train. Yet no motion, no breath of hers had escaped him.

"You didn't say a word," she whispered. "You didn't ask if I'd go, or advise me not to."

"It was your decision. I was curious to see if you would shrink from the fact of an old woman's passing, or if it would release some old emotions from their locked place inside you. I believe you went to St. Timothy's, Janet—perhaps in spite of yourself." His voice was calm, dispassionate. "Why did you hate her so? I've often wondered."

"I didn't hate her. At least, I never wanted to. I was afraid of her—of her power over Gary, of how she might influence him when he came back after the war." She swallowed hard. "I was so sure, you see, that he would come back."

She thought suddenly, "He would have been in his thirties now—Gary." That seemed oddly incredible.

She burst out involuntarily, "She never once smiled at me—not in all the months I lived in her house."

Steve said gently, "Funny, I never knew you lived in her house. You never mentioned it."

Her heart began beating in an uneasy rhythm and her throat was dry.

"Have you been happy with me, Janet?" Steve questioned her softly. "I used to think you were, but for some time I've wondered if our marriage has meant happiness to you—or if, instead, you've retreated into it as a sanctuary where nothing could get to you or hurt you any more. Have you loved me, or have you taken refuge with me, Janet?"

No words rose to her mind. She could only look at him, cold and afraid.

"Don't think I'm speaking from jealousy of Gary," Steve added. "I don't begrudge him his young first love. I haven't wanted the nineteen-year-old girl, Janet—only the woman."

She could answer him, then: "You've had the woman. For a long time now, four years."

He shook his head, smiling at her. "Not altogether. But some day I will."

"Perhaps I have hidden away in marriage from the hurts I couldn't meet and put aside," she admitted reluctantly to herself. "But I've loved Steve, I've been happy with him. . . . I believed I was making him happy, too."

Steve said, "We'll order dinner first. How are your dancing feet, Mrs. Ward?"

"Wiggling with anticipation."

She began talking to him in too high a voice, laughing too often, as if to prove to him and to herself that they could still have a wonderful evening, that laughter could be spread to cover the silent thing which lay between them.

Suddenly he said, "Come back to me, Janet," and drew her closer in his arms as they danced.

She whispered, "I'm here, darling," and let her upward-tilted face touch his.

"I mustn't fail," she thought. "I must hold him always."

She tried to think of ways to do it. He was more gregarious than she. Though he didn't press the point she knew he liked to see people. It meant more to him to have friendly neighbors.

"We'll have that new couple, the Allbrights, over for a drink," she thought, remembering that Steve had suggested it only last week end and she had made an excuse. She could hear her own cool, detached voice: "Oh, darling, I honestly don't think we'd like them much. They're noisy and she simply screams at her little boy." She thought now, "That wasn't fair. Steve might have liked them. I never gave him the chance to decide."

She knew why. It was the little boy. A child down the road, where she could hear his voice and laughter.

She looked up at Steve. Strange, frightening perhaps, that she should never have told him. There had been times when she had tried, and failed. She was sure she would have felt accountable to him if the doctors had found anything wrong with her, but except for her youth and her anxiety there had been no special weakness in Janet.

"Steve," she said haltingly, "Steve, those months with Mrs. Hutchinson, those dreadful months when we lived like strangers in her house—they were because Gary wrote and begged her to look after me, until the baby . . ."

She could read nothing in his face. It was a quiet, listening mask above her.

"I wanted to go on working, but I couldn't. I was sick so much of the time."

She swallowed hard, remembering Lucretia Hutchinson's town car parked outside her boarding place that day. She had felt a lurch of joy because this might

"For us?"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY VIC MARTIN

be the moment she had waited for, when Gary's mother must turn to her in their common loneliness and need.

"You will, of course," Lucretia had said coldly, "make your home with me."

Janet had thanked her, undaunted by her manner, for surely, once they were actually together, two women alone in a huge, echoing house, they must find a meeting ground of friendship.

"I did everything I could to please her," Janet blurted. "I ate what she thought I should, I agreed to the name she wanted for the baby—she seemed to expect a boy, to be named after her father—I tried, I really tried. But she was only marking time. She never let me forget I was an outsider and a disappointment to her—to be tolerated because of the grandchild."

She went on after Steve had taken her back to their table, the dammed-up words pouring out in a flood. She could say them now; the last link with her past was broken.

A nurse at the hospital had told her she had a son, and she hadn't been able to speak at all, just murmur some happy incoherence before she turned and slept deeply. Many hours later she was wakened by a different nurse, a young nurse with a quivering chin who brought Lucretia to her bedside and left the room.

"She asked me to tell you about the baby," said Lucretia with a granite face. "He's dead. He lived five hours."

She knew now that if Lucretia had wept or tried to comfort her, if they had met across the depths of their mutual emptiness, that might have been the moment she had waited for so long.

But Janet, reading the cold, tearless eyes which brushed across her face, had seen only the contempt: "You were not only puny and insignificant; you were even unfit to bear Gary's son."

"That was the end," she told Steve. "When I was discharged from the hospital I didn't go back to her. A few months later, after Gary was killed in the Pacific, I tried to see her, but the maid said she wasn't at home. Everything else is just the way I told it to you first. I had Gary's insurance money, so I tried to enter nurse's training school. When they turned me down I took up modeling instead."

"And one night we met," he continued for her, "and I thought your face was the most beautiful I had ever seen, but closed, remote."

"I've never wanted to be remote from you, Steve," she whispered.

"Only remote from the rest of the world," she added silently to herself. "I wanted to escape the things Lucretia Hutchinson symbolized for me, to be safe from her intolerance, her prejudices, her incredible pride."

She had found them all that day, all the old sins in new guise. The world had swung in its accustomed rhythm, unchanged by an old woman's passing. Pride, the deadliest of all, had filed by with its sister sins, yet its mocking face was one she had not recognized till now.

No, pride hadn't been banished to the shadows with Lucretia Hutchinson. It was here, a bitter residue, in a strange place—her own heart.

Now she knew why Steve had challenged her about her garden. Her pride in it was ingrown, misshapen. She had hugged what she had created to herself.

"Steve," she said suddenly, urgently, "it isn't too late for me to make you happy. Only let me try." She dared to search his face for anger, but found only gentleness and compassion.

"My darling, you've made me happy every moment of our marriage, but, being human and therefore greedy, I've wanted what you've withheld as well as what you've given me."

"You've wanted children, haven't you? Oh, Steve, I pretended not to know."

"I wanted *you* to want a child," he corrected her. "And I thought the reason you didn't was immaturity, a reluctance to lose your model's figure even for a time. So I waited for you to change."

"I have changed," she said, and knew that it was true; she would dare now to have another child.

He smiled, and the crinkles around his eyes reassured her.

"Shall I tell you something which may make you angry, Janet? All your desperate losing battles against the sense of loneliness and rejection Mrs. Hutchinson put into your heart would have been fought and won years sooner—not by her death, but by Gary's coming back. The contest with the mother for the possession of her son wouldn't have gone on with the years—because you wouldn't have wanted him. He wasn't your kind. I'm not saying this to hurt you, darling. I'm telling you something I believe to be true from all you've told me."

She had tried, and failed, to imagine a Gary in his thirties. She remembered only the golden boy who had loved her, but who had been made confused and miserable by his mother's disapproval.

"I don't know, Steve," she whispered. "I'll never know now what it would have been like, after the war."

But she was very sure she no longer hated Lucretia Hutchinson. She could even think of her with a curious pity. Poor Lucretia, to have died unloved. For the woman who had outlived her, there must be no further retreat from the demands and burdens of love.

Steve asked her to dance again, and as they moved to the rhythm of a slow ballad, she pressed close to him. At the last strain of music she looked directly up into his eyes.

"Shall we take the ten o'clock home, Steve?"

"If you like. It's your evening."

She smiled. "My garden is lovely in the moonlight, and though it's not on the tour this year, I'd like to give you a private showing."

Just as only that morning she had felt the sorrow of death on a day in spring, now she sensed all the wonder, the pulse and stir, of coming alive on a night in spring.

Silently she promised him: "You'll see, Steve. You have the woman—the one you've waited for so long. She was delayed a while, but now she's here—yours, Steve, forever."

THE END ★★

He Is Mine

(*Continued from page* 21)

willful Sally. Perhaps that's why Chris had been so indulgent with her little sister, had made so many sacrifices for her.

But, oh, how fully she had been repaid—not by Sally, exactly, but by life! If she *hadn't* stayed on at the college, even this past fall when Sally insisted on going to New York, Chris might never have met John, never had her whirlwind courtship and marriage. At twenty-eight, she'd almost given up the ideal of romance. . . .

John, seemingly more handsome and charming than when they'd parted this morning, met her at the Sharon Center station.

"Buy up the town, sweet?" he asked, piling her packages into the car.

She nodded brightly, but decided not to tell him about the new dress. He'd insist on paying for it if she did and, in a sense, it was a replacement for the pink wool in her trousseau and, thus, her responsibility.

"Mostly fancy groceries," she said. "Sally's a regular gourmet."

"She a good cook?"

Chris laughed. "Sally! She can't open a can. But I do all right, don't I, darling?"

"Your cooking's the third reason I proposed. Shall I repeat the other two? One—the slight wiggle to—"

"It *doesn't* wiggle! A librarian's never does. And I'm the tailored type. A salesgirl told me so."

"*My* type." His hand closed over hers warmly as they rattled into the driveway of a small white brick house.

"Wonder if Sally will like our home? She's not keen on these new developments. Of course, now that she's a Manhattan cliff dweller, herself—"

"Sally can like it or lump it!" John said with surprising firmness.

In the bedroom, changing from street clothes, Chris was thoughtful. Had she, by any chance, talked too much about her sister to John, unwittingly building a little jealousy? Of course, she'd been heartbroken when Sally couldn't come to their quiet marriage ceremony, which had to take place during the college Christmas vacation. At the last moment Sally had an offer to model cruise clothes in Bermuda.

"It's the chance of a lifetime," she'd said over the phone, two days before the wedding. "You do understand, don't you, Chris, darling? Just postpone the big day a week or two."

But John had been adamant. "Both of us go back to work in two weeks," he'd

said. "You don't want to be married over a week end, do you?"

A little doubtfully Chris had shaken her head. And a tiny, almost imperceptible cloud dimmed the ecstasy of that most eventful day in her life. Sally was not there to witness her happiness, to wish her joy and to meet John. Sally had never seen John Rhodes.

"But she will tomorrow," Chris thought. "They'll have a whole week to get to know and like each other." . . .

She had planned on meeting Sally's afternoon train by herself, but John surprised her by coming home early to drive her to the station. "Didn't think I could wait till tonight to see this new sister of mine, did you?" he asked, grinning.

Sally, chic as a cover girl in a new plaid suit, catapulted into Chris's arms, then, rearranging a small straw sailor on her blond curls, did a quick double-take at John.

"Oh, no, it couldn't be! It isn't—or is it?" She turned back to Chris. "Don't tell me this is John!"

"Why, certainly not. You didn't expect me to be out with my own husband in the middle of the afternoon," Chris said dead-pan, and stopped short at the changed expression on Sally's face. Why, Sally hadn't been kidding at all. She'd honestly been shocked that her staid sister's husband could be so young, so attractive. "Of course it's John, silly!" Chris pushed Sally toward him and smiled happily when he leaned down and kissed her.

Sally wriggled contentedly between them on the drive home. "So wonderful to have a vacation," she sighed, "even if it's only a week. Oh, darlings, I've asked a friend, Bill Hankins, out for dinner Saturday night. You don't mind, do you? I'll cook it; I'll clean house; I'll—"

"Hey, wait a minute," John interrupted. "We'll like having your Bill. But since when the domestic sciences? Chris tells me you—"

"I adore housekeeping. I just never had a chance."

Sally adored the house, too, and the huge and ugly tomcat, Miss Priss.

"She loathes cats," Chris had said worriedly last week. "Think I should board Miss Priss out?"

A lot of the things she'd told John about her sister were proving false and a little foolish, even why Sally hadn't been up to see them before or since the wedding, and on the day of that great event.

"I kept writing Chris I *wanted* to come," Sally told John at dinner, her larkspur-blue eyes wide with distress. "But she didn't even tell me you were engaged until a couple of weeks before the wedding. And, darling," she said, turning reproachfully to her sister, "when you heard about my Christmas job in Bermuda, you insisted I take it."

"Did I?" Chris wondered, honestly bewildered. Of course, she'd not wanted Sally to miss a golden opportunity. Maybe she hadn't urged her to give up the trip, but certainly she hadn't demanded that she take it. There must be some misunderstanding.

But why worry about misunderstandings when tonight she held happiness close? John had never been more animated. And all last week she'd been fearful he'd come home tired nights while Sally was here, wanting a quick dinner so he could return to his study, as he often did, as college teachers often must. She'd wanted so desperately to have Sally recognize him as someone pretty wonderful.

And she did! In the guestroom that night Sally was practically lyrical: "He's absolutely dreamy, Chris! Why didn't you *tell* me? That intellectual type with a devil in the eye and a crooked grin lays me low."

Chris hugged her warmly and went back to her bedroom, tingling with joy and pride. Her sister had always thought the men from town or college who called on Chris stuffy. And indeed most of them were! No wonder John's good looks and sophistication came as a shock. Frankly, she sometimes had to pinch herself to realize her marriage was a reality.

"Like her?" she whispered to John, who was already in bed.

"Um-m-m! She's a cute kid—a lot like her big sister."

She could tell by the ring in his voice that he meant it, and snuggled under the covers happily. The two people she loved most were spontaneously attracted to each other. John, she felt sure, would never dread Sally's visits again, as she suspected he had this one. He'd understand now that the bond between the girls was almost a mother-daughter relationship. If she sometimes indulged and sometimes scolded the impetuous but lovable girl, he'd probably assume the same parental role. . . .

Sally, who'd refused to get even her own breakfast in the years she'd lived with Chris, had learned to cook. She wheedled them into letting her prepare a delicious veal scallopini the night after she arrived, and discussed exotic menus with John while Chris did the dishes. After that evening she didn't offer to help in the kitchen, but no one minded when she cried appealingly, "I'm on vacation and I love being pampered. Spoil me, darlings!"

Twice John dutifully brought home two of his senior students and a young assistant professor, but Sally, gentler and more beautiful than even Chris remembered her, refused the boys' eager offers of future entertainment. "No dates for me this week. I'm hibernating—and loving every minute of it."

For three nights Chris, listening to the pleasant hum of voices in the living-room while she was working in the kitchen, told herself she was utterly contented. But try as she would she could not recapture the unadulterated joy she'd experienced the first evening of Sally's visit. Something was wrong. Something was out of focus. Not John. He was perfect. He'd not only followed her subtly hinted suggestions on how to make her sister's stay a gala one, but improved on them. And surely Sally, herself, had never been more amenable and affectionate—almost out of character. That must be it. Sally's months in New York had changed her.

Chris flushed uncomfortably, remembering the things she'd told John: Sally hated domesticity, cats, lazy evenings around a fire. How wrong could you be about someone you had brought up from childhood? Admitting she'd been wrong, she nevertheless felt uneasy, as restless as Miss Priss before a storm.

Friday night came the earthquake, only a small trembler, perhaps, but one doubly frightening because of its portent of disaster. Sally, perched on the arm of John's chair, suddenly announced that she'd moved from the girls' club where Chris now paid her rent and board.

"It's a simply super little apartment in the Village." Sally plucked at a piece of lint on John's coat. "And only twenty a month more than I've been paying at the Chamber of Horrors—that's what all the gals call the Club. I've been dying for a place by myself—"

"By *yourself!* You don't have a roommate?"

"That's for sure," Sally said darkly. "Don't be Victorian, darling, and think that two women can live together peacefully."

John laughed. At the enormity of Sally's eighteen-year-old cynicism, Chris thought, and almost joined him. But then, as Sally patted his hand approvingly, she knew with distressing certainty that they were both laughing at her, at her shocked expression registering disapproval. At her apparently outmoded amazement that a girl under twenty should dare live alone in New York.

She tried to excuse John by telling herself that he didn't realize Sally was young for her years, overly impulsive and emotionally unstable. Sally had always sought danger as zestfully as she'd sought gaiety, and sometimes had trouble in distinguishing the fine from the tawdry. Only after months of pleading had Chris agreed to finance her sister's venture in New York, and then she'd hoped that Sally would mature there in the work she liked—but with some control and guidance from the club's authorities.

"Don't be so silent and disapproving!" Sally cried now. "You act as if someone were keeping me!"

"*I'm* keeping you," Chris thought dully. "I've paid your way gladly so you could spend your own earnings on clothes to help give you a good start in modeling. I've done it gladly, even since I was married. That's why I've kept on with my job."

John was looking at her speculatively. He didn't know she sent Sally a monthly allowance. She hadn't wanted to tell him until after he'd met Sally and could see for himself that she was still dependent. But Sally hadn't acted like a dependent child, didn't look like one.

Suddenly and sickeningly, as she returned John's gaze and Sally's, Chris realized that it was not a young girl sitting on the arm of the chair brushing against her husband's shoulder, but a woman, a woman wiser in the emotions of men than she, herself, was. Sally's overtures to John these past few days had not been those of a girl to a father or brother. They had been the appeal of a

provocative woman to an attractive man. Why had she been so blind? She, of all people, should have recognized that proprietary gleam in her sister's eye!

"'Birds gotta fly,' Chris," John said. "It's bad business to clip their wings."

She stood up abruptly. "Apparently you've already signed your lease, Sally. Why should I protest now? . . . We've got company coming tomorrow night and there's a lot to do. Think we'd better turn in and get a good night's sleep."

What a stupid thing to say, she fumed on her way to the bedroom. Company was never any trouble for her and she'd just made herself sound like a martyr! It must be the peculiar alchemy that had been wrought as she realized her little sister had become a woman capable of tempting *her* husband.

In the bathroom she began to cry, and pressed a cold, wet washcloth hard against her eyes. There had been other times she'd cried noiselessly in the privacy of the bathroom. Twice that she remembered vividly: The time Sally had been a biter—biting everyone who thwarted her six-year-old will. After weeks of provocation, Chris had suddenly bitten back, leaving her own toothmarks on Sally's forearm and crying, "There! That's what it feels like. Don't you ever dare bite anyone again!" Sally, after a brief spell of wailing, never had. But Chris could not forget her own savagery and wept long and bitterly because she'd descended to the instinctive and brutal tactics of a small child.

The other time she'd cried silently was from humiliation. Sally, a minx of eleven, had caught her primping in front of the bedroom mirror late at night. At twenty-one Chris had been frustrated and lonely, longing for the glamour of a big city, beautiful clothes, and romantic suitors. Sometimes she would brush her long black hair into a rippling, lacy mantilla, outline her lips vividly with rouge, and bare her white shoulders provocatively. Once Sally had caught her in the act and laughed, mockingly, with the cruelty of a child. Chris had fled to the bathroom then, and ignored her sister's knowing eyes for hours afterward.

She pretended to be asleep when John came to bed half an hour later and Sally's high heels castaneted down the hall. For the first time since their marriage she felt that he was censorious of her, ready to reproach her for not giving Sally free rein.

Chris woke early, after troubled dreams, dressed quietly, and went to the kitchen. John had classes all Saturday morning and a special seminar in the afternoon. "I'll just about make it for dinner tonight," he said, downing a second cup of coffee after an unusually silent breakfast.

"Hey, Johnny! Wait for me!" Sally yelled. She appeared almost instantly, a pale blue coat over her pajamas. "He said I could have the car if I'd get up in time to drive him to class," she explained to Chris. "And I'll need it if I'm to get my hair done and meet Bill in Boston."

Chris had been planning to drive John to work, herself. She needed the car today for last-minute shopping and to pick up Nellie, their some-time maid, who would serve tonight's dinner. Well, to avoid argument, she'd order by phone and pay for Nellie's taxi. Actually, she'd be happier with Sally out of the house until she'd had more time to think things through.

By three o'clock the rooms were slicked up and the meal practically ready for the oven. Nellie could do the rest. Like many women with outside jobs, Chris was a casual but efficient housekeeper and made the most of her leisure hours. This afternoon, however, she could neither read nor rest and had no desire to leave the house. She thought of Sally, sitting now in a smart beauty shop.

"She's eighteen and I'm ten years older," Chris thought, staring at her too-white face in the dressing-table mirror. "*I'm* the one who needs the beauty treatments!"

Before she left, Sally had "borrowed" ten dollars. For the first time, Chris had given the bills reluctantly.

She hadn't been able to refuse the money, not after last night. She had to be sure she was not showing petty malice or jealousy. Chris bowed her head in her hands, not knowing what her motives were or whether she was honest with herself. Because, at the very moment John had told her that the fledgling must be free to fly, she'd experienced a pang of jealousy, of certainty that her sister was consciously making up to John.

"It's like the pink dress," she thought, "and the other dresses, the jewelry and perfume. The few times Sally has liked what I had, she's taken it."

But it was her own fault. Always before she'd given gladly, without resentment, and never demanded that the things be returned. Why blame Sally? It was she who was spineless, stupidly indulgent. Sally had been predatory from childhood. When she hadn't had her own way she'd bitten the housekeepers, Chris, herself—until the day Chris had bitten back. *Until the day Chris had bitten back!*

Once the idea came, it germinated quickly, especially after she went into the guestroom and tried on the black dress. It was Sally's newest and most daring, with a plunging neckline and a pencil-slim skirt. A little fearfully Chris looked for her own pink wool in the closet, and sighed with relief when it was not there.

She had straightened the cluttered dressing table an hour ago, so it was easy to find the right creams for her home facial, white lilac bath oil and dusting powder. "At least, we still have the same taste in perfume," she thought wryly, remembering that Sally had swiped her one precious bottle of white lilac cologne on her departure for New York.

As Chris relaxed in the steaming, fragrant bath some of her apprehensions left her. Just because John enjoyed Sally's flattery and had sided with her against his wife did not mean their marriage was threatened. Last night's fear had been purely instinctive, the knowledge, based on past experience, that Sally wanted something of hers—something too precious to share.

It was fun making up her face with Sally's cosmetics, so much more plentiful and exotic than her own. With naturally good, clear skin and dark lashes, Chris had got by with just lipstick and powder. But she saw now that nature could be improved upon, especially at night.

Time was creeping up on her and it was close to six when she finally posed in Sally's dress. If the mirror told her the truth, if she was not just bemused by this ritual of dressing up as she had been in her girlhood, she was more beautiful even than Sally. She was the full-blown flower instead of the too-tight bud, suggesting fulfillment instead of promise. The illusion of beauty stayed with her as she went down the hall, lending her poise

"Shrimp Newburg, cheesecake, coffee, plus tax . . ."

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY DON STACY

—also expectancy. It would be fun to watch Sally's face when she opened the front door—and John's!

Sally, leading her friend, Bill Hankins, came in first and started a casual introduction, abruptly halted. "Chris!" she cried. "That's *my* best dress! The one I was going to wear tonight!"

"Let me take your coat, Bill, and let's go into the living-room. . . . Sally, darling, I had to wear your dress. I looked all over for the pink wool you borrowed from me and couldn't find it, so—" She shrugged eloquently, ignoring her sister's stony face. "Martini, Bill, or sherry?"

"Well, while you two enjoy yourselves I'll rustle into some blue jeans!" Sally stalked down the hall.

"That's fine, dear," Chris smiled.

"Just like my two kid sisters," Bill put in genially. "They're always borrowing each other's clothes. But, gosh, I had no idea you were so young and—well, so young and—I thought you were—"

"I am." Chris waved him to John's favorite chair and raised her glass. "To a young man's gallantry," she cried gaily. "Tell me about your sisters, Bill. Are they in New York, too?"

"Jane's just been transferred there from our home in Albany. She's twenty-four and a research chemist, although you'd never know it to look at her. Sally's met her. In fact, on the way out here I was trying to promote a deal with Sally for Jane to share her apartment."

"Why, that's a wonderful idea! What did Sally say?"

Bill smiled ruefully. "Said she'd think it over—that she'd liked Jane on sight but— Well, Sally's awfully independent, isn't she, Mrs. Rhodes? You're not like that, are you? I mean, you two are so different. Both wonderful-looking, but—"

"Let him stammer," Chris thought, as she heard John's quick, light footsteps on the porch. "Let my pal Bill go on with this act. I love it!"

When he saw her, John did a double-take, as startled as Sally.

"Sally's dress," Chris announced candidly. "Seemed a touch too sophisticated for her, so I've appropriated it. . . . John, this is Bill Hankins, Sally's friend from New York."

As the men shook hands, Sally stalked in silently, wearing blue jeans and a T-shirt. When she saw John, her grim face brightened and she ran over and kissed him warmly.

"Hey!" Obviously embarrassed, he tugged her arms from his neck. "Where you been? Fishing?"

"Just giving Sis a break," she said sweetly. "Haven't you noticed she looks unusually glamorous this evening?"

"Yes," John said quietly, and excused himself to wash up.

As the evening progressed, Chris became a little sorry for Sally, who behaved increasingly like a spoiled child, thwarted in its demand for attention. She looked so absurdly young in the rolled-up jeans that her attempts at sophistication were incongruous—and a little embarrassing, especially the slightly off-color stories she told at the dinner table until Chris changed the subject.

Both John and Bill responded gratefully, she thought, and intermingled with pity for her sister was delight in her own ease in handling the difficult situation. Several times she was conscious of Bill's admiring glances, but she could not turn to meet John's eyes. Surely he'd guessed that she'd deliberately planned to give Sally a dose of her own medicine. Would he think her spiteful and jealous?

This was a problem she'd have to face later, with herself as well as with John. Because she still couldn't analyze the purity of her motives.

Around ten o'clock Sally disappeared. By ten-thirty Chris could hardly resist following her. The mother-impulse was strong in her to comfort and apologize, to humble herself, if necessary. John stopped her with a gesture when she half rose to excuse herself and, for the first time that night, she faced him squarely.

"Birds gotta fly," he said softly, and turned back to Bill, who was consulting his watch. "Don't rush off, fella. Sally will be back in a minute."

"I'm taking the midnight from Boston. But I'm in New England a lot on business—if you'll let me come again."

"You can't go without me!" Sally cried brightly from the hall. Tugging her suitcase, she appeared in the same trim suit she'd worn on her arrival. "Darlings, forgive me!" she said penitently, glancing from Chris to John. "There's so much to do to get the apartment settled before I go back to work, I thought I'd better—"

"But you can't take the midnight with Bill!" Chris cried. "Even if you had reservations, it doesn't look—"

"Car 6, lower 9." Sally produced a memo slip from her purse. "I just called the station. . . . Well, what are you all looking so fuddy-duddy about?" she cried defiantly. "Let's go."

"But, Sally, your dress! You haven't time for me to change."

"I'll swap it for your pink one. That's really more my style. . . . Now, who's going to drive us to the depot? Johnny?"

All three urged Chris to accompany them but she refused. There would be time enough to be alone with John.

"At least, Sally doesn't go off in a corner and mope," she thought. "Even when she loses, she's a good sport. But if only she'd grow up a little, think things through—like taking the midnight with Bill." Chris sighed despairingly. "I can't go on roping and tying her. She's a woman and has to make her own decisions."

A car's tires grated in the gravel driveway. Chris stood tensely, one hand braced against the wall. She heard familiar footsteps—not John's, but . . .

"I'm back," Sally said from the open door, her suitcase in her hand. "John's putting the car in the garage." She stared at her sister thoughtfully. "It wasn't just you that disapproved of me, Chris. It was Bill and John."

"Come on out in the kitchen and have a cup of coffee." Nervously, Chris led the way.

"They didn't say anything, neither one of them. It was the way they looked and what they *didn't* say! Especially Bill and, well—he's pretty special. I kept thinking how I must have seemed to him all evening and—"

Whether it was a cough or a sob Sally uttered, Chris could not tell. She did not trust herself to turn away from the stove.

"Like last night," Sally went on relentlessly. "After you went to bed John and I got down to cases about the apartment and stuff. He said independence was a wonderful thing when you were ready for the responsibilities that went with it. Some people worked hard all their lives, he said, and never earned it. Why, Chris," she said suddenly, "you'd never even told John you sent me money every month!"

Unsteadily Chris carried the coffee cups to the table and sat down. Where was John? Was he purposely avoiding this session? "No," she said. "I should have told him. But I wanted him to know you first and understand why—"

"*I* told him. He wasn't mad or anything. Just wanted to know how your paying my room and board contributed to *my* feeling of independence? I didn't quite get what he was driving at then, but I think he's got something there."

John was on his way in, making a business of locking the front door. Suddenly Sally dropped her cup with a clatter, jumped down from the table where she'd been perched, and rushed to the hall.

"I've got it!" she cried, pulling him back into the kitchen. "I've got it all worked out. It's Jane, Bill's sister! She and I can swing the apartment together—on our own money." She wrinkled her forehead in a fierce scowl. "We'll probably fight like tomcats and never have enough to eat, but it might be fun, at that. At least," she said, dimpling, "it should appease my conservative family as well as my best beau! First thing, we'll have a housewarming, and you, Chris, and John will just have to—"

"Go to bed, brat, and dream about it." Grinning, John propelled her toward the door. "Tell us all about it tomorrow. . . . Coming, Chris?"

She kissed Sally good night tenderly and gratefully, preceded John into their bedroom. Back against the door, he asked softly, "Remember me?"

She nodded.

"You're lovely." He took her in his arms. "And you did just fine. Just what the doctor ordered for our Sally. The kid's got the makings of a fine woman but she needs an occasional kick in the pants. I'm proud of you."

"For stealing her dress, humiliating her, for—"

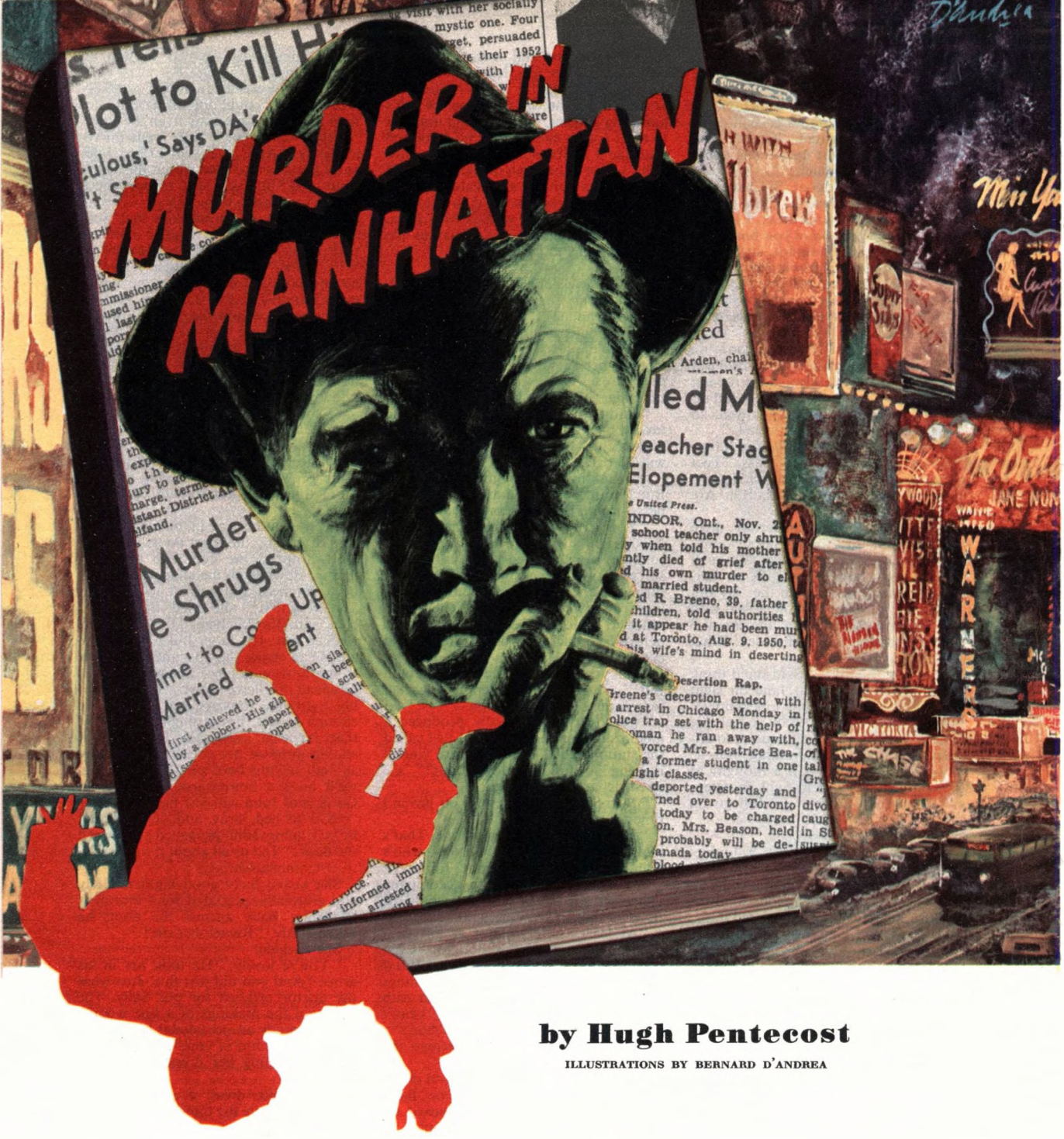
"It's a nice dress, if a little naked. Maybe not quite the thing for the Dean's tea, but—"

"Oh, I bought a little green number for *that*. I hid it under the bed so Sally wouldn't find it. Oh, darling, it's you who've really helped Sally grow up. I've been such a fool."

"It's bedtime." He crossed the room to the closet. "No more talk. Here's your bathrobe." He tossed her the red flannel.

Chris threw it back. "Oh, not that old thing," she said, yawning. "It's too hot. See if you can find that chiffon negligee."

THE END ★★



by Hugh Pentecost

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BERNARD D'ANDREA

Good or evil, people were Mike's business, material for his column.

But this man was dead—and even in death he was a threat to all that Mike loved

A COMPLETE AMERICAN MYSTERY NOVEL

BREAKFAST was always at eleven in the morning. Mike asked only one thing of the two girls, and that was that they come to breakfast and be on time. Since he never went to bed much before five in the morning, himself, it wasn't asking much. Joan usually had been up for quite a while and had only coffee at the eleven o'clock session. Erika was often with Mike on his morning rounds, and when she wasn't, she was usually on some kind of tear of her own. She'd complain sometimes about having to get up at eleven. Mike pointed out that he always took a nap in the late afternoon and there was no reason she shouldn't do the same.

"Breakfast is the only time we have for any kind of family get-together," Mike always said. "We're going to have it if it kills us."

That morning I was putting the personal mail alongside Mike's place at the table in the dining-room when Kathy Adams came in. About thirteen or fourteen years ago Kathy came to New York to make her fortune as a secretary or a model. She's thirty-two now and she could still do all right as a model, except that she's probably the most fabulous private secretary in existence, working for the most fabulous boss, and, I might add, drawing the most fabulous salary for the job. The only thing that's happened over the years to mar her model-like good looks is a fine line between her blond eyebrows that's become engraved there from a frowning concentration on the general fabulousness.

"Fine thing," she said. "Erika's not home."

"Been and gone, or never came back?" I asked.

"Her bed hasn't been slept in," Kathy said. "I looked on the telephone pad, but there wasn't a message."

"Maybe Mike took it when he came in this morning," I said.

The little groove between Kathy's eyes deepened. "I don't think so. I spoke to William. He says he didn't hear anything from her."

William is a former club steward whom Mike picked up somewhere during his travels. William does all the cooking and general housework in the place.

You might say that everyone who works for Mike does a little bit of everything. I was a cub reporter on a small New England newspaper when he picked me up. Now I do leg work for him, write some items for "Off-Mike," his column, act as bodyguard, advance agent on his trips out of town, and general handy man. I love it. I love him, and I mean it quite sentimentally.

At fifty-two, Mike Malvern has more energy, more brains, and more courage than any guy I've ever met anywhere. He can be wrong about things, but never because he was too lazy to find out the facts. His opinions may not be the same as yours, but he arrives at them from thinking, not from irresponsible emotions, and he's afraid of no man, no power, or no influence on earth.

He is probably one of the most widely read columnists in America. He believes in God, in his country, and in calling a spade a spade—to coin a phrase. A lot of people hate him for the spade-work, but not nearly so many as love him for it. He's never been afraid of the haters for himself, but he worries about his daughters. His wife died when Joan was born and he'd brought the girls up himself. There was one standing rule in the household, and it went for us as well as for Erika and Joan: Stay out as long as you like, do what you want, but if you're not going to be where you say you're going to be, phone in! If you're not coming home when you've said you were, phone in!

Erika hadn't phoned in that day. She hadn't come home and she hadn't phoned.

If it had been Joan I'd have worried. Erika was another dish of tea. She forgot once in a while, and Mike would call her for it, and she'd put her arms around him and snuggle up to him, and two minutes later she was forgiven. Joan always phoned, but if she hadn't, the lightning would have struck, and good!

WILLIAM came in with the hot dishes—eggs, sausage, bacon, broiled lamb chops. Mike ate breakfast and he ate again about midnight, and that was all.

William said Erika hadn't called in during the evening. "Not at no time," he said.

The front door bell rang while Kathy and I were talking to him.

"You keep on with the breakfast, William," I said. "I'll take that."

There were two guys at the front door I'd never seen before. One was tall and thin and looked like an up-and-coming copywriter for a smart advertising agency. The other was short, fair, and my first impression was that he was the dreamy type. Then he looked at me out of the frostiest blue eyes I'd ever seen, and I changed my mind. This one flipped a police badge on me in a little black case.

"McCuller. Lieutenant. Homicide," he said, and put the badge away.

"I'm John Rand, Assistant D.A.," the other one said. "Is Mr. Malvern in?"

"He's in, but he's just getting dressed," I said. "Our day starts late here. I'm Vance Taylor, his assistant. Can I help you?" I felt a faint prickling sensation at the back of my neck. These men meant business. Homicide and the

Cast of Characters

MIKE MALVERN	*A famous columnist*
JOAN MALVERN	*His younger daughter*
ERIKA LAYNE	*His favorite daughter*
WALDO LAYNE	*Her ex-husband*
AUSTIN GRAVES	*A man about town*
KATHY ADAMS	*Mike's secretary*
VANCE TAYLOR	*His Man Friday*
JOE RICARDO	*Underworld boss*
CHARLEY CARSON	*A shrewd lawyer*
ED JOHNSON	*A play producer*
LIEUTENANT McCULLER	*Of the police*
JOHN RAND	*Assistant D.A.*

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begins on page 128

D.A.'s office. Erika hadn't phoned in!

"We'll wait until he's dressed," McCuller said.

I took them into the library. "What's up?" I asked them.

"I think I mentioned I'm from Homicide," McCuller said.

"We haven't killed anybody here," I said, trying to make it sound light.

"Please," McCuller said wearily. "I've been up all night."

"A man named Waldo Layne has been murdered," Rand said. "We believe Malvern can give us information about him."

Mike could give you information about almost anybody in the country, or get it for you. Waldo Layne he knew all about, to his sorrow. Waldo was Erika's divorced husband. And Erika hadn't phoned in! . . .

MIKE was at his place at the breakfast table when I came back from the library. Joan and Kathy were seated at the table. Mike, I saw at once, was in a foul temper.

"Oh, there you are," he said to me. "Sit down."

"There's a couple of guys in the library," I said.

"I don't want to see a couple of guys in the library," he said. "Sit down."

"But these guys—"

"Sit down, Vance. What's the matter with you?"

I sat down, and William brought me a cup of coffee. It's hard to describe Mike. He has a kind of pixyish quality when he's in a good mood. He is small and lithe and his hair is light brown without a touch of gray in it. His hands are graceful, and he uses them when he talks. He plays a very good nonprofessional piano, both hot and classical.

I watched him eat. He's a gourmet, and he insists that everything be cooked for him just so, and then he eats it so fast you can't imagine that he's really tasted a mouthful of it. Besides, he talks while he eats, in short, machine-gun blasts.

"*You* haven't heard anything from Erika?" he asked me.

"No."

I saw the shadow of worry cross his face. Everybody who knew Mike was aware of his almost heartbreaking devotion to Erika. When his wife died he'd concentrated all the love and affection he had on his older daughter.

Erika would give anybody something of a jolt the first time he saw her. She had everything. She had a perfect figure, naturally red hair, and gray-green eyes that glowed with an almost electrical excitement. Except for the brief period of her marriage to Waldo Layne, Erika was Mike's constant companion. She made the rounds of the hot spots with him at night, she went on his holidays with him, she knew how to do all the things that flattered and pleased him. When he gave one of his rare parties she presided as hostess with dignity, charm, and just the right amount of casualness.

She knew her way around Mike's world with a sure instinct. As far as I was concerned, she was as out of reach as the top ornament on the Christmas tree at Radio City—so far out of reach that I didn't really want her. And also there was Joan. But I admired and respected Erika.

That morning, sitting at the breakfast table, still holding back the news about Waldo, I remembered a conversation I'd had with her one day. It came after a row with Mike over something that had gone wrong which he thought was my fault and I thought wasn't. Erika was sitting in the library, which opened off Mike's office, and I guess she couldn't have helped overhearing the argument.

"Take it easy, Vance," she said, as I came storming out of the office.

"That maniac!" I said. "He'll never admit he's wrong about anything."

"And he never is," Erika said. She took hold of my arm and pulled me down on the couch beside her. "He can be mistaken, Vance, but he's never wrong in principle. That's what's so wonderful about him."

"Right now he's for the birds, as far as I'm concerned," I said.

She looked past me with a kind of a dreamy light in her gray-green eyes. "I get rebellious myself once in a while," she said. "He's so arbitrary about some things. But it's never out of meanness, or cantankerousness, or vanity."

"It's all very well for you to talk," I said. "All you have to do is ask for the moon and he'll get it for you."

She smiled. "Sometimes I wish that wasn't true. There is so much to live up to! Still, it's a wonderful thing to be loved like that, Vance."

I REMEMBERED that now, as I saw Mike's worry. He put his knife and fork down on his plate. "I won't have the rules broken," he said, "particularly now. I won't have it from any of you."

He said it straight at Joan. I saw her look down at her hands. Joan is a small, somewhat darker edition of Mike. Some people may not think she's pretty. I think she's beautiful. The trouble is she doesn't know I'm alive. She treats me like the boy next door. She knew and I knew and Kathy knew what was eating Mike. He wished one of us, not Erika, had broken the rules. I never knew Mike's wife, but they tell me that Erika is a ringer for her. It kills him when Erika makes him worry, because he idolizes her. If it were Joan it wouldn't matter so much.

"Why 'particularly now'?" I asked him.

He took a cigarette out of his pocket and lit it. "I don't want to believe it," he said. "I *can't* believe it. But there's a leak somewhere. Stuff that's coming to me from confidential sources is getting out."

"That's impossible," Kathy said quietly.

She's the one who handles everything. Information comes to Mike from every conceivable source; from people he pays and from people who volunteer it. It comes from hat-check girls and society matrons, from bartenders and bank presidents, from punks and chiselers and ministers and statesmen. Some of it is usable and some of it isn't. Some of it is fact and some of it is just plain filth. But all of it is on file.

To protect himself, Mike makes a record of every piece of information that comes his way, the exact hour and minute and place where he received it, and whom it came from. There's material in that file that would blow thousands of people sky-high if it was ever released. The file was kept in a modern vault in his office off the library.

I don't think the vault could be broken into. It certainly never had been. It was never left carelessly open. Kathy had access to it. I had access to it. Kathy knew everything that was in the file. I could find out if I wanted to. There was just us.

"All right, all right; stop looking sore," Mike said to me. "If I can't trust you and Kathy I'd better blow my brains out. But there has been a leak, all the same."

"Look," I said. "A guy gives you a piece of information. It gets out somehow. He blames you. But maybe he told other people, or maybe someone else knew."

"Of course," Mike said. "I figured that angle, Vance. I figured it had to be that way. Stuff *has* been getting out and I *have* been blamed for it, but I shrugged it off. Then last night I got it between the eyes from Joe Ricardo."

Joe Ricardo is what the newspapers like to call an "Overlord of the Underworld." He's a smooth, tough guy who, so far as I know, has been able to keep clean of the law—but he's not to be fooled around with, all the same.

"Ricardo has heard the rumor that I was leaking stuff," Mike said. "Get this—he heard I was using private information for purposes of blackmail. He thought if the racket was big enough, he could give me protection. For a price, naturally."

"Mike, how absurd!" Kathy said.

JOAN just sat there, looking down at her hands.

"Ricardo framed me," Mike said evenly. "He rigged up a story. It was an item on Ed Johnson, the producer. He and Johnson are friends. You know the item, Kathy. It's in the file—about Johnson and Ricardo's girl."

Kathy nodded.

"Johnson was approached yesterday with a blackmail demand on the basis of that item," Mike said.

"By whom?"

"A phone conversation. A man. Johnson couldn't identify the voice. But you see where that leaves us? They planted the story with us to see if it would leak, and it did." He looked around at us. "How?"

I didn't have an answer. Neither did Kathy or Joan. It wasn't possible.

"My whole life, my whole career, depends on my handling the information I get with integrity," Mike said.

"The leak isn't here," I said. "The leak is at the source somewhere."

"We have to prove that, Vance. We have to prove it or we're in bad trouble." He pushed back his chair. "And we aren't going to prove it sitting here."

Then I remembered McCuller and Rand. "You've got to see those guys in the library," I said. "A homicide dick and an assistant D.A."

"What about?" Mike asked.

I took a deep breath. "It seems somebody caught up with your ex-son-in-law last night."

"Waldo?"

I could see it all flash behind his eyes—the anguish Erika's unhappy marriage had caused him, the way he hated Waldo Layne's guts.

"I don't know any of the details," I said.

I saw Kathy look from Mike to Joan. Joan was staring down at her hands, motionless, almost as though she'd heard none of it.

Mike put out his cigarette in the ash tray on the table. "Let's go talk to them," he said. He started toward the door, and then turned back to Kathy, whose face had suddenly gone very white. "Find out where Erika is," he said. "I'm worried about her." . . .

As NEARLY as I can make out, Waldo Layne had always been a heel. He grew up in a family with money, and he never went without anything he wanted until he was a grown man. He went to the best schools and to a famous Ivy college. He was an athlete of sorts, and might have been really good if he'd had the proper temperament. But he was a show-off from the word "go." Once he intercepted a forward pass and ran forty yards for a winning touchdown against Princeton. He would describe the play in detail without any encouragement whatsoever. Some remote disability kept him out of the Army. Then his family lost all their money and Waldo was on his own. He fiddled around, trying to be an actor, but he didn't have the talent for it. He finally wound up being a kind of glamour-host for a night spot on the East Side. He carefully cultivated women with money.

It was in his capacity as host at the night spot that he met Erika. Mike took her there one night on his rounds. I don't know what she saw in Waldo. She could pick and choose her men. Waldo had something for her, that's all. The marriage came as about the biggest shock Mike ever had. He and I had gone to Chicago to cover a political convention, and when he came back Erika and Waldo met us at LaGuardia with their little announcement. Mike never showed them by the turning of a hair how he felt, but he took it hard when I was alone with him.

Waldo had no money. Mike put up the dough for a charming little apartment on the East Side. Waldo gave up his job and tried to chisel his way into Mike's act. On that Mike wouldn't give an inch. The truth was he couldn't have anybody on his staff he couldn't trust. Nobody trusted Waldo. He would turn up from time to time with items for Mike, obviously expecting to be paid for them. They were rarely usable, and, besides, every cent Waldo spent came indirectly from Mike.

It lasted about a year, until Erika began coming home in a state from time to time, once with a black eye. Waldo was drinking and he had begun to chase around after other dames. The marriage came to a breaking point and Mike whisked Erika out to Reno, where she got a divorce. Since then she'd been living at home again, and Mike was relatively at peace. He was never happy when she was very far out of his sight. . . .

In the library it was Rand who told us what had happened. McCuller seemed satisfied to sit back and let the assistant D.A. do the talking. Waldo was living in a cheap theatrical hotel just off Broadway. About three in the morning the hotel clerk got a phone call from a woman, who wouldn't give her name, saying there was something wrong in Waldo's room. The clerk and the house detective went upstairs, and found Waldo lying on the floor with a bullet hole between his eyes. There was no gun, and the homicide squad hadn't turned up anything in the way of a clue.

"The Wakefield hasn't a very savory reputation as a hotel," Rand said. "Layne could entertain anyone he chose at any time of day or night, as long as his bill was paid. Of course the management denies this, but it's true. We figure the woman who made the phone call was someone who came to see Layne early this morning, found him dead, slipped away, and phoned from outside. We haven't any kind of a lead to her."

Mike stood during the whole recital, his hands locked behind him. His face was frozen in a fixed expression of detachment, almost as if he weren't listening. But when Rand finished he spoke.

"What do you want of me?" he asked.

"Please!" McCuller said, speaking for the first time. "The man was a member of your family for a while. Who are his friends? Who had it in for him? Add him up for us, Malvern."

"You've added him up for yourself," Mike said. "He was a heel."

McCuller sighed. "You don't want to help?"

"Any way I can."

"Incidentally, we'd like to talk to Mrs. Layne," Rand said.

A nerve twitched in Mike's cheek. "She's not at home just now."

"When do you expect her?"

"I don't know exactly," Mike said. He looked down at his fingernails. "She went out before I was up this morning. I don't know where she went."

"You're not sorry Layne is dead," McCuller said casually.

"I don't wish any man a violent death," Mike said. "I particularly and pointedly disliked Layne, if that's what you're asking."

McCuller heaved himself up out of his chair. "Just routine," he said, "but I suppose you can account for your movements last night and early this morning."

Mike smiled faintly and nodded at me. "My perpetual alibi," he said. "I never go anywhere without Vance."

"I can write you out an itinerary," I said. Then I glanced at Mike, wondering. There had been a period of nearly two hours last night when he'd gone up to Joe Ricardo's apartment and left me waiting for him in a bar across the street.

"Write out the itinerary," McCuller said. He turned to Mike: "I won't wait for Mrs. Layne, but I want to see her as soon as you can get in touch with her."

"Of course," Mike said. McCuller started for the door, and Mike checked him. "I'm a newspaperman," he said. "Because of Layne's connection with me I can't ignore this, although it's not strictly my department. Would it be possible to see his room at the hotel?"

"Why not?" McCuller said. "We're going there now." He looked at me. "Bring along a piece of paper and you can write out that itinerary on the way in the taxi." . . .

MIKE told Kathy where we were going and told her if Erika called she was to phone him at Layne's room at the Wakefield. If he didn't hear from her he'd check back with Kathy as soon as he left there.

I found out on the way to the Wakefield that McCuller wasn't kidding about the itinerary. He even lent me his pen to write with. I had no chance to check with Mike, and I couldn't get any kind of tip-off from him. He seemed to be studiously avoiding me. It wasn't that there was any reason why he shouldn't have visited Joe Ricardo. That sort of thing was part of his work. The point was that I couldn't really alibi him for a two-hour stretch. I don't know why it bothered me. The idea that he might have killed Waldo never entered my head.

I finally wrote everything down just the way it had happened, including a list of people we'd seen and talked with in various spots during the evening. When I handed it to McCuller he didn't look at it. He just folded it up and put it in his wallet.

The Wakefield was a dingy place. There was something shifty about the manager, the clerk, and the house dick. It was hard to tell whether they had something to hide about Waldo, or whether they were afraid that general violations might be unearthed during the murder investigation. They were too greasily co-operative, somehow.

Waldo's room was a mess. Clothes strewn around, the desk a mass of unsorted notes, letters, and papers, cigarette butts everywhere. The smooth, slick young man you saw at night clubs was revealed here as disorderly and unfastidious. Waldo himself was gone. I wasn't sorry.

"The door has a snap lock," Rand said, "and it hasn't been forced. The house detective had to use a passkey to get in after they'd had the phone call from the woman."

Mike stood looking around the room with an air of distaste. I imagined he was thinking that Erika had had to put up with this sloppy unpleasantness.

"The woman must have had a date with him," Mike said, "came upstairs, found the door open, and went in. She probably ran out, closing the door behind her."

"That's the way we figure it," McCuller said.

"The gun?" Mike asked.

"Small caliber," McCuller said. "I haven't the ballistics report yet. Probably the kind of gun a woman could carry in a handbag."

"What makes you think a woman killed him?" Mike asked sharply.

"I don't think anything," McCuller said. "I just say it was that kind of a gun." He shook his head. "A case like this you just check and check and check," he said. "His friends, his acquaintances, everyone he saw yesterday, everywhere he went, his past, present, and what might have been his future. That's where you and Mrs. Layne can help us, Malvern. I'd like to get at it."

"He had no friends," Mike said quietly. "He fed off people until they had no more to give, or couldn't take him, and then he turned to others. That was his past and his present." He raised his eyes to look directly at McCuller. "I think his future was always what happened here last night."

"Somebody was bound to get him sooner or later?"

"Violence of some sort," Mike said, and turned to the door. . . .

You can't go anywhere with Mike that he isn't recognized. We left McCuller and Rand at the Wakefield, after promising to let them know the minute Erika showed up at home. We went across the street to a little bar and grill. The proprietor spotted Mike at once. He would have given Mike the joint, and he acted hurt when Mike said all he wanted was some plain soda with a half a lime in it. I ordered a cup of coffee. We went to a booth at the back of the place. Mike lit a cigarette and sat there staring at the table-top until the soda and coffee came and we were alone again.

He took a sip of his drink and looked up at me. "I'm *not* sorry about Layne," he said.

"Why should you be?"

He took a deep breath. "Work has to go on just the same," he said.

"Yeah."

He took out a pocket notebook. There were some clippings in it. I cut them out every morning and leave them for him, along with the mail, on the breakfast table. They're usually news items I think he might be interested in following up. He glanced through them quickly.

"How come we didn't hear of this fire at the Hotel Spain while we were doing our rounds last night?" he asked.

"It happened while you were at Ricardo's," I said. "Nobody knew where we were."

"Twelve people burned to death." He shuddered. "Death by fire is the worst of all."

"Not pleasant."

"You'd better dig up what you can on it. There's no list of the dead or injured here."

"It was from an early edition," I said. "Don't you want to cover it yourself?"

He shook his head. "Check with the fire chief on the cause," he said. "There are probably dangerous violations in places like that all over the city. It might make a running story."

"Right."

"When you've got all you can, come back to the house."

"You're going there?"

"I want to see Erika the minute she gets back," he said. "Layne's death will be a shock to her. She did love him once, you know."

"Or thought she did."

"What's the difference?" he said. "I want to be with her when she hears about it. She'll need me."

So we separated, and I went to see what had happened at the Hotel Spain. Ordinarily, it would have been an interesting story to cover, but I couldn't get over my feeling of uneasiness about Erika. Some months ago, when Mike was getting some anonymous letters

threatening him and his family, he bought Erika and Joan each a small .22 revolver to carry, and got licenses for them. That was the first thing I'd thought of when McCuller mentioned the type of gun used to kill Waldo Layne.

The fire at the Hotel Spain had been pretty grim. It was an old family-type hotel about twelve stories high. The fire had started on the fifth floor, and it must have been a lulu, because the seven top stories had been completely gutted. The twelve people who had died in the fire had all been trapped above the fifth floor. Others had escaped, but those twelve had either been unable to get to safety or had not become aware of the danger until too late. Bodies had been taken to the morgue, and so far there had been no definite identifications. That is to say, the authorities had, by checking with the survivors, been able to tell who the twelve dead were, but the bodies themselves had been burned beyond recognition.

I looked over the list of the dead and saw no names there that meant anything to me. It's cold-blooded, but my concern was with names that would mean something in the news. The fire department wasn't prepared to make any sort of statement as to how the blaze got started, though they hinted someone might have dropped a lighted cigarette in some trash can. There was no suggestion of arson.

I had a look upstairs. My press pass and my connection with Mike got me most places I wanted to go. When I finally returned to the lobby the place was jammed with anxious people, checking on the safety of friends or relatives. I started to push my way through the crowd toward the front doors, and then I stopped dead. Standing in the center of the crowd was Joan Malvern.

She didn't spot me until I'd worked my way over to her and put my hand on her arm. She swung around to face me and I was shocked by the look in her eyes. She was scared stiff.

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

"I—I had a friend who lived here," she said.

"Who?"

"A—a girl I know."

"What's her name?"

"Vance, what are you trying to do? Give me a third degree?"

"What's the matter with you?" I said. "I happen to have a list of the casualties here in my pocket. What's your friend's name?"

She moistened her lips with the tip of her tongue. "Eloise Morton," she said.

That was a facer, because I remembered the name. It was about third from the bottom on the list of the dead. I took Joan's arm in a firm grip. "Let's get out of here," I said.

She didn't say anything till we got out on the sidewalk. Then she stopped and faced me. "Her—her name is on the list?"

"I'm sorry, Joan."

Her legs started to buckle under her. I grabbed her and started looking for some place to take her, but she managed to get hold of herself.

"Would you buy me a brandy, Vance?"

I found a place a couple of doors down the street. She drank the brandy, choking a little on it, and I ordered her another. We sat at a little table, and she didn't say anything. She just twisted and untwisted her handkerchief around her fingers.

There was no use not talking about it. "I never heard you mention this friend of yours," I said.

"She—she was an old school friend," Joan said.

"Oh."

"Where's Father?" she asked, her eyes fixed on the twisted handkerchief.

"He's gone home to wait for Erika. The police want to talk to her. Waldo's death will be a nasty shock."

"Yes."

"Look, Joan; we all have to die sometime. Maybe it comes easy or maybe it comes hard."

"I know."

"It's funny," I said. "I'm sorry about Eloise Morton, and I never heard of her till ten minutes ago. I knew Waldo well—and I'm not sorry."

"The early afternoon papers have the story on Waldo," she said. "The police say some woman who came to see him tipped them off."

"That's right."

"Have they found out who she was?"

"Waldo had a million of them," I said. "She called from outside. She didn't give a name."

Joan didn't say anything more. She just sat and stared at the handkerchief.

"Joan," I said, "you remember that little revolver Mike gave you a few months back."

"Yes," she said listlessly.

"You know where it is?"

"In my top bureau drawer at home. I never carried it, Vance. I couldn't have shot anybody if my life depended on it."

"Maybe I better take you home."

"No," she said sharply.

"You still look pretty rocky."

"I—I better get in touch with Eloise's family," she said.

"Can I help?"

"No, thanks, Vance. No; thanks very much."

She stood up, and I never saw anybody look so white. But she walked quite steadily out of the place. . . .

We were getting it in reverse when I got back to the house. Reporters were hanging around the front entrance, along with a dozen or so photographers. They all crowded around me, demanding in:

"You know how it is, Vance. It's a job we have to do."

"I'll see what I can work out for you," I told them, and opened the front door.

Inside, I glanced at my wrist watch. It was nearly four in the afternoon. I went through the library into Mike's office.

He was sitting at his desk, but he wasn't working. His elbows rested on the desk and his face was buried in his hands. He lifted his head quickly as I came in. "Any news?"

"It was quite a fire," I said. "Twelve known dead. It turns out one of them was an old school friend of Joan's."

"I didn't mean that," he said impatiently. "Is there any news of Erika?"

"I haven't been looking for Erika," I said. "Haven't you heard from her?"

"Would I be asking if I had?" Then he turned away. "I'm sorry, Vance. I'm afraid I've gotten panicky. There hasn't been any word from her. Surely she'd have heard about Waldo by now and gotten in touch."

"That girl can sleep the clock around," I said. "If she holed up with some friend for the night she may not be awake yet, not if they did a late turn."

"Thanks," he said dryly.

"For what?"

"For not saying what you really think."

"That *is* what I think."

He brought his fist down hard on the desk. "There's something badly wrong. We all know it. We just don't want to admit it."

"Okay," I said. "Then let's do something practical about it. We'll start calling her friends. One of them will—"

"What do you think Kathy and I have been doing all afternoon?" he cut in. "We've called everybody we can think of that she knows. We've called every number in the address book on her telephone table. We've called the hospitals"—his voice cracked—"even the morgue."

"Well," I said, as cheerfully as I could, "if there hasn't been an accident and she isn't in the morgue, that ought to take part of the load off your mind."

"She could have driven out of town with someone. There could have been an accident somewhere else—Jersey—Connecticut—Long Island. How can we begin to cover those possibilities?"

"Look, take it easy," I said. "The best bet is that she tied one on last night with some of those crack-brained friends of hers. She rolled in at five or six in the morning somewhere and stayed overnight."

"Why wouldn't she call me?" Mike said. "She knows the rules. Even at six or seven in the morning she should have called."

Ordinarily, he'd get sore if you suggested Erika might have been drinking. He was so worried now he almost preferred to think so.

"She knows you don't like her to get tight," I said. "It's just after four now. If they rolled in, say about six this morning, it's only ten hours. Erika's just getting her second wind of sleep when it's ten hours."

He smiled, very faintly. Erika's sleeping jags were a family joke.

"And let's face it," I said. "We don't know *all* of her friends. You can easily have missed up on someone."

He seemed to relax a little. He reached out for a cigarette in the box on his desk. "Thanks for the pep talk," he said. He gave me an odd, narrowed look. "I don't know how I'd have got on without you these last few years, Vance."

I grinned. "I hope you never do find out how."

"I hope not," he said.

Somehow, the way he said it wiped the grin off my face. "There's a mob of reporters outside, Mike. Don't you think—?"

"No. Not till we hear from Erika," he said.

"I'm going to grab off a sandwich from William. I haven't eaten since breakfast."

"Okay," he said. I started for the door, and he called after me: "What was that you said when you first came in, about some friend of Joan's?"

"Girl named Eloise Morton," I said. "Joan went to school with her. She burned to death at the Spain."

"Morton?" He frowned. "I don't seem to remember her. Does Joan know?"

"I ran into her at the Spain, checking. She took it pretty hard. I bought her a brandy and she went off to see the Morton girl's family."

"This seems to be a rough day for a lot of people," Mike said, and forgot I was there.

I went out through the library and started back toward the kitchen. Kathy hailed me. She was coming down from upstairs. She didn't look herself, either. I guess the strain was telling on everyone.

"What do you make of it, Vance?" she asked.

"She's asleep somewhere," I said.

"You don't really believe that, do you?"

"It could be," I said. "You've checked for accidents, Mike tells me. That makes it more likely."

"Vance, I'm scared," she said. "Mike dictated some notes to me on the Layne business. The gun—the small-caliber gun—"

"You, too?" I said. "I thought about those toys Mike bought the girls."

"I just checked upstairs," Kathy said. "I can't find them."

"Let's face it," I said. "Erika takes a pot shot at Waldo and goes into hiding!"

Kathy's eyes widened. "But both guns are missing, both Joan's and Erika's," she said. . . .

McCuller showed up at the house about five o'clock. He looked shot, and I realized he'd been on the go steadily since he'd been called to the Wakefield at three in the morning. He also looked as though his patience had frayed a little at the edges. He had another guy with him, an old man with a loose, twitching mouth. McCuller told him to sit on a chair by the front door. He didn't introduce him.

"Mrs. Layne?" McCuller asked me.

"She hasn't turned up yet," I told him.

"Where's Malvern?"

"In his study."

"Let's go."

"I don't think he wants to see anybody right now."

"That's too bad," McCuller said. "Let's go."

Mike apparently hadn't moved since I left him. He gestured to us to come in, and tried to make an effort to straighten up and be himself.

McCuller came over to the desk and stood looking down at Mike. "Let's stop kidding around," he said. "Where's Mrs. Layne?"

Mike played it straight. "The honest truth is, I don't know, Lieutenant," he said.

"That's better," McCuller said. "She didn't come home last night, did she?"

"No," Mike said. "I've been trying to locate her. I've called her friends—I've checked hospitals—the whole routine."

"You should have told me this morning," McCuller said. "I'd have started a systematic search."

"I didn't think it was serious this morning," Mike said. "It's not unusual for her to spend the night with friends."

"Without telling you?"

"That isn't usual," Mike said, "but it has happened. I expected to hear from her at any time."

"Do you expect to hear from her now?" McCuller asked, his voice expressionless.

"Of course," Mike said.

McCuller's eyes moved slowly around the room. "Do you have a photograph of Mrs. Layne?"

"Yes. In my bedroom upstairs."

"May I see it?"

"Vance—"

I went up to his room and got the leather-framed portrait of Erika that stood on his bedside table. It was one of those two-picture frames, and in the opposite side from Erika's was a picture of her mother. They did look alike.

When I came back downstairs I noticed the old guy was no longer sitting on the chair by the front door. I found him in the study with McCuller and Mike.

The detective reached out for the photograph. He studied it a moment and

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then handed it to the old man. "The one on the right," he said.

The old man stared at it with rheumy, frightened eyes.

"Night elevator man at the Wakefield," Mike said casually. "He remembers taking a dame up to Waldo's room about two-thirty this morning." Mike didn't seem worried.

"Well?" McCuller said.

The old man shook his head, first uncertainly, and then with more assurance. "It wasn't her," he said. "I'm pretty sure it wasn't her."

"Pretty sure?"

"Positive," the old man said. "I'm positive, Lieutenant."

McCuller sighed. "We'll check again in the flesh when Mrs. Layne turns up," he said. "This is a good likeness, Malvern?"

"Excellent," Mike said.

McCuller put the picture down on the desk. "What do you propose to do about finding her?"

"If she's in New York I'll know in the next two or three hours," Mike said.

"How?"

Mike smiled faintly. "Every headwaiter, bartender, hat-check girl, and half the taxi drivers in town are my friends," he said. "They'll locate her if she's around. I've already spread the word."

"How about Missing Persons?" McCuller said.

"I'd rather hold off for a few hours," Mike said. "I still think she's with friends somewhere and hasn't heard the news."

McCuller looked at his watch. "At eight o'clock I send out a general alarm for her," he said. "I don't know why I wait, except I need a couple of hours' sleep, myself." He took a pencil out of his pocket and wrote a phone number on Mike's desk pad. "My home. Call me there the minute you hear anything."

"I will, and thanks," Mike said.

I WALKED out through the library with McCuller and the old guy. Just as we got into the entrance hall the front door opened and Joan came in. During the moment the door was open I could hear the reporters on the front steps still gabbing at her. She threw us a quick look and went straight for the stairway.

The old guy reached out and tugged at McCuller's sleeve. "That's her," he said.

"What?"

"That's her—the one that came to the hotel last night."

"You're sure?"

"Sure I'm sure, Lieutenant. That's her, all right."

"Just a minute, miss," McCuller called out.

Joan turned to face him, holding tightly to the stair rail. . . .

Mike stood by the window in his study, his back turned to us, looking out at the darkening street. Joan was huddled in the big leather armchair beside Mike's desk. McCuller prowled back and forth in front of her, firing questions at her. I stood off to one side, the inside of my mouth dry.

"You know I don't have to give you the break of questioning you here in front of your father, Miss Malvern," McCuller said. "I could take you down to headquarters and really put you through it."

"I know." Joan's voice was small and far away.

"You went to see Waldo Layne at two-thirty this morning. Why?"

"Personal reasons," Joan said.

"Miss Malvern, I'm not going to take that kind of answer. What personal reasons?"

"I—I wanted to see him," Joan said.

"You don't say!" McCuller was angry. "I didn't suppose you had any other reason for going there. But why did you want to see him?" Joan didn't answer, and he shouted at her. "*Why?*"

"I—I was in love with him," Joan said.

I SAW Mike's shoulders sag, but he didn't turn. My own world went floating off into space. Joan and Waldo!

"Were you in the habit of visiting him in the middle of the night?" McCuller asked.

"No."

"What was the reason for this visit, then?"

"I—I hadn't heard from him for days," Joan said. She didn't look at McCuller or me or Mike. She just stared straight ahead. "I was worried. I—I couldn't stand it any longer so I went to see him."

"At two-thirty A.M.?"

"It may have been," Joan said. "I—I wasn't concerned with the time."

"You got to the hotel and went up in the elevator. You didn't announce yourself?"

"No."

"What made you think Layne would be in?"

"If he—he hadn't been I'd have waited for him upstairs."

"But he was?"

Joan's eyes closed for an instant, and then opened in that fixed stare. "His door was half open. I knocked. When he didn't answer I looked in and—and I saw him, lying on the floor."

"You went into the room?"

"No. I—I ran," Joan said.

"You didn't even stop to see if he was alive, if he needed help?"

"I didn't think he was alive."

"Why?"

"I—I don't know. I just didn't think so."

"So you ran away and left him?"

"Yes."

"Then what?" McCuller asked, as if he didn't believe a word she'd said.

"I ran down the service stairs and out into the street."

"You didn't want to be found there?"

"No."

"You loved this man," McCuller said, his voice rising, "but you ran away, without making sure he was dead, without trying to get help for him?"

"About a block from the hotel I found a drugstore that was open," Joan said. "I called the hotel from the coin box and told them something was wrong with Waldo."

"And then?"

"I came home," Joan said.

McCuller paced back and forth for a moment. "Were you having an affair with this man while he was still married to your sister?"

"No!"

"It began after they were separated?"

"Yes."

"And now he was tired of you?"

"I—I suppose so," Joan said.

I FELT sick at my stomach. I wanted to get out of there, but I couldn't move. Joan, carrying on with that louse Waldo, and we'd never even dreamed of it.

McCuller went over it in earnest now. He made her describe the hotel lobby, the clerk, the old elevator guy, the color of the rug in Waldo's room. It was as though he wanted to shake her story, but she had every detail of it cold. She didn't miss up on a thing. And all the time Mike stood with his back to her, staring out the window. Finally McCuller came to the point I'd been waiting for and dreading:

"Do you own a .22 caliber revolver, Miss Malvern?"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"In my bureau—in my bedroom upstairs."

"Did you carry it with you last night?"

"I've never carried it," Joan said. "My father gave it to me some months ago when we'd received threatening letters, but I never carried it."

"You didn't have it with you last night and you didn't shoot Waldo Layne?"

"No!"

McCuller let his breath out slowly. "Let's go look at it."

Mike didn't move. I hesitated, and then followed Joan and McCuller upstairs. McCuller didn't seem to notice I was there. Joan went straight to the bureau and opened the top right-hand drawer. She reached into it, seemed surprised, pulled the drawer out farther and really searched. Then she turned to McCuller.

"It—it doesn't seem to be here," she said.

"It seems open and shut, Miss Malvern. Woman scorned—that's the motive. You were there. You own the right kind of gun, which has disappeared. I don't have any choice."

"I—I can see that," Joan said.

"For heaven's sake, Joan, if you took the gun last night—!" I started to say.

"I didn't take it, Vance," she said. "I don't know what's become of it."

"Joan," I said, and I guess my voice cracked a little.

"I'm sorry, Vance," she said.

After that McCuller took her away. As he said, he had no choice. . . .

Mike never showed. He never came out of his study when McCuller left with Joan. I warned Joan not to do any more talking till we got our lawyer to her, and then I went to find Mike.

He was back at his desk when I went into the study, and he looked at me as though I were a stranger.

"McCuller's taken her downtown," I said. "Her gun is missing. You'd better call Charley Carson and get him down to her at once."

"I'm through with her," he said, slowly and distinctly.

"That's no way to talk, Mike! She's your daughter."

"I'm through with her," he said again. He got up and walked over to the window. He started to talk, with his back to me. "She killed her mother getting born," he said, in a voice I'd never heard. "She has never brought me anything but tragedy. Now this! Waldo Layne! Sneaking out at night to see him! Loving *him!* Wasn't what he did to Erika enough? So she killed him, because he got tired of her! Well, let her pay the price for it."

I was so shocked I couldn't speak for a minute. "No matter how you feel," I said, "she's your daughter and you can't let her go undefended. Call Carson."

"The courts supply lawyers," he said.

"If you don't call Carson, I will," I said.

He turned back from the window. "Let me remind you, Vance, you are an employee here. You'll do as I say or you'll go out the front door so fast you won't know what hit you."

"Are you going to call Carson?" I asked. I could feel the blood pounding in my temples.

"No," he said.

"Good-by, Mike," I said. "It was nice knowing you—up until tonight!"

I RAN out of the room, and almost collided with Kathy, who was just outside the study door. I could tell by the look on her face that she'd heard. She didn't say anything, but she took hold of my arm and walked out through the library with me into the entrance hall.

"Take it easy, Vance," she said. "I've already called Carson."

"Then you better go pack your trunk," I said.

"A good secretary anticipates her boss's wishes," she said. "I assumed he'd want Carson on the job. He didn't tell *me* not to call him."

"What's the matter with Mike?" I said. "He talks like a crazy man."

"Find Erika," she said, "and he'll come back to normal. How much can a man take in one day?"

"I walked out on him," I said. "That's that."

"Don't be foolish," Kathy said. "He'll have forgotten it, and so will you in a couple of hours."

"That he should hate Joan so much—" I said.

She looked up into my eyes. "Love and hate are back to back on a coin, Vance," she said. "You haven't been kidding me, buster. I know how you've felt about Joan. What do you feel about her now?"

"I guess that's the sixty-four-dollar question," I said. "Right now I don't feel anything—about anything."

"Go somewhere and cool off," Kathy said. "Be on the job tomorrow morning. I'll fight out the Carson thing with him." She turned her head, that little frown between her eyes, to glance at the study door.

"Since you just let down my back hair," I said, "how about I let down yours? You've been in love with Mike ever since you went to work for him."

"Sure, I have," she said quietly. "He's the most wonderful guy in the world. But it doesn't do me any good." She patted my shoulder and then started off for the study. . . .

I suppose every man who has ever gotten a sock in the teeth from the woman he loves has reacted foolishly about it, all the way from getting drunk to punching the wrong guy in the nose. I thought I would be smart and do neither of those things. I would keep busy. It was important, if anybody was going to act sanely, to find Erika. I knew all of Mike's contacts in the city. I set out to check on who'd seen Erika last night and whom she'd been with. And it was at the sixth place that I came across my first lead. There was a young playwright around town named Austin Graves who had been giving Erika quite a rush, and I heard that they'd been having cocktails together in the bar in the Bijou Club around seven o'clock.

I didn't call Graves. I went to his apartment, a brownstone in the East Fifties. He opened the door to me, and when he saw me his face went the color of the chartreuse walls in his living-room.

"Vance!" He didn't try to stop my coming in. There was a glass shaker of Martinis on the coffee table in front of the fireplace. Our Austin had been drinking alone.

"What's the matter with you? You look sick," I said.

"Is there any news about Erika?" he asked.

"Would I be here if there was? When did you hear she was missing, and how? It hasn't been made public."

"Miss Adams called me."

I should have known Kathy would be miles ahead of me.

"I told her all I know," Austin said. "I bumped into Erika on Fifth Avenue around six yesterday, and invited her to the Bijou Club for a cocktail. We sat around for an hour or so. I—I tried to persuade her to have dinner with me, but she said she had another date."

"Who with?"

"She didn't say."

"Why are your hands shaking?" I asked him.

He stuffed them in his pocket. "I'm worried about Erika," he said.

"Why? She's just gone off with some friends and forgot to let us know."

HE DIDN'T say anything to that. He just stood there, wetting his lips.

"You got a different theory than that?" I asked him.

He shook his head.

"Then what are you worried about?"

"Layne being murdered," he said, "and then Erika not turning up."

"You think there's a connection?"

"Look, Vance; I—"

"You've been thick as thieves with Erika for months," I said. "You must know where she went after she left you."

"So help me, Vance, I don't. We separated at the Bijou Club about seven—and that's the last I saw of her. This noon I read about Layne in the papers. I tried to call Erika at home but the phone was always busy. Finally Miss Adams called me, and I heard Erika hadn't come home last night and was still missing."

"What did you do after Erika left you last night?"

"I—I ate dinner at the Bijou and came back here."

There was something about him I couldn't put my finger on. Concern for Erika was natural, but he acted scared out of his wits.

"Listen, Austin; if I find out you're not telling me everything you know, so help me I'm coming back here and take you apart, piece by piece."

"Why shouldn't I tell you everything I know?" he said.

"I'm darned if I know, Austin, but for some reason you don't smell good to me."

"I swear I've told you everything I know," he said. For a minute I thought he was going to cry. . . .

When I got out into the cool night air again I began to work on really big ideas—technicolor ideas. I started thinking

about Joe Ricardo, and the leak from Mike's files, and Ricardo's little frame-up of the phony item. I wondered if Ricardo was playing rough. He might think he could use Erika as a means of twisting Mike's arm, and was waiting for Mike to get good and worried before he put the twist on. My ideas were big, and I felt brave.

I went straight up to Ricardo's hotel suite and asked to see him, which was not much less foolhardy than the Charge of the Light Brigade.

A smooth guy let me into the place and nobody acted tough at all. I had to wait only a minute or two before somebody took me into a small living-room where Ricardo was sitting at a desk going over some papers. Ricardo is strictly not a movie-type mobster. He has gray hair and a friendly face and you can tell he spends time at a gym somewhere keeping down his waistline.

"Hello, Vance," he said; "you're too late."

"What do you mean, too late?"

"The cop beat you to it."

"What cop? What are you talking about?"

He looked a little bored with me. "McCuller. What other cop?"

"Look, Joe; let's start over," I said. "And this time make some sense."

Ricardo leaned back in his chair. "Tell Mike I'm surprised at him. He ought to know I always play it strictly on the level."

"Joke," I said, "but I don't get the point."

"I could get annoyed with you, Vance," Ricardo said. "I would not frame an alibi for anybody, not even my mother. I might need to be believed some day on my own account, so I couldn't risk a phony."

"Frame an alibi?"

"Even if I would have done it, I'm not a mind reader, Vance. If Mike wanted me to say he was here for two hours instead of about twenty-five minutes he should have said so."

It seemed suddenly very hot in there and Ricardo's face looked blurred. I wasn't sure I'd heard him correctly. "Mike didn't need you to say he'd been here for two hours last night. I said so. I know. I waited for him across the street."

Ricardo's shoulders rose and fell. "I didn't say you weren't across the street for two hours, Vance. But Mike wasn't here for more than twenty-five minutes and I'm not going to perjure myself to say so. I told McCuller the truth."

"I want to get this straight," I said. "I came in here with Mike. I saw him go up in the elevator. Then I went across the street and waited—"

"There are about five different ways out of this hotel, Vance." He let that sink in for a long time and I swear there was a look of sympathy on his face.

"I don't know what's going on, Vance," he said. "Confidential stuff has been leaking, and I've proved it. Mike has had a reputation for honesty. That's why he gets away with what he gets away with. Now he offers the cops a phony alibi. His ex-son-in-law is murdered, one daughter is arrested for that murder, and the other daughter disappears. I don't know what's going on, as I said. But don't stick your neck out too far, Vance, until you know what you're sticking it out for. That's just common sense." . . .

When I got down into the lobby of Ricardo's hotel I was still trying to juggle times and motives in my head. It had been about midnight when Mike and I went to Ricardo's the night before. That meant that from twelve-thirty, roughly, until two, when he picked me up in the bar across the street, Mike had been on the loose somewhere. He'd left me sitting in that bar for an hour and a half while he went somewhere he didn't want me to know about. Somewhere like Waldo Layne's room at the Wakefield?

A blind anger swept over me. If that was it, then he was deliberately letting Joan take the rap for something he knew she hadn't done! That wasn't like Mike, though. He always played dead level, even with people he had no use for, and he couldn't hate Joan *that* much! But suddenly I had to know what he'd been up to. I couldn't spill anything until I had the answers.

I tried to put myself in his place after his talk with Ricardo, when he'd discovered, without any question, that someone was leaking the stuff out of his files. The story was that somebody had called up Johnson, Ricardo's friend, and tried to blackmail him with the framed story. The somebody had been a man. If I'd been Mike, and I wanted to start checking, I'd have gone to see Johnson and asked him about the phone conversation.

Johnson is a theatrical producer and I knew he had an office at the theater where his production of *Underdog* is running. I went there to see him. It was about forty minutes before curtain time and he was in his office on the second floor of the theater. He wasn't too cordial, but he saw me. He was a nice-looking, fairly young man.

"If Malvern wanted any more information from me he should have come himself," Johnson said.

"I'm here on my own," I said. "If you've heard the news today you know things are pretty messed up in Mike's life."

"That's the understatement of the week."

"Mr. Johnson, did Mike come to see you last night?"

"I ran into him at Lindy's around one o'clock," Johnson said. "I don't know that he was exactly looking for me."

"You talked to him about the blackmail phone call?"

"Yes." Johnson was smiling at me in an odd way.

"Would you repeat the gist of that conversation to me?"

The odd smile widened. "I got a distinct impression, Vance, that he was trying to find out if I'd recognized your voice over the phone."

"*My* voice!"

"That was the gist of it," Johnson said. "I wouldn't get too burned up about it. He'd just had it proved to him that there was a leak somewhere and that a man was involved. You, I take it, are the only man who has access to his confidential records. He'd have to check on you, no matter how much he trusted you, wouldn't he?"

An hour after I left Johnson I went into a quiet little place off Broadway and ordered myself some food and coffee. I'd done some more checking and I be-

ILLUSTRATION BY BERNARD D'ANDREA

● *At my question Joan turned quickly, her eyes wide with fright*

gan to understand why I'd been left sitting in that bar across from Ricardo's hotel twiddling my thumbs. Mike had been investigating me! He must have had some idea of other items that had leaked. Two or three guys who were usually very friendly with me had acted queer and reserved. Mike's questions had left them wondering about me.

It hit me hard to discover that Mike had doubted me so actively. Well, it didn't matter. I was clean and he must know it by now. Also, though his two-hour alibi at Ricardo's wouldn't hold up, I'd discovered half a dozen places he'd been in that time. There were gaps in it—big enough to make a short visit to Waldo possible—but it was still a pretty good alibi.

ALIBIS made me think of Charley Carson, Mike's lawyer. He should have seen Joan by now if he'd acted on Kathy's call. I had his private number in my pocket notebook and I dialed it from a booth in the restaurant. Carson is one of the topflight boys in his trade, and his particular specialty, as far as Mike was concerned, was a vast knowledge of the libel laws. He worked on a retainer for Mike, and any time there was anything the least bit touchy in one of the columns, Carson saw it before the proof was okayed.

"Hi, Vance," he said, over the phone. "You been talking to Kathy?"

"Not recently. Why?"

"I've been trying to reach you. Kathy said you were out on the town somewhere. Can you come over to my place for a few minutes?"

"Sure. How's Joan? You've seen her?"

"I've seen her," Carson said. "Get over here, will you, son?"

Carson lives on Central Park South, a fancy penthouse overlooking Central Park. He's a big, fat, easygoing guy who likes the good things of life, and earns them by being sharp and hard as nails at his job. He let me in himself and took me into his library. He was wearing a silk lounging robe and smoking a cigar that smelled like about two dollars' worth.

"I understand Mike has blown his top over this thing," he said, as he settled himself in the armchair back of his desk.

"Things are rough," I said. "Erika missing. Joan charged with murder. Somebody stealing stuff from his files."

Carson has the heavy, hooded eyes of a gambler. You can never read in them what he is thinking. "I didn't know until after I'd seen Joan that he hadn't wanted me called."

"He was pretty hard hit about then. He'll have calmed down when he hears about it."

"He has heard about it. He told me to lay off."

"What are you going to do?" I said.

"I told him to go fly a kite," Carson said. "I told him Joan had retained me personally."

"Good for her," I said.

"Of course she didn't. That's where you come in, Vance. I want you to go see her and tell her I'm working for her, not her father."

"What'll she use for money?" I asked bitterly.

"Who said anything about money?" The hooded eyes turned my way. "You ought to have your behind kicked," Carson said amiably.

"I? What have I done?"

"You've been mooning around over Joan for a couple of years," he said. "I had an idea you were really in love with her."

"I was—only, she wouldn't give me the time of day."

"Was?" His bushy gray eyebrows rose.

"I don't know where I'm at right now," I said. "Waldo Layne! When I think of her—and Waldo—"

"I'll be glad to do that kicking right now," Carson said. "You never loved that girl. If you did you'd know what kind of a person she is."

"I thought I did."

"Would the girl you loved have given Waldo Layne the time of day?"

"I wouldn't have thought so. But—"

"You wouldn't have thought so! You fathead! What's changed her?"

"I don't know. I—"

"Nothing changed her!" he said emphatically. "She was no more in love with Waldo Layne than I am. And I handled his divorce and know just the special kind of louse he was."

"But—"

"You sound like an outboard motor! But, but, but! Why don't you use your heart and your head? Why is she telling this cock-and-bull story?"

"There's no question that she went to the hotel," I said.

"Who said there was? She was there, she found Layne dead, she ran away, she phoned in the alarm. All those things happened. But she hasn't said why she went or what it was all about. Of course, you and Mike, who love her, are perfectly prepared to believe she could care for a heel like Waldo."

I FELT a lump in my throat. "Mr. Carson, you really don't think she—?"

"Oh, for Pete's sake!" he said impatiently. "I've known Joan since she was toddling around in a baby-walker. I'm not in love with her, but apparently I know her better than those of you who are supposed to be." He paused, and I had to look down, because my eyes felt hot and salty. Then he went on in a matter-of-fact tone: "Frankly, I couldn't get anywhere near the truth from her, Vance. She kept repeating that silly story about Waldo. Maybe you can break her down."

"I'd like to try," I said.

"Good. I'm going to give you an authorization for her to sign, retaining me as her counsel. I'll arrange for you to see her now. Okay?"

"Wonderful," I said. "One thing, Mr. Carson—about the revolver. The fact that it's missing is damaging, isn't it?"

"Don't tell me that along with your other assininities you think she shot Waldo?"

"No, of course not. All the same—"

"Until they find the gun and ballistics proves it was the one that killed Waldo it's just a gleam in McCuller's eye. Good heavens, do I have to tell you again? She didn't kill Waldo. She wasn't in love with him. She's covering for someone, and I wonder if I have to tell you who that is, too?"

"Erika?"

"Dear, sweet, lovable, little Erika." Carson's voice dripped acid. "But you don't know the girl you love, so how could you know Erika?"

"I think I know her," I said.

"A greedy, self-interested—" He jammed out his cigar in an ash tray on the desk. "She's a cannibal, Vance. She's been feeding off people all her life—off Mike, off Joan, off her friends, off Waldo. You know, I actually felt sorry for Waldo when he fell into that trap. It served his chiseling soul right, but I wouldn't wish Erika on my worst enemy. She sucks you dry and leaves you for the Sanitation Department to collect with the morning trash. As I said, she's a cannibal." He smiled grimly. "Well, maybe this time she overate!"

"But what could Joan be covering?"

"Vance, you can't read anything but the large print, can you? Who *did* kill Waldo?" . . .

CARSON had been a shot in the arm to me. Why hadn't I relied on my certainty about Joan instead of accepting her story? Well, maybe it wasn't going to be too late to make it up to her.

I picked up a paper on the corner and then took a taxi downtown to where they were holding Joan. I turned the ceiling light on in the cab and looked at the front page. Waldo had made it, with pictures. There was a background piece on his marriage to Erika and, of course, some mention of Mike. But there was nothing about Erika being missing. If McCuller had sent out a general alarm, as he threatened, it hadn't been picked up by the newspaper boys, at least for this edition.

I was about to put the paper down when I noticed a follow-up story on the fire at the Spain. All but three of the twelve dead had been claimed by relatives or friends—two men and one woman. The unclaimed body of the woman was assumed to be that of Eloise Morton, Joan's friend. That was odd, I thought, because Joan had been on her way to break the news to the Morton girl's family when she'd left me at the Spain. The answer, I figured, was that the girl wasn't Eloise Morton. Then I read the piece over again. No one had come forward to identify the body assumed to be Eloise Morton's! The reporters must have slipped on that one.

Instead of the regular visiting cage at the jail I was ushered into a captain's office.

"McCuller's orders," I heard one of the cops say.

Five minutes later they brought Joan in and left us alone. Poor darling, she looked all in. I didn't say anything, but I did something I'd never dared do before. I walked over to her and put my arms around her, and the next thing I knew she was clinging to me and her whole body was shaken with sobs. I just hung on to her and stroked her hair and let her cry it out. Finally I gave her my handkerchief to blow with, and that made her smile a little; and then I moved her over

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and sat her down in the swivel chair at the captain's desk.

"Listen," I said. "For two years I've been wandering around like a smooch waiting for you to give me some kind of sign before I said anything to you. Well, I quit! I'm telling you, sign or no sign, that I love you, that I was a fool to believe that line of yours about Waldo, and that I'm going to keep on loving you whether you like it or not."

"Oh, Vance," she said shakily.

"Sign this," I said, and put Carson's authorization down on the desk in front of her. "It's a technicality," I told her. "Carson has to have this to show you want him on your side." No use telling her Mike had walked out on her. Mike would be back, I told myself.

She signed the authorization and I put it in my pocket. I pulled up a straight chair and sat down.

"Now let's start this thing over from the beginning," I said. "Why did you go to the Wakefield to see Waldo last night?"

She turned her face away.

"Look, darling, I'm sure you have a reason for telling the story you did," I said. "But I'm Vance, remember? You can tell me what the real reason was."

"I can't," she said, her face still turned away.

MY HEART did a bump against my ribs. Those two words were an admission that she'd been lying.

"Where's Erika?" I asked her quietly.

Her head turned quickly back to me and I saw that her eyes were wide with fright. "You know where she is, don't you?"

She just stared at me, and I tried again: "She killed Waldo?"

"No!" It was just a whisper.

"What is it, darling? Did you suspect she was going to do it, and get there too late to stop her?"

"No. Erika didn't kill him, Vance. She couldn't have!"

"But you thought she might and you went there to warn him?"

"No."

"Joan, for heaven's sake, let me have it straight!"

She shook her head slowly. "I can't, Vance. I wish I could."

"You don't trust me?"

"With my life," she said. She gave me a little twisted smile. "If you were to ask for it."

I kissed her on the mouth then. We didn't say anything for quite a while.

"We'll announce it right away," I said. "That'll kill this other story."

"No, Vance. We'll have to wait."

"For what?"

"For things to be cleared up," she said. "Please, darling, don't keep asking me to tell you something I can't tell you."

"If it isn't Erika you're protecting, who is it? Is it Mike? Because he's got an almost foolproof alibi."

"Please, Vance, it has to be this way," she said.

I could see I wasn't going to break her down then, at least. "You better get as much rest and sleep as you possibly can," I said. "McCuller will probably start to work on you when he wakes up. Don't talk unless Carson is here."

"I won't talk," she said.

I reached in my pocket for a cigarette, and felt the folded newspaper. "Oh, by the way—there's a piece in the paper tonight that mentions your friend, Eloise Morton."

"Who?" Joan said.

"Eloise Morton, the girl at the Spain!"

"Oh."

"It says no one has claimed her body. Didn't you get in touch with her parents?"

"I?"

"You were going to get in touch with her parents when I left you this morning."

JOAN had been pale when I arrived. Now her face was the color of chalk. "Oh, yes," she said.

"You saw them?"

"No—no, they're out of town."

"Look, honey; you better tell me where they live, so the department can get things straightened out."

She just stared at me. She moistened her lips, but she didn't say anything.

"Darling, what is it? I know it's hard for you, but if you'll give me the Mortons' address I'll handle it for you."

She twisted her body around in the chair as though she was suddenly in mortal pain.

Then it hit me, right between the eyes, and it had been there all day for me to see and I had been too stupid to see it. Eloise Morton—E. M. Erika Malvern—E.M. The grief and panic on Joan's face when I'd met her in the lobby of the Spain. The death of a school friend *could* have shocked her that much, but surely it would have had to be a close friend, someone Mike or the rest of us would have heard of.

I took Joan by the shoulders. I had to push my breath out hard to make a sound. "Erika?" I asked her.

She didn't have to answer. It was there in her eyes.

Joan didn't cry. It would have been almost better if she could have. Now that it was out between us, she talked, dry-eyed. It wasn't a pretty story.

Most of the people who stayed at the Spain were permanent residents, elderly, not too well off. There was no smart bar or cocktail lounge. You just wouldn't go there unless you knew someone who lived there.

Joan had been doing some volunteer work at one of the hospitals and had made friends with one of the patients, a little old woman who lived at the Spain. When this woman was released from the hospital she made Joan promise to come and see her, and only yesterday Joan had kept that promise. As she was crossing the lobby to the desk she ran smack into Erika. They went through a "What are you doing here?" routine. It seemed they had both come to visit someone.

Erika was just starting out when a bellboy came up to her. "There's a phone call for you, Miss Morton," he said. "Do you want it in the booth, or shall I have them hold it till you get up to your room?"

I GUESS the way the boy said it, his smile, his ready recognition, made it impossible for Erika to bluff it out. She took Joan upstairs to her room and there she told her:

"You and I are different, Joan. You're satisfied to live the way we do—in a goldfish bowl. Because of father and his business everything we do is watched and commented on. You're content to wait till the right man comes along, marry him, and live happily ever after. I've *been* married, and I can't go back to be treated like a schoolgirl. I want some privacy. I want some independence. So I come here occasionally and stay under another name—Eloise Morton."

She'd chosen a name with the same initials because her accessories, bags, handkerchiefs, were monogrammed. She said there was no harm in it. It was just that Mike insisted on choosing her friends for her, making her plans for her. She wanted some part of her life, she said, where she could make her own friends and be out from under Mike's supervision, loving as it might be.

Joan was shocked but, being Joan, she tried to understand. She could understand how, after a year of complete independence, Erika might find Mike's chaperonage chafing from time to time. Erika tried to make her promise she wouldn't say anything to Mike. Joan wouldn't promise, but she did say she'd think about it and she'd tell Erika before she went to Mike, if that was her decision.

"Last night I was in bed," Joan said, "but I couldn't get to sleep. Kathy had gone to bed. About one o'clock the phone rang. I picked it up quickly so the ringing wouldn't disturb Kathy. It was Waldo. He sounded as though he'd been drinking. He wanted to talk to Erika. I told him she wasn't home. Then he said, 'I know I can count on you, Joan, to keep your mouth shut. Find her, Joan, and tell her I've got to see her. Tell her if she doesn't get in touch with me within two hours—by three o'clock—I'm going to tell Mike Malvern she's been using his confidential files for a cozy little racket. I have a hunch he might slap even Erika down for that kind of a double-cross. And tell her that goes for her play-writing boy-friend, too.'

"I wanted to ask him more, but I heard, or thought I heard, the click of one of the extension phones. I didn't want Kathy to hear what Waldo was saying. . . . Oh, Vance, I knew then that Erika and Austin Graves must be using Mike's confidential material for blackmail. Erika was with Mike so often when he picked up stories; she even made the records for his file. It wouldn't have been too hard for her to discover the combination to the vault. And he loves her so, Vance. He loves her so that the possibility would never enter his head. He thought of you, he thought of Kathy—

people whose loyalty is beyond question. He never thought of Erika."

"Whose loyalty was even farther beyond question," I said.

Joan nodded. "Excitement was like a disease to her," Joan said. "Even as a little girl she'd do crazy things, just for the thrill of it. She didn't need money—Mike would give her all she needs. But she would steal information from Mike and blackmail people with it—just because it was dangerous, and because she liked to control people. Mike has power, you know, but he uses it for good. Erika wanted it to use for excitement, for thrills." Joan took a deep breath. "I knew Waldo wasn't fooling, Vance. I didn't know if Erika was still at the Spain, but I took a chance and called there. I couldn't get a connection."

"The fire," I said.

JOAN nodded. "Of course, I had no way of knowing whether she was there. I tried all the friends I could think of, without any luck. I tried her favorite night spots. Then, without any particular plan, I got dressed and went out on the town looking for her. Around half-past two I hadn't found her. I was beginning to get panicky about Waldo. I called the Wakefield, but his room didn't answer. He'd said Erika was to get in touch with him there by three, so I thought maybe he'd be there again. I—I went there, just as I've told you, and found him. I just wanted him to hold off, not do anything crazy until we located Erika."

"Poor baby," I said.

"Then, this morning, there was no word from Erika—and all the talk from Mike about the leak. I'd read about the fire at the Spain, but there was no list of the injured or dead in the early editions. As soon as I could get free I went over there—as you know."

"But, Joan, darling, why didn't you just tell this as you've told it to me?"

For the first time her eyes filled with tears. "Vance, you don't know what it's like not to be loved by someone you love and need. Mike has never forgiven me because my mother died giving birth to me. He's never been unfair, but he's never loved me. It's been Erika, always Erika, he adored. I couldn't be the one to tell him the truth about her. He would hate me even more for knowing. When I knew this morning that Erika was dead I knew I'd never tell him. It may never have to come out now, Vance."

"It'll have to. I—"

"You're not going to tell, Vance."

"But, Joan—"

"I didn't kill Waldo, so they can't prove it. They'll have to let me go after a while. The chances are they'll never identify what's left of Erika unless they're given a lead, and they're not going to get it from you or me. It's better for Mike that she should just disappear. In time he'll convince himself it was some underworld enemy of his who did away with her. Anything would be better than that he should know she never really loved him and that she quite calmly betrayed him."

"And you'd let him go on thinking that you and Waldo—?"

"What does it matter? He can't have less regard for me than he's always had."

I shook my head. I felt a little groggy. "Joan, how do you know Erika didn't kill Waldo? You were so positive about it."

She looked at me, her eyes wide. "But, darling, don't you see? Waldo called at one o'clock. As soon as he hung up I called the Spain. It was on fire then, and she was there, trapped!" . . .

It was about midnight when I left Joan. I felt as if I'd been beaten around the head. I remembered I'd promised Carson I'd call him when I got through talking to her. I went into a drugstore and rang him.

"I don't know any more than I did when I left you," I said.

"You're lying," he said cheerfully.

"Oh, she's hiding something," I said, "but I don't know what it is."

"Ought to have your mouth washed out with soap," Carson said. "You talked to the woman for three hours and all you did was tell her you loved her?"

Three hours!

"You're wrong about one thing, though, Mr. Carson," I said. "Erika didn't kill Waldo."

"How do you know?"

"I can't tell you," I said, "but that's one thing I did find out."

"*Was* it Joan?"

"No, you idiot!"

"Okay, Romeo; have it your way," Carson said. "But remember one thing: Joan is safe in jail with her secret. You're walking around loose with it. Somebody might not like that."

"But I tell you she didn't—"

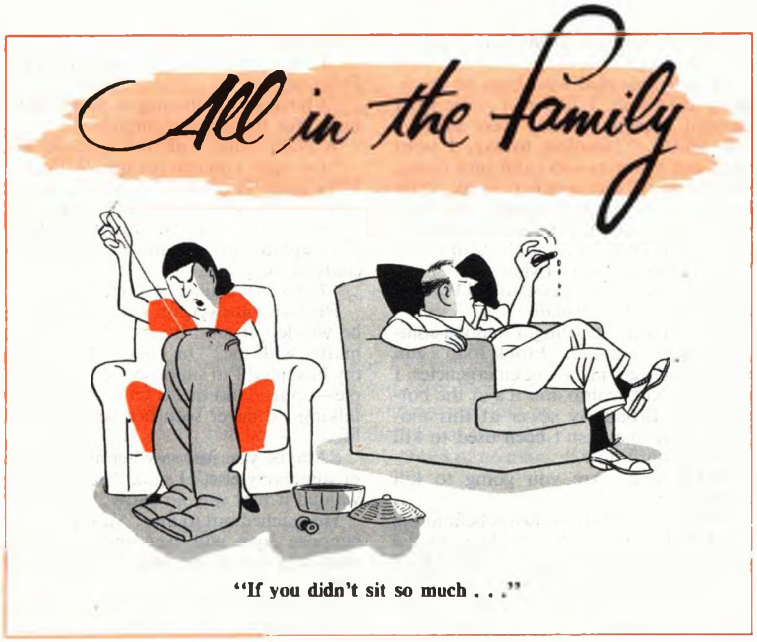
"Tell it to the Marines," Carson said.

SO I took a cab up town, nursing my headache and my secret, and thinking about what Carson had said. Someone—the someone who had shot Waldo—might be watching to make certain no one got on his trail. I know I had some weird ideas on the trip uptown. I thought first that maybe Ricardo had discovered that Waldo was in the know, and that Waldo had been making a nuisance of himself. So Ricardo had had Waldo rubbed out! It was a nice, clean, simple answer and didn't hurt anybody I loved. But then I had a picture of one of Ricardo's boys blasting someone with a woman's toy revolver. With Joan's revolver, because I was unpleasantly convinced that the missing gun was the one McCuller needed to tighten his case.

The whole thing kept coming back to us—to Mike, and me, to Erika, and Joan, and Kathy. We were the only ones who could have taken that gun out of Joan's drawer and used it, and Erika had to be eliminated because she hadn't had a chance to use it. She was being broiled alive when Waldo was killed. Not me. I knew that, if no one else did. Not Joan. And how on earth did Kathy fit into the picture? She loved Mike; she might have overheard Waldo's phone call to Joan and she would protect Mike from hurt if she could, but to commit a murder just to protect the man you loved from having his feelings hurt—that was hard to take.

That left Mike.

As I thought about it I could feel the small hairs rising on the back of my neck. To begin with, Mike no longer had a real alibi. He could have been at the Wakefield. He certainly could have taken Joan's gun, although he had one of his own that he was licensed to carry. Motive? Well, there were a dozen ways to figure that. There was one simple one: Suppose Waldo had gotten in touch with Mike last night—after he'd talked to Joan. Suppose Mike had gone to his room at the Wakefield and Waldo had said to him, "Mike, Erika is the one whose been stealing your stuff and black-



"If you didn't sit so much . . ."

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mailing people with it." Mike hates Waldo, figures he can handle Erika himself, so he draws his gun and lets Waldo have it. But not his gun—Joan's gun. The use of Joan's gun suggested premeditation, a scheme.

I tried another tack: Waldo didn't get in touch with Mike, but Mike, on his rounds, ran into something that convinced him Waldo was part of the blackmail setup. He could put two and two together. It would have to be Erika who was working with him. So he goes to the Wakefield and plugs Waldo, covering his tracks by using that little revolver which would have the police looking for a woman. And deliberately put Joan on the spot?

Oh, brother! But nonetheless, where could you go but Mike? Where could you possibly go but Mike?

THE palms of my hands were damp when I paid off the driver and walked up the steps to Mike's house. I had a key, of course, and let myself in. There was a light on in the library and I could see through into Mike's study. There was a light on there, and though he would usually be out on the town at this time, it didn't surprise me he was there now.

I remember I stood in the entrance hall and lit a cigarette. I was trying to figure out just what I'd say to him, just how I'd go about talking to him without involving Joan. Even then I wasn't kidding myself about being a detective. There was probably something quite obvious that would clear Mike entirely. Actually, I hadn't done anything like a complete check on his alibi. Maybe it would turn out to be airtight. McCuller had probably checked it already and found it was okay, or Mike wouldn't be running around loose. Well, the first thing I had to do was find out if I still worked here.

I walked through the library to the study. The door to the vault where he kept his files was open and I could hear him puttering around in there. I walked over to his desk, put out my cigarette, and lit another one. I could hear the file drawers open and close. He was hunting for something special, I imagined. Well, Kathy did the filing, not me.

I sat down in the chair beside his desk and closed my eyes. They felt hot and tired. It had been the longest day of my life, measured in stresses and strains.

Then I opened my eyes again, and saw her standing in the vault door.

"Don't move, Vance," she said. "I've got to think this out."

It was Erika! She was pointing the little .22 at me, her gray-green eyes as bright as diamonds.

The room began to do a slow, rhythmic spin. I've never fainted in my life, but I imagine I was as close to it then as I'll ever be. The spinning stopped and Erika came back into focus. She had the gun in one hand and she had a small suitcase in the other.

"I counted on your being out with Mike," she said. Her red lips moved in a smile. "Looking for me!"

"That's what Mike is probably doing," I said. I could feel anger beginning to rise up in me, hot, blind anger.

"Poor darling," she said.

"I've seen Joan tonight," I said. "She's taking a rap for you, too."

"My luck's been so good up to now," she said. "It seems to be changing. Joan told you things?"

"Joan told me things."

"She's protecting Mike, of course. How very noble and self-effacing."

"She thinks you're dead," I said. "She's not protecting you."

The gray-green eyes narrowed. "She *did* tell you things."

I began to think in terms of feet and inches then. I was about eight feet away from her. I wondered how accurate she could be with that popgun if I made a dive for her.

"Yes, my luck has gone very bad," Erika said. "Sooner or later I knew she'd tell someone about the Spain. The fire was my first piece of luck. I wasn't there, but someone died in my room—probably someone who got caught in the hallway and ran in there for safety. Joan would talk, I thought, and my passing would be duly mourned. You see, don't you, how your coming home is very bad luck, Vance, darling?"

"You killed Waldo?"

"Waldo was far too greedy," she said.

"I made a mistake tonight, myself," I said. "I had a chance to break Austin Graves' neck and I didn't. He is your partner in this blackmail racket, isn't he?"

"Poor Austin, he's probably half dead of fright by this time," Erika said. "He started shaking last week when Waldo accidentally caught on to our little pastime."

"I can understand why," I said. "Who tipped you off that Waldo was going to spill to Mike?"

"I heard his chat with Joan on the library extension. I had just come in. I thought Joan and Kathy were asleep." She smiled. "Needless to say, I went right out again to—to calm him down, shall we say?" Her eyes narrowed. "You know, Vance, perhaps your being here now is providential. I can tell Mike I found you rifling the vault, and when you tried to get away I shot you."

"With the gun you used to kill Waldo? It will be hard to explain."

She laughed. "Darling, I'm not a complete child," she said. "I took Joan's gun a long time ago, in case of emergencies. I used it to kill Waldo and it's at the bottom of a Broadway sewer at this moment. This one hasn't been used to kill anyone—until now."

"And Joan? Are you going to kill Joan, too?"

"Why? Poor Joan—always behind the eight ball. I admit, Vance dear, to the horrible sin of leading a double life. I expose you as the double-crosser. Mike will forgive me, after he's scolded me. He will be grateful to me for stopping the leak—by putting a bullet in you. It will be my word against Joan's. Who does Mike always listen to?"

I tried getting my feet under me so I could make a fast move. Erika was thinking this out all too clearly.

"You're a nice boy, Vance," she said. "It's really too bad for you it had to happen this way. But when you get into the kind of jam I'm in you have to get out of it. You see that, don't you, Vance?"

I made my move then, without much hope. Waiting would get me no place. I dived forward, as low and hard as I could. The gun went off, and the sound of it was much louder than I'd expected. I didn't feel anything, except the jar of my shoulder against her knees, and then she went down, and I fumbled frantically for her right hand.

"Vance!"

IT WAS Mike! I turned my head and saw him standing over me. At the same moment I heard a moaning noise from Erika, and I saw the little .22 lying a couple of feet away on the polished floor. I reached for it, and rolled clear of Erika and stood up. I saw her right hand, shattered and bloody.

Mike had a gun in his hand. It was his gun I had heard, not Erika's. Mike's face was the color of ashes, set in hard anger such as I'd never seen it. He made no move to help Erika.

She played it, right to the end: "Father, you don't understand. Vance was in the vault. I found him there. I—"

"Call McCuller," Mike said. He said it to me.

I went to the desk and started dialing police headquarters. William, attracted by the shot, came running from the kitchen.

"Get the first-aid kit from upstairs," Mike said to him.

Erika, clinging to her injured hand, struggled up to her feet. Mike made no move to help her. I got police headquarters on the phone and told them to send McCuller.

"Father, you've got to listen to me," Erika said.

"I have been listening to you," Mike said, "for the last five minutes."

William came with the first-aid kit.

"Do what you can for her, William," Mike said. Then he turned and walked slowly and steadily away into the library.

I went after him. He was standing by the fireplace, looking down into the dead coals in the grate.

"I'm sorry, Mike," I said.

He didn't answer, for a moment. Then he whirled around on me. "What's the matter with me?" he cried. "People are my business! I'm supposed to know people—understand them! Until I heard her talking I'd never seen her before in my life."

"Maybe you just saw her as a replica of somebody else," I said. "Because you wanted it that way so badly."

He reached out to me. "Vance, do you suppose Joan will ever understand? Is there any way I can ever make it up to her?"

"I wouldn't be surprised," I said. "She's quite a girl."

THE END★★

Elaine had wanted attention, but this avalanche of admiration was beyond her fondest dreams

Sophisticated Lady

by Mary Knowles

ILLUSTRATION BY FRANK MC CARTHY

AN AMERICAN STORIETTE

UNTIL she got on the bus this morning Elaine Cosgrave had almost purred with contentment. She was twenty and beautiful and married to a promising young attorney. Even more important, she was taking Timothy Robertson Cosgrave to the doctor for a checkup. It was her first trip to town since Timmy's birth six weeks ago.

The trouble began in the packed bus, when a good-looking young man, glancing up from his paper, saw her with the baby and got up. He said, "Here's a seat."

She gave him her most dazzling smile. "Thank you," she said sweetly.

He nodded politely. His eyes skimmed over her and returned to the newspaper. He said, "That's all right, lady."

Elaine sat down as if she had been jolted. The handsome young man's eyes had appraised and rejected her in one glance! That had never before happened to her. And he'd called her *lady*. "As if I were settled and done with," she thought. "As if I were shelved!"

When Elaine came home from the doctor's she was in such an emotional state she kept repeating to herself, "I won't be shelved. I won't!" By four o'clock she couldn't contain herself. She had to know if motherhood had robbed her of her appeal.

She was close to tears when she telephoned her husband at his office. "Bob, you've got to come home right now!" she told him. . . . "No, there's nothing wrong with Timmy, but I want you to tend him while I take an hour or two off. It's important!"

She bathed and dressed and stood, finally, before the full-length mirror. She was wearing her black broadcloth suit, an original, very simple and terribly smart. On her head was a black satin hat with a flirt veil that gave an intriguing come-hither look to her long-lashed eyes. . . .

TWENTY minutes later Elaine heard the front door open and Bob's voice call, "Baby-sitter has arrived." When she walked into the living-room he stared wonderingly at the vision before him, but the look on her face somehow made questions seem inappropriate.

"Timmy's bottle is in the refrigerator," she said. "If I'm not back by six, warm it and—" Just then the baby began to cry, and Elaine, forgetting glamour, hurried over to him and skillfully lifted him out of his crib. She placed him on the bed, then got a fresh diaper and safety pins.

She felt Bob's lips on the back of her neck. "You take the afternoon off, honey," he said. "Sometimes a person has to get away. I'll finish the job."

As soon as Elaine closed the front door an intoxicating feeling swept over her. She felt slim and light, and by walking at a leisurely pace she could reach the financial district by five—just as men were pouring out of the big office buildings. She would soon know by their looks if she were shelved or not.

Her timing was perfect. As she reached the Hamilton Building doors opened and men began hurrying out. Elaine walked with the poise of a model.

The first man was white-haired. He stopped and looked at Elaine. Then he took off his hat and gave a courtly bow, and there was tenderness in his smile. The tenderness puzzled Elaine; she had never thought of a man reacting that way to glamour.

The next reaction was more direct. An office boy whistled and then grinned at her, touching his hand to his forehead in salute. A group of young men, walking together, turned as one and eyed her in admiration. Then the wide grin and again that look of affection.

Elaine's confidence came back with a rush. Being a mother didn't put you on the shelf at all! The man on the bus this morning must have been blind. . . .

When Elaine got back home she was laughing. She hugged Bob and told him the whole story. "Honest," she said girlishly, "I don't want to brag, but I've never had such flattering attention."

"I can believe that, baby," he said gently, and in his smile was admiration and tenderness a thousand times more wonderful and more appreciative than anything she could ever see in other men's eyes.

She said, "It's almost time for Timmy's bottle."

He helped her out of her jacket and stood holding it in his arms. And after she had gone into the kitchen his hand moved quickly over the jacket before he placed it on a hanger.

Elaine must never know that hanging from the satin-bound lapel of her smart broadcloth suit had been three large diaper pins.

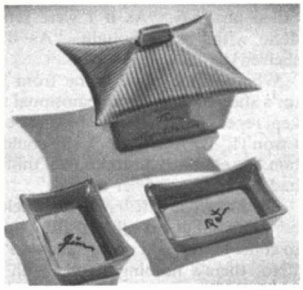
American

Here's a switch . . . called Flicko the Clown, gay replacement for the ordinary toggle switch plate. Just push the clown's bulbous nose up or down to turn the lights on or off. A decorative idea for nursery or game-room that kiddies think is a circus of fun. Made of plastic, 6 inches high by 4 inches wide. Postpaid, $1.00. Fireside Shop, 1154 Tower Building, South Bend, Indiana.

Three for tea . . . in the shape of paunchy little Toby jugs, replicas of originals that have long been the collector's delight. There's a creamer, sugar bowl, and 1-cup teapot. Jolly addition to your tea table; an equally happy note on the whatnot shelf. Use them, too, as planters or cigarette servers. They're yours for only $2.00 ppd. Seth and Jed, New Marlborough, Mass.

Perky pin-ups . . . to enchant the small fry, the lively and colorful Mother Goose wall decorations. Made of laminated board, each set comes with materials for hanging. Central figure about 18" high. Choose your kiddy's favorite nursery rhyme; almost all are available. Pictured, *The Cat and the Fiddle*. Postpaid, $2.50 a set. Kaytam Gifts, 814 Schofield Bldg., Cleveland 15, Ohio.

Redecorating on a budget? . . . Then you'll be interested in Rugadub, the liquid dye that changes or restores rug color. Just mix with water and brush it on; simple as scrubbing a linoleum floor. Can be used only on wool. Choose hedge green, emerald green, midnight blue, maroon, tobacco brown. One pint (enough for 9 by 12 rug), $3.95 postpaid. Chair-Loc Co., Box K, Lakehurst, N.J.



It's the name brand . . . that makes a gift of great distinction for your own home, for the couple celebrating an anniversary or housewarming. The cigarette box is decorated with the family name; ash trays with the couple's given names. Highly glazed ceramic in a warm golden sand color. Postpaid, just $2.95. Stratton Snow, P.O. Box 1898, Dept. L., Delray Beach, Florida.

PHOTOS BY BERNARD GOLD

Buy-ways

A shopping guide of mail-order specialties

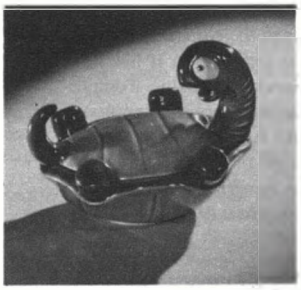
by MARY ROGERS

Make a clean sweep . . . with the Jiffee Venetian blind cleaner that washes, waxes, and polishes both sides of the slat with one easy motion. Kit includes spring-grip applicator and a special paste that you mix with water. Follow the directions and watch your blinds come clean. Specify whether for curved or flat slats. Postpaid, $1.59. The Krebs, Westerly, Rhode Island.

Well heeled . . . and soled by a process called Nelsonizing that restores good looks, fit, and serviceability to the most tired footwear. More than the usual repair job, for the shoes are actually rebuilt over individually fitted lasts. They do wonders with women's shoes, too. For complete details write B. Nelson Co., 10 E. 39th Street, New York 16, N.Y. Request Booklet A.

Set to please . . . your favorite teen-ager, this go-together belt and necklace. Made of leather, the adjustable belt highlights an enameled heraldic medallion which matches the necklace. A smart idea for the sweater-and-skirt crowd. Belt in red, brown, honey, suntan, or black, $1.95; necklace, $1.50; ppd. Vernon Specialties, Dept. A, 16 Mount Vernon Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y.

Give cheers for these chairs . . . that take a back seat to none. Budget-priced, yet in workmanship and sturdy good looks they're hard to beat. Made of mountain ash with hand-woven fiber seats, they're copies of antique ladderbacks. Unfinished, $6.75 each; in mahogany finish, $8.50. Minimum order, 2; sent express collect. Jeff Elliot Craftsmen, Elizabeth City, N. C.



A picture of frustration . . . is Myrtle the ceramic turtle, looking somehow like the lady driver trying to back into a tight space . . . or the man who's just discovered he's locked the car with the keys inside. Myrtle's the girl who knows how you feel. Use her for laughs, for nuts or candy. She's really a covered dish, 7" long. Postpaid, $3.95. Village Store, Lake Placid, N.Y.

Merchandise on these pages may be purchased from the firms listed. No C.O.D.'s, please; send check or money order. Stores (except those selling personalized items) agree to refund full price of merchandise returned within ten days.

America's Silver Lining

YOU could, if you didn't know the real people of this country, make a pretty strong case that America is headed for a moral and spiritual breakdown.

You could dwell on duplicity in high places and immorality in low. You could concentrate on crime, high taxes, and industrial conflict. You could emphasize hate, and fear, and guilt.

They are all there, all right. You could emphasize them and even argue that democracy has failed, that we should try some other system.

But you would be horribly wrong.

* * *

Because it just isn't true. America isn't just a few thousand irresponsible chiselers and charlatans. America is millions of people. And most of them are people of integrity who still believe in themselves, their families, their homes, their churches, and America. Maybe they can't put America into words, but deep in their hearts they know what it means.

They are law-abiding people who want to believe in their government. When any public official betrays their confidence they are shocked, but their faith in government by free people remains unshaken.

This does not mean that they condone or forgive any form of evil, regardless of where it appears. Neither do we of THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE. Like our readers, we still have more faith in good than in evil.

We happen to believe that what is fundamentally true about the American people is much more important to the future of America than the latest evidence of duplicity or stupidity on the part of some weak mortals who forgot that the public is still the boss.

Specifically, we believe in America.

* * *

Your home town is probably the best example of America that you'll ever know. Maybe you don't live there now, but you've never forgotten it. Better still for you, perhaps you have never left there. In any case, that's where most of America lives—in your home town and all the other home towns.

Geographically, Home Town America is a lot of places. It is Fairfield, Connecticut, and Winnetka, Illinois, and Macon, Georgia, and San Diego, California, and Walla Walla, Washington. It is all of these and, what is more, it is a state of mind.

Like America itself, every good home town came into being for the good of people. It is the kind of place where the local merchants and their customers know one another and share a common pride in making their community a wholesome, prosperous place in which to bring up their families . . . and just as these home towns came into being to serve the best interest of decent families, so did THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE many years ago. That is why we have the majority of our readers in home-town places.

You can pretend to be hard-boiled or sophisticated about it, but down deep in your hearts you are probably very grateful that America has so many places where people still trust one another.

The people in America's home towns know one another pretty well. The druggist, for instance, and the grocer—they know their customers, not just as statistics, but as individuals. They meet one another at Rotary or church suppers. They take an interest in P.T.A. and primary elections, and work together on Community Chest drives. Because they are not strangers, they are inclined to believe in one another.

* * *

Smug sophisticates may not understand what we are talking about, but these home-town people have spiritual as well as material assets. They still feel that individual ability, good intentions, and hard work can make any man a success. Their spirit and sense of personal responsibility for their own security is reassuring in these days of government generosity.

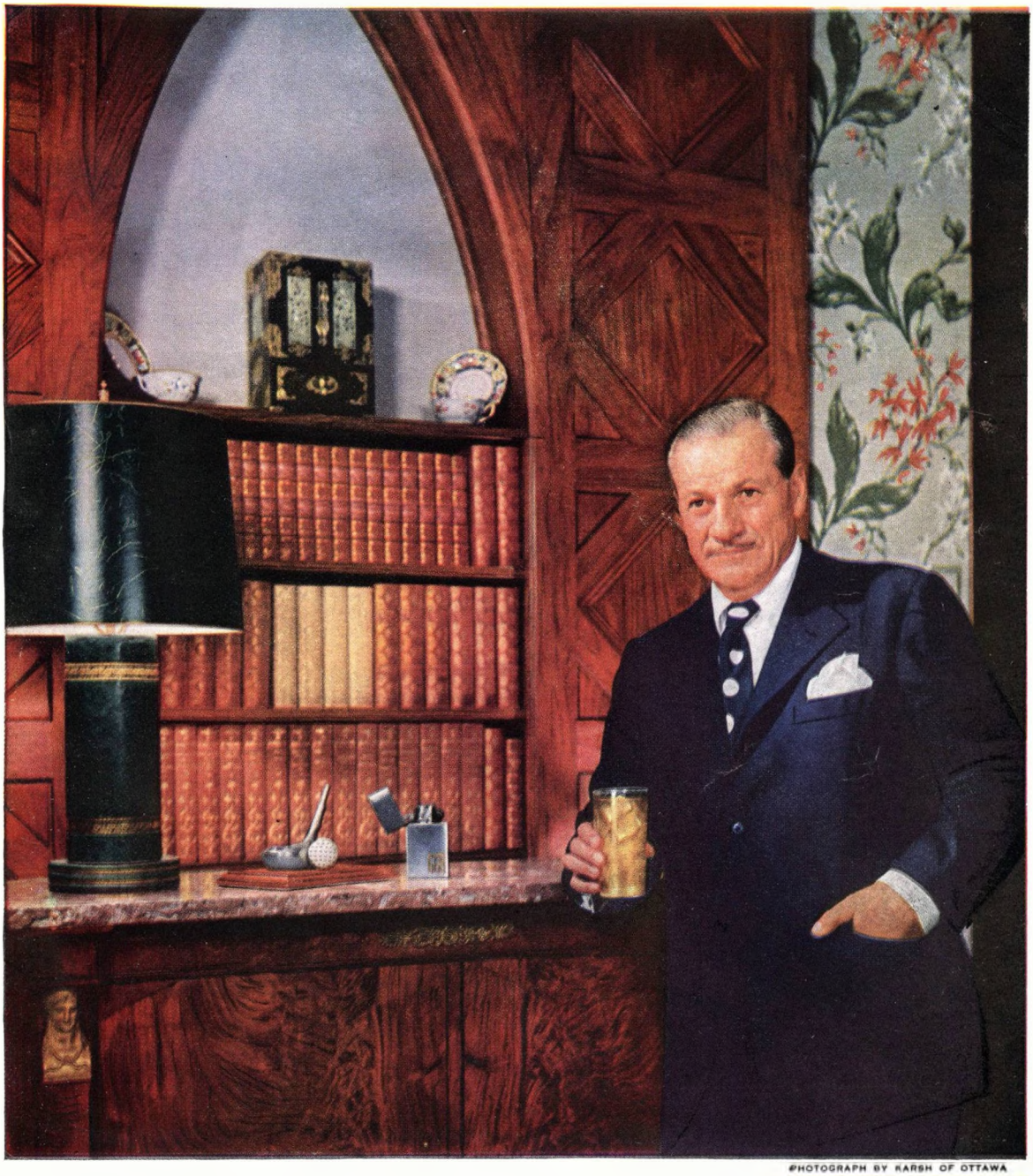
Because they are not afraid to believe in things, they are more responsive to sound ideas than people who seem ruled by their fears and suspicions.

How do we know them so well? Simple enough. We are of them. And for 76 years THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE has been edited for them. Just as they have created Home Town America as a wholesome place to rear their families, so has THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE supported and served the American family—wholesomely and well. For that reason it has become known as the Family Service magazine. Today, more than ever, we believe in these home-town people, for in the dark clouds over America, they are the silver lining—they are the hope of the nation.

Yes, we firmly believe that America is sound and good at its roots. And its roots grow deep—in Home Town America.

John W. McCurdy

PUBLISHER



PHOTOGRAPH BY KARSH OF OTTAWA

Make your next drink a better drink. Whether you prefer a cocktail or a highball, Lord Calvert offers a *unique flavor* and *distinctive lightness* matched by no other whiskey in the world. For of all the millions of gallons we distill — only the very choicest are set aside for this distinguished whiskey. So tonight, at home or at your favorite bar, enjoy Lord Calvert... the whiskey of distinction.

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MR. GEORGE G. BLAISDELL— *distinguished manufacturer. Mr. Blaisdell's successful career can be traced to his boyhood interest in mechanics, which led him to design a wind-proof lighter. He started production in the depression year of 1932 with the help of two employees, some garage space and $260 worth of second-hand equipment. Today his lighter, the Zippo, is one of the world's largest sellers, and the favorite of Servicemen. Mr. Blaisdell devotes much time to philanthropies. His hobbies are sport cars and — as evidenced by the hole-in-one trophy in the picture — golf.*

Free

TO NEW MEMBERS

6 Big-Author MYSTERIES

You Get

3 BY ERLE STANLEY GARDNER (including his very latest)

2 BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

1 BY MANNING COLES

---

1 ERLE STANLEY GARDNER'S

Very Latest Perry Mason Mystery

THE CASE OF THE Angry Mourner

A DEATHLY silence hangs over the courtroom. Belle Adrian, Mason's client, is as pale as a ghost. A witness *swears he saw* Belle at the scene of the murder. Exhibit "A" is Belle's compact with the *missing* mirror—AND the shattered mirror fragments found near the corpse. And Exhibit "B" is the *murder* weapon — Belle's *own gun!*

2 ERLE STANLEY GARDNER

The Case of the Fiery Fingers

MASON is retained by a gorgeous brunette to *prevent* a murder. But before he can act, the police find the *corpse — and Perry's client goes on trial.* The D.A. flings a small package in front of the woman. She collapses. The jury is ready to send her to the chair — but Perry comes up with *his own* surprise package in a slam-bang finish!

A. A. FAIR—Pen Name of

3 ERLE STANLEY GARDNER

Top of the Heap

DONALD LAM, private eye, gets tangled up with a gambler, a burlesque queen, a mining man, two lively girls —*and a DEAD one.* It's a jig saw puzzle that baffles the police—especially when the *second corpse* refuses to stay put! But Donald puts the pieces together . . . and hands the police a picture of the KILLER! It will amaze you!

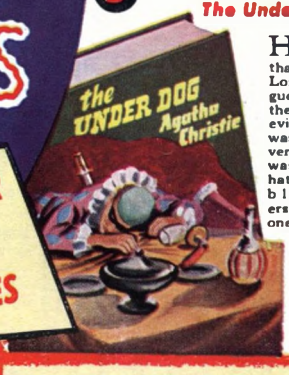
4 AGATHA CHRISTIE

Blood Will Tell

HERCULE POIROT has to solve a crime for which a man has *already* been sentenced to hang. And he has only three weeks to find the killer! There isn't a shred of evidence—until he uncovers a faded newspaper clipping about three missing women. Now he's sure who the murderer is. He goes to her house to get a confession — but finds *her* MURDERED!

5 AGATHA CHRISTIE

The Under Dog



HERCULE POIROT knew that all four of Lord Astwell's guests were up to their elbows in evil plotting. One was out to get revenge. Another was goaded by hate. Two were blackmailers. *But which one was guilty of MURDER?* This is only the first of 9 mystery tales in this book — Agatha Christie's *latest.*

6 MANNING COLES

Night Train To Paris

YOU'RE a respectable Englishman. But Communist agents are convinced that you have top-secret plans. You're paralyzed with fright. You board the train to Paris to escape. Then you discover that *the spies are on that very train!* You huddle in your berth, hoping, waiting, waiting. THEN . . .

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